

The Uxbridge Cosmos

Vol. 20 No. 2

TheCosmos.ca

Thursday, January 18, 2024

Online this week: a new look for thecosmos.ca • Budget talks - public works • Award winners in our midst



LET THE MUSIC PLAY - Tom Newman entertains a small but appreciative crowd at the Open Mic session held downstairs at the Uxbridge Legion on Sunday afternoon. The Legion hosts the Open Mic every Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. - a great way to stay out of the cold! *Photo by John Cavers*

Foster gate damaged by pickup truck

Conrad Boyce, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A single vehicle accident has destroyed the historic front gate of the Thomas Foster Memorial.

Around 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 10, a pickup truck headed north on Durham Road 1 veered off the highway and slammed into the stone abutment to the south of the gate. The abutment, however, did not stop the vehicle. It continued on, smashing the wrought-iron fences on either side of the gate, causing considerable damage to the main gate, and not stopping until it collided with the hydro pole to the north of the gate.

Durham Region police will not say at this point whether the driver of the truck was injured, or whether that person has been charged in connection with the accident. They also will

...continued on page 3

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Township awaiting negotiation request from railway

Conrad Boyce, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Township of Uxbridge still hasn't heard from York Durham Heritage Railway (YDHR) on whether it wants to return to the negotiation table, despite remarks made last week by the organization. And the clock is ticking.

On Dec. 21, in an announcement on its Facebook page, the board of the York Durham Heritage Railway (YDHR) said that "with a heavy heart," it had decided to leave Uxbridge after more than 26 years and set up operations somewhere else in Ontario (although it didn't say where). The announcement said the YDHR's landlord, the Township of Uxbridge, had made it clear that the railway was no longer welcome in this town.

Previous to that announcement the Township had cited YDHR for several building code and safety violations in the Uxbridge yard, including four long-abandoned passenger cars which had asbestos contamination and had fallen into

unsightly disrepair. The Township told the railway that failure to comply with these demands would mean that YDHR's lease on the train station, due to expire Dec. 31, would not be renewed. The railway vacated the station by that date, two of the cars remain on site, and the lease has expired.

The tracks and rail yard, on the other hand, are leased by a provincial agency, Metrolinx, to the Township, which in turn has sub-leased them to YDHR, recently on a month-to-month basis. Following the railway's Dec. 21 statement of its intention to leave, the Township told YDHR its lease on the yard and tracks would expire January 31 of this year, but that it would be permitted to enter and remove its assets, including rolling stock, until April 30.

YDHR then appeared to have a change of heart. On Jan. 9, again on Facebook, it announced it had parted ways with its senior staff, and was returning to a volunteer-led organization. The chief of those volunteers, board chair

Michael Jacula, told the *Cosmos* that the YDHR loved Uxbridge, and it hoped to get back to the negotiating table with the Township to resolve its concerns, and continue operations here.

But CAO Kristi Honey says the Township has received no such request.

"We have not heard from YDHR since Dec. 11," she said. "We learned about the Dec. 21 and Jan. 9 announcements on social media, like everyone else. It is our understanding the regulator is reviewing the status of their operating license at the end of this month. We await official communication from YDHR on their intentions, and updates from the regulators including the province, ESA and Public Health."

At the Jan. 8 council meeting, Honey and Mayor Dave Barton said that once YDHR was deemed compliant with safety concerns, its

...continued on page 3

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Uxbridge at a Glance

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Council & Committee Meetings

Meeting Schedule for January, 2024

Thursday, January 18, 1:00 p.m.
DEPARTMENT BUDGET
PRESENTATIONS
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING -
CANCELLED

Friday, January 19
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING -
CANCELLED

Monday, January 22
COUNCIL MEETING CANCELLED

Tuesday, January 23
DEPARTMENT BUDGET
PRESENTATIONS
1:00p.m. - 5:00p.m. (if needed)

Thursday, January 25
1:00p.m. - 5:00p.m. (if needed)
DEPARTMENT BUDGET
PRESENTATIONS
BIA BOARD, 7:00 p.m.

Monday, January 29, 3:00 p.m.
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION
COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 30, 3:30 p.m.
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Proclamations for the Month:

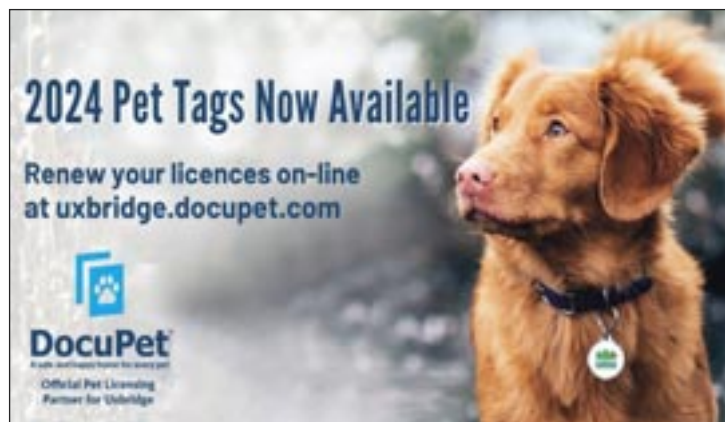
- January 21 - World Religion Day
- January 21 - Lincoln Alexander Day
- January 24 - International day of Education
- January 24 - Bell Let's Talk Day
- January 27 - International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
- January 29 - National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia
- January 29 - Hospice Awareness Day



INDOOR WALKING TRAIL
January 9th - March 29th
Mondays & Wednesdays
Uxbridge Secondary School
6:00pm-8:00pm
Register on ActiveNet or in-person at the Uxpool
Learn more at Uxbridge.ca



Budget Meetings
2024/2025
BUDGET
Thurs. 18
Tues. Jan 23 (if needed)
Thurs. Jan. 25 (if needed)
1:00-5:00pm
Attend virtually or in person via online TEAMS meeting or at Town Hall (51 Toronto St. S)



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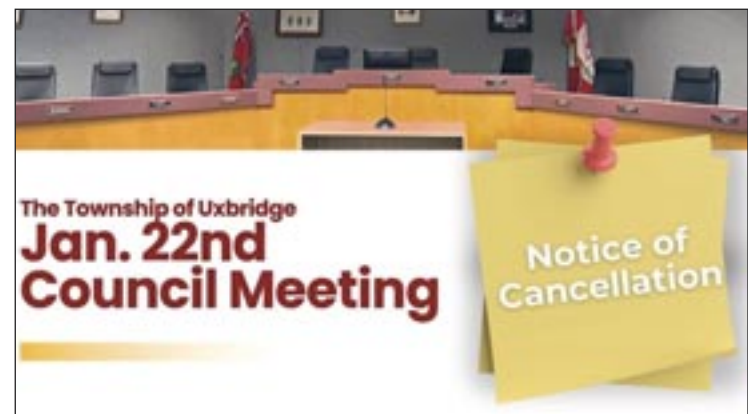
Elgin Pond Ice Is Not Currently Safe for Use
No ice is safe ice. Red Flags at Elgin Pond mean ice is unsafe for use. Yellow flags mean use ice with caution.

Road Closures

- Uxbridge-East Gwillimbury Townline from north of Durham Reg. Rd. 39/Queensville Sideroad to south of Holborn Road, East Gwillimbury - closed for bridge repairs to 2024
- Uxbridge East Gwillimbury Townline from York St. 500m south of Ravenshoe Road to Zephyr Road - closed for bridge repairs to January 2024



Snow Removal Reminder
All snow, slush, and ice must be cleared from sidewalks beside properties and roofs adjacent to sidewalks within 24 hours of snowfall



The Township of Uxbridge
Jan. 22nd Council Meeting
Notice of Cancellation



Winter Parking Reminder
No overnight parking on Township streets or in Municipal Lots from 2am -7am
November 1st to April 1st



Did you know...
Off-road vehicles are prohibited on municipal streets, trails, sidewalks or in parks

-  DIRT BIKES
-  ATV
-  SNOWMOBILE



Township of Uxbridge documents are available in alternate formats upon request. Please fill out the Request for Alternate Formats Form at uxbridge.ca/accessibility

email: accessibility@uxbridge.ca
phone: 905-852-9181 ext.209



Uxbridge at a Glance continued

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF UXBRIDGE NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION AND PUBLIC MEETING CONCERNING AN APPLICATION FOR A ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT

This Notice is to inform you that the Township of Uxbridge has received a Zoning By-law Amendment Application which has been deemed complete in accordance with the requirements of Section 34 of the Planning Act. The Planning Committee of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Uxbridge will hold a statutory public meeting to make available adequate information to the public regarding, and to consider, a proposed Township Zoning By-law Amendment pursuant to Section 34 of the Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990, submitted by 1093560 Ontario Limited (Coral Creek Homes – Fabio Furlan).

The statutory public meeting will be held in a hybrid format allowing for in-person attendance or virtual viewing of the public meeting. The Township of Uxbridge will be processing the Zoning By-law Amendment as required by the Planning Act and welcome any comments that you may have.

PURPOSE OF PROPOSED ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT:

- The purpose and effect of this application is to amend the Zoning By-law to permit a semi-detached house on the subject property.
- The subject property is designated “Living Areas” in the Durham Regional Official Plan, and “Residential Area” in the Township of Uxbridge Official Plan. It is zoned “Residential First Density (R1)” zone pursuant to the Township of Uxbridge Zoning By-law No. 81-19, and is proposed to be rezoned to “Residential Second Density (R2)” zone.

LOCATION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY:

The subject property is located on the north side of Planks Lane, west of Third Avenue South, in the Town of Uxbridge. The property is legally described as PT LTS Q AND R, BLK 66 PL 83 AS IN D453569 and is municipally known as 50 Third Avenue South, Uxbridge. The location of the property is graphically illustrated on the key map below.

FILE NO.: Zoning By-Law Amendment 2023-13 (ZBA 2023-13)

APPLICANT/OWNER: 1093560 Ontario Limited (Coral Creek Homes – Fabio Furlan)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Additional information relating to the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is available for inspection in the Development Services Department between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, at the Township Municipal Office, 51 Toronto Street South, Uxbridge, Ontario. It is preferred that if you require additional information that it be requested by email, mail, or telephone from the undersigned. However, if necessary, the Township Office can be accessed Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by contacting the undersigned.

Jennifer Beer

Permits & Approvals Analyst

Development Services

Township of Uxbridge

51 Toronto St. S., Box 190

Uxbridge, ON L9P 1T1

Email: jbeer@uxbridge.ca

(t) 905-852-9181 Ext. 225 (f) 905-852-9674

PLANNING ACT REQUIREMENTS:

This Notice is being given in accordance with Planning Act requirements. A final recommendation on the application will not be presented until after the Township Public Meeting and all technical comments have been received.

The public meeting is being held in a hybrid format allowing for in-person attendance or virtual viewing of the public meeting. The livestream public viewing can be accessed by visiting <https://www.uxbridge.ca/en/your-local-government/council-meeting-calendar.aspx>

The meeting date and time is as follows:

MEETING DATE: Monday, February 5, 2024

REPRESENTATION

ANY PERSON may participate in the public meeting and/or make written or oral representation either in support of or in opposition to the proposed Township Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment.

1. Written Submissions

Written submissions should be addressed to the Township Clerk at the address shown below. Written comments should be submitted before Friday, February 2nd, 2024. If you wish to be notified of the adoption or the refusal of the proposed Township Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment, you must also make a written request to the Township Clerk before the adoption of the by-law.

2. Oral Submission

Oral submissions may be provided to Council at the meeting on livestream, you must pre-register with the Clerk's office by email at dlroux@uxbridge.ca, or telephone at 905-852-9181 ext. 228 or mail at the address below before 12:00 p.m. (Noon) on Friday, February 2nd, 2024. Please include your full name, address, and a call-back phone number. You will be contacted by the Clerk's office to confirm your participation and receive the online call-in information before the meeting. Technical assistance may be provided to ensure you are able to participate.

PLANNING ACT REQUIREMENTS

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at the public meeting or make written submissions to the Township of Uxbridge before the proposed application is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Township of Uxbridge to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

If a person or a public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township of Uxbridge before the application is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

DATED AT THE TOWNSHIP OF UXBRIDGE THIS 16th DAY OF JANUARY, 2024.

Debbie Leroux, Clerk

Township of Uxbridge

51 Toronto St. S., Box 190, Uxbridge, Ontario L9P 1T1

Email: dlroux@uxbridge.ca

(t) 905-852-9181 Ext. 228 (f) 905-852-9674

KEY MAP (not to scale)



Foster gate, from page 1

not reveal whether road conditions, the speed of the vehicle, or other possible factors might have played a role in the crash.

Amanda Ferraro of the Township of Uxbridge, which owns the Memorial and the land on which it sits, said preliminary estimates of the damage are about \$50,000.

“Lovers of the Foster are devastated by this,” said Bev Northeast, longtime chair of the Friends of the Foster, the volunteer committee which raises funds for the site’s upkeep. “It’s very doubtful whether repairs can be done in time for the summer concert and tour season. A silver lining, though, is that this may present an opportunity, during the restoration, to move the gate back 15 feet or so, to prevent salt erosion, avoid just this sort of accident, and give more room for parking. Another possibility, which we’ve long talked about, is to re-incorporate the beautiful archway which used to sit there, but was moved to the far southeast corner of the property.”

All possibilities must be discussed by council.

YDHR, next steps? from page 1

proposal to operate in Uxbridge would be considered along with any other potential users of the station, yard and tracks.

Meanwhile, a number of people who either worked during YDHR’s holiday season or were parents of children who worked on the holiday trains have reached out to the *Cosmos*, as well as taken to social media, to say that they/their children have not yet been paid for the hours they worked during the holiday season. The *Cosmos* reported on the same issue in January 2023.

The *Cosmos* did reach out to Jacula with a number of questions to try to clarify YDHR’s status going forward, both on its presence in Uxbridge and on the payment situation. Neither he nor any other YDHR member had responded by press time.



Our two cents

Ten reasons to love the cold

It's a pretty safe bet that every single person reading this has recently made a comment to another person with regards to the weather. "Cold enough for you?" "Geez, can't believe how cold it is!" "Can't talk, my face is numb from the cold..."

We can talk about the cold (we're Canadians, of course we talk about the cold.), we can complain about the cold, we can, in spite of ourselves, deal with the cold. But rather than gripe about it (because let's face it, there ain't a darned thing you can do about it), let's look at some things we can do to put cold on the back burner.

1. Think about how less likely you are to get sick. Despite popular urban myths, you cannot catch a cold from going outdoors. And the little germs that cause us to sneeze and feel yucky can't stay alive or reproduce as well in cold temperatures. So get outside and don't catch a cold!
2. Think of all the calories you're burning. We tend to feel a little heavier after the holidays, so a lot of time shivering from the lower thermometer will actually help you shed some unwanted pounds.
3. Speaking of the holidays, many of us need a holiday from the holidays. Re-entry to the "real world" of January and work and the like is difficult. When it's too cold to do anything, we may just be forced to do something that we are getting less and less good at - relaxing. Perhaps by a fire. Perhaps in a chalet. Perhaps under a cozy duvet. Perhaps on the sofa with that book you got for Christmas and weren't anticipating reading until the summer.
4. While you relax, enjoy a hot beverage of your choice. Tea, coffee (we're the world's top consumers, next to China), a toddy (not just for the sick), mulled wine... Hot water and lemon is a great tonic for your body, and your soul too, as you watch the snow fall outside.
5. Depending on where you do your "relaxing," you could help solve the problem of underpopulation. There's always a wee baby boom just after school starts, as all the merry-makers on the holidays found fun and interesting ways to keep warm...
6. In keeping with the bed theme - it's a good time to indulge in something our ancestors did all the time - heat the bed. Try an electric blanket, or slip a hot water bottle under the covers before you crawl in. Nothing beats that warm spot when your nose is still cold.
7. If you're a fashionista, then this could be just the time for you to strut your stuff and really show the world your outdoorsy look. Sport a toque, scarf and mittens like no one else can. Those clunky, ugly-but-oh-so-warm snowmobile boots are about to put Jimmy Choo to shame...
8. It's the best time of the year to catch a sunrise. Sunrise happens relatively later in the morning. You can get a good lie in and still be up in time to make an item 4 and marvel in the start of a brand new day. You'll go to work feeling like you connected with nature, and that peace will follow you through the day.
9. You can see a film guilt-free. Anything you want to catch up on. Start on Saturday morning, finish Sunday night - you won't even know what the weather's doing outside.
10. If you are escaping to warmer climes, this is the time to feel smug about your impending hot weather holiday. Toques off to you. We'll keep the seat warm for you.



Letters to the Editor

If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck...

When referring to the genocide of the Palestinian people, our local paper thus far has only mentioned the Oct. 7 attack on Israelis by Hamas. My question is, why is that? When will we read reporting on what is happening to Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli Defense Force?

The term 'apartheid' is defined as a set of legal policies that segregate one racial group from another. Amnesty International (an NGO specializing in human rights) identifies the Israeli state as one that practices an apartheid regime on Palestinians.

The practice of apartheid has relations to other ducks...genocide, colonization, and ethnic cleansing.

Currently, in the Israeli occupation of Palestine, there is a genocide taking place in Gaza. We live in an age where we don't have to wait for traditional sources of news to inform us - or sometimes misrepresent information to us - of what's going on. Our social media feeds are flooded with images and videos of genocide on the ground.

Since October, the Israel Defence Force has killed almost 25,000 Palestinians living in Gaza. From the old to the young, from civilians trying to flee to journalists reporting on the ground. Some of these people were patients in hospitals trying to receive life-saving care, the smallest ones were babies in incubators. And we are watching this, live on our phones, across continents and an ocean.

We make vows in November for Remembrance Day to never forget

the cost that has been paid for fighting for liberation, justice, and peace. In John Wood's comic from the Nov. 9 issue, a cartoon character reads a newspaper that says, 'News: Israel and Hamas Still At War in Gaza.' On one side of the character, 'Lest we forget' is posted on a sign and on the other side is another character that has said, "I think we already have."

I don't think forgetting is the true issue here.

The world over has seen barbarous acts of one group oppressing, subjugating, displacing, dehumanizing, and annihilating another group. And the world, over time, has asked itself, 'How did people condone these acts as they were happening?' I think it starts with actively not talking about what's actually going on - which I hope this local paper will take steps towards rectifying. And one step more disturbingly beyond that, it continues with not practicing critical thinking and being propagandized.

In the past two months of thousands of Palestinian civilian deaths at the hands of the Israeli Defence Force, calling what has been going on a genocide and calling for a ceasefire has been erroneously and egregiously conflated with being anti-Semitic.

On Nov. 17, Nada Tarbush, Palestinian representative to the United Nations (U.N.), addressed the international organization with these words: "Palestine has always been multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious. People of Jewish faith have lived in historic Palestine as Palestinians for centuries. We consider them to be our brothers

and sisters. And since the memory of the Holocaust has been invoked, let us also say loud and clear, we have the greatest of solidarity with both the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. It was not Palestinians that committed that horrific genocide, but the fascist forces that spawned from Europe... We are united with those hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world, including from organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace, If Not Now, Na'amud UK, who are calling out this genocide and chanting in the streets of New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Sydney, Toronto, and all major western cities so that their governments can hear, "Not in our name, end the genocide in Gaza." With them, we stand together to end this pain and suffering..."

In reflection on the Palestinian people, Tarbush declared to the U.N. that, "the Palestinian people are a people who refuse to disappear. And your nuclear threats, and your bombs, and your tanks, and your bulldozers will never break the Palestinian people's will to be free, and to live in the dignity and peace to which all people are entitled."

What is currently being done to Palestinians looks like, moves like, and sounds like genocide. You don't need a *Sibley Guide* to be able to identify this duck. When referring to the "Israel and Hamas" war, I implore our local paper to amplify the voices of Palestinians who are calling for an end to what is actually going on in Gaza - a genocide. Ceasefire now.

Name withheld upon valid request
Uxbridge

The **Uxbridge Cosmos**

Publisher/Editor: Lisha Van Nieuwenhove 905-852-1900
Advertising/Sales: 905-852-1900

38 Toronto Street North, Unit One, Uxbridge Ontario L9P 1E6
E-mail: Lvann@thecosmos.ca Website: Thecosmos.ca

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Friday to 4 p.m.

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Am I wrong?

column by Roger Varley

Before you start griping...

You don't need me or anyone else to tell you times are tough. Skyrocketing food and housing costs have hit us all, telecom prices continue to rise, gas isn't cheap and so on. No wonder a lot of us gripe about the strain it puts on our wallets.

In the near future, based on past experience, there is going to be a lot of griping when Uxbridge council passes the 2024 budget. That's because, as councillor Willie Popp, chair of the finance committee, has warned a couple of times, it is going to be difficult to not go over last year's property tax increase of 5.9 per cent.

It's easy to gripe, especially when you haven't sat through all the budget discussions. I've griped in the past myself, but usually it has been about council adding items from a wish list - (they hate that term) - that increases the tax levy. But on the whole, council tackles every department budget individually, raising questions about proposed expenditures, asking if there are other ways of doing things to reduce costs. In defending their proposed budgets, department heads almost always point to things beyond their control: increased costs for supplies, climbing hydro rates, higher contracting fees and, quite often, meeting requirements from higher levels of government.

However, unlike the federal and provincial governments, municipal governments are prohibited by law from running deficits. We all know of the billions of dollars in deficits registered by the provincial government every time it brings down a budget. But heaven forbid that local councils go even one dollar into deficit.

A lot of the expenditures put forward by the various departments rely heavily on grants from the two senior levels of government. But when those payments are less than expected - or even disappear completely - it puts added pressure on the municipality. For example, the committee was told last week that a grant from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund will be about \$140,000 less than expected, and the township will receive about \$30,000 less than expected from the federal gas tax. Imagine what it would do

to your finances if the year-end bonus you were waiting for was way under what you were hoping for.

And councillors don't just sit there and take everything at face value. Last week, councillor Todd Snooks noticed what amounted to a clerical error in the public works budget which, when corrected, took \$179,000 out of the mix. Admittedly, the error would have been caught eventually, but it shows the councillors are paying attention.

On top of that, there are demands (requests) from the public that they have to deal with. Time and again, council is asked to waive fees for use of municipal facilities and, whenever possible, council will acquiesce. Usually the request is made for a worthwhile cause, but in such cases the township still has related costs, such as heating and janitorial services. Public works always has a list of roads and sidewalks that are in need of repair or replacement, but there is always someone who is angry that their road, their sidewalk, is not included on the list.

The bottom line is that almost every township department is predicting an increase in operating costs this year, just as almost every household is faced with higher costs. Households can lower their costs somewhat by cutting back on frills and even, at times, by eliminating some essentials. But council can't do that. There is little in the budget that could be described as "frills" and eliminating essentials just doesn't enter the discussion. Snow plows have to clear our roads and roads have to be kept in a reasonable state of repair or the township could face lawsuits. Facilities have to be well maintained in order to realize revenue. And revenue is needed to keep the tax levy as low as possible.

I'm not expert and I hope I'm wrong, but I am predicting a property tax increase in the neighbourhood of 6.2 per cent. If I should be correct, expect to hear a lot of howling. But it seems to me that if you want to howl, maybe you should consider running for council yourself and see how you handle the budget.

Tell me, am I wrong?



The Barris Beat

column by Ted Barris

Putting a face to a name

For some, the new year means resolutions, diets, workouts or turning over a new leaf. For me, perhaps because I'm a details person, January means ensuring that household services continue to arrive and that I'm living up to annual commitments. Among them, as usual, I stopped by the township office to pay the annual licence fee for our dog, Jazz. The clerk said the past few years Uxbridge has contracted that service out to Docupet, an online service in Kingstons.

"That's fine," I said, "but I'd prefer to pay you."

"It's easier if you go online," she said.

"Maybe, but if I pay you locally, in a way I'm ensuring you keep your job."

I've always maintained that the best customer service happens face-to-face. I've often written in this column about the erosion of that human contact in modern society. It may be more convenient to sit at a computer to conduct your day-to-day business. But certainly the past few years of the pandemic have shown how remote communication - wireless bill payment, Uber booking, artificial intelligence substitution and online ordering - have become so faceless. It may be simpler to deal with the world from the palm of your hand, but it's also ruined our social skills if not dehumanized us completely. I truly believe that a small community survives - indeed thrives - when people in both the civil service and the private sector keep storefront operations functioning.

I'm sure everyone remembers how we all flocked to the ease of Zoom when COVID-19 arrived in March 2020, just under four years ago. When medical science told us to self-isolate, wireless science showed us we could have the next best thing: artificial face-to-face contact with family, friends, coworkers, business associates and educators. The Ontario government told us that online education was the best thing for our children - keeping them safe while keeping them tuned into their studies via the Zoom classroom. History proved that it did neither. The technology intimidated Ontario students and worse, it made them social misfits.

"Our brains were not actually designed to work that way, to learn things through two-dimensional screens for hours on end," Marjorie Robb, at the Children's Hospital of

Eastern Ontario, told the *Toronto Star* last year. In other words, by taking away human contact, she said we create a kind of social deficit in basic skills. "The skills for dealing with people (on a screen) are not the same as the skills you develop by being with real people in real time."

Long before the pandemic, and indeed as a general rule, I've always tried to make the effort to see and listen to people I deal with in person, rather than rely on a voicemail, a text or an online link. I remember when I first applied for a car loan and a mortgage back in the 1970s. I knew that I could make a more convincing argument for my reliability (or in financial terms "risk aversion") in person rather than by correspondence or referral. My theory (particularly when I was not working on salary but for freelance income) was to always give my banker a personality to relate to, not just a faceless account number. Even today, all these years later, I prefer to walk into my financial institution to make a deposit or withdrawal, as opposed to their preference that I use online banking.

Large organizations prefer online interaction to cut back on staff, reduce the number of bricks-and-mortar branches they need to maintain, and generally reduce costs. That's why I never use automated checkout at the grocery store. That's why I'll take the extra time to talk to service representatives on the phone - if they actually exist - instead of conducting my business by touch-tone dialing. Sometimes I'll even catch myself texting when it makes more sense for me to walk to or call up a person and actually talk to them. Wireless is too often faceless.

This first week of January, I also dropped into the firehall to buy my open-fire burning permit. The receptionist greeted me, then asked me to fill in the form, and finally pay my fee by poking the application and payment through a slot in the protective glass between us. When I did, she looked at the form, smiled and said, "That's why I recognized you. I read your column all the time."

"Thanks," I said and I thought, if nothing else, we've put a face to a name. And that's never a bad thing.

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Urban provincial park will come in phases

Conrad Boyce
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

One of the principal things Uxbridgeans may be wondering about Uxbridge's new urban provincial park, announced last spring and discussed in an open house at Uxbridge Secondary School in October, is what land will be included. As may be suspected with a project that involves multiple levels of government,

as well as various other agencies and conservation groups, the answer is not straightforward. The *Cosmos* asked Colleen Baskin, recently seconded part-time from the Township to the park project as project manager, to give us an introduction to the process. This is what she provided:

At this point, things have not progressed enough where the various public land-owners can talk about future land-transfers to the park, but I can describe what we are working on.

There is a working group of public land-owners which includes TRCA, the Region of Durham, LSRCA and the Township, who are collaborating with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) to identify viable scenarios for possible future land transfers. One goal of the project is to link existing recreational and conservation spaces to each other so that the whole is better than the

sum of the parts, but how that might materialize hasn't been determined yet.

The working group (the members of which are listed below) is identifying which lands are appropriate candidates, and what the terms and conditions of a potential transfer might be. Each member of that group is also working within their own organization to examine properties to determine pros and cons of transfer and will need to identify, by property parcel, specific issues to address.

Once some viable scenarios have been created, then each agency will be willing to discuss specific lands further. The public land-owners will wait to discuss specifics publicly until the bigger picture questions can be answered. There then needs to be public engagement on behalf of each agency to further understand impacts of transferring property. Any offers of land must be approved by each agency's council (or board) and then negotiated with MECP until acceptable terms are agreed upon.

So in summary, each agency in the working group is evaluating the pros and cons of including some amount of their existing public-access properties currently used for recreation and/or conservation. From a Township perspective, the McCutcheon property on Conc. 7 was donated with that goal in mind. The addition of any of these public lands would be considered an expansion to Phase 1 of the park boundaries (i.e., added to the park in the future). Phase 1 will likely consist only of lands already owned by the province, such as Gan Eden just southwest of town, and the Nesbitt Farm on Conc. 6 (where "Road to Avonlea" was filmed).

Given the amount of work required to prepare the property files and conduct public engagement, draft the proposals and get approval from council/boards, negotiate, and then subsequent administration work with land registry and regulatory processes, it is not likely that any additional lands could be officially made part of the park prior to 2026. This would be considered a Phase 2 initiative.

We have learned that TRCA spent over 10 years working on property transfers to the Rouge National Urban Park, and that some are still in process.

Some other things to keep in mind:

- The park is still a proposal.
- There are no plans to expropriate any property for the park.
- The park (if approved) will consist of non-contiguous parcels of land

...continued on page 8

CARL B. CORNELL

January 26, 1938 - November 9, 2023

The family of Carl Cornell invites you to a Celebration of his Life at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #170, 109 Franklin Street, Uxbridge, on Friday, January 26, 2024, from 3-6 p.m. (Eulogies and toasts will begin at 4 p.m.)

Please join us to share stories and raise a glass to our Dad, Poppa, Brother, Uncle and Dear Friend, and celebrate a life well lived.



John Anthony Gallé

April 30, 1943 - January 13, 2024

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the peaceful passing of John Gallé, at the age of 80, on January 13, 2024, surrounded by family.



Devoted husband to Isabel. Loving father of Susan, Bill (Carmen), Annie (Mike), Andrew (Belinda) and Michael (Erin). Cherished Papa of Sarah, Christine, Jessica, Emily, Tyler, Tessa and Lily. Beloved brother to Anne Gallé and uncle to Jennifer Gallé (Mark) and daughter, Aila, of Prince Edward Island. John will be greatly missed by many other family members and friends.

Born in Durban, South Africa, his childhood was spent in places like Egypt, England, India, the Maritimes and Québec. He lived his adult life in the Montréal area, then on to Uxbridge, Ontario, which was his home for 20 years before moving to Manilla and, finally, Lindsay.

John was only 15 years old when he started dating the love of his life, Isabel Ranger. They met in Dorval, Québec. Married on February 6, 1965, becoming partners in life for 65 years. They complimented each other perfectly. Their marriage produced five children and seven grandchildren.

John held many titles throughout his working career at CIL, ICI and SAP including computer chief of production & sales, project implementation consultant, CFO, project manager (distribution & IT), and production manager. He worked tirelessly and was respected by his colleagues, many of whom became lifelong friends. John retired from ICI Canada in December, 1995, and joined SAP Canada as a senior consultant. He stayed with SAP until his full retirement in December of 1998.

Retiring at a young age, John was able to spend many years enjoying his hobbies, which included camping, astronomy, travelling, restoring a 1959 Triumph TR-3 and motorcycling (if only to keep up with Isabel, who was a passionate biker). Most of all, John spent as much time as possible enjoying his family. His grandchildren were the absolute light of his life.

To say John will be missed is an understatement. He was the wise, strong and loving pillar of the family.

A visitation will take place at the Stoddart Funeral Home, 24 Mill Street, Lindsay, on Friday, January 19, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., until time of service at 1 p.m. Interment to follow at St. Mary's Cemetery.

The family would like to thank the staff of the Geriatric Assessment Behavioural Unit at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, and the Palliative Care Unit at the Ross Memorial Hospital for their compassionate care and support.

As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations made to Community Care Hospice Service would be appreciated by the family.

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In Loving Memory of John Henry Webster

February 25, 1931 - January 15, 2024

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of John Henry 'Hank' Webster, in his 93rd year, on Monday, January 15, 2024, at the Uxbridge Hospital. Hank was a lifelong resident of Uxbridge; he was born on the family farm on Hwy #47 east of Hwy 23.



Hank was married to his loving wife Donna (née Greig) for 54 years. He had one son, Ronald John Webster (Marilyn) of Victoria, British Columbia, and his two granddaughters, Danni and Lacey Webster.

Hank was predeceased by his parents John and Myrtle Webster, his older sister Evelyn Michie (Bob), and his younger brother Gordon Webster. He is survived by niece Mary Anne Richardson (Jack), sons R.J. and Shawn, his sister-in-law Betty and his nephew Wayne Webster. He will be missed by his wife Donna, his large extended Greig family and many friends.

He was a mechanic at Williamson and following his retirement mastered skills of carpentry, furniture construction, antique tractor restoration and building model wooden vehicles.

Visitation will take place at Low & Low Funeral Home, 23 Main Street South, Uxbridge, 905-852-3073, on Thursday, January 18, 2024, from 6-8 p.m. Funeral service will be held on Friday, January 19, 2024, at 2 p.m., in the Low & Low Funeral Home Chapel with a visitation 2 hours prior.

Donations in Hank's memory can be made to the Uxbridge Hospital Foundation. Family & friends are invited to send condolences & special memories by visiting www.lowandlow.ca

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Connecting with the Region

with Regional Councillor Bruce Garrod

What to look forward to in 2024

When this series of articles was launched over a year ago, the intent was to establish a new mode to communicate how Uxbridge Township fits into, and is supported by Durham Region. It has been suggested that occasional updates looking at the broader challenges the Region faces would be useful. Entering into 2024, this month's column will provide a high-level departmental sense of the work that lies ahead.

Durham Region is one of the fastest growing regions in North

America. It's current population of over 700,000 is expected to balloon to 1.2 million in the next 25 years. The vast majority of this population will be in the five southern municipalities. Due to its proximity on the Oak Ridges Moraine and wastewater management restrictions, Uxbridge is expected to continue to have among the slowest growth in the GTHA.

Durham Region Transit (DRT) ridership has completely recovered from COVID reductions and now consistently operates at record levels. All

vehicles and staff are fully deployed each day. Management is being forced to redirect vehicles from lower-use areas to zones where riders are unable to board already full buses. The focus for Uxbridge is to increase the number of on-demand vehicles and improve connectivity to transportation hubs in south Durham and York Region.

Homelessness and mental health issues are at unprecedented levels in Durham Region. The causes are well documented and, despite the Region bringing more facilities online, including in Beaverton to support North Durham, further supports are required. The Region often faces community resistance when new facilities are proposed.

Social Services is also leading the construction of a new long-term care home in North Pickering. The new LTC home in Uxbridge is part of the hospital redevelopment project.

My October column focused on regional policing. According to Chief Peter Moreira, DRPS has fewer uniformed officers per capita than its comparators. The Region is facing increased crime, significantly more traffic and ever more complex situations to manage. Similarly, EMS resourcing is fully utilized. 2024 budget deliberations have specific action items to increase staffing in these critical areas. The chief recognizes the North Durham challenge of reckless and impaired driving, and is committed to increasing enforcement.

From a public works perspective, the Region has almost 850km of regional roads. One hundred and thirty of those kilometers are in Uxbridge. Roads and buried infrastructure throughout the Region require ongoing reconstruction and expansion. Locally, construction is scheduled to begin on Durham 1 and Durham 13 next year. Excellent progress continues by Durham OneNet to provide highspeed internet to areas currently under-served. With Regional population growth comes increased demand for water, sewer and waste management. Significant investment is required at all existing water management facilities. At the Uxbridge wastewater management location, scheduled maintenance will be completed in 2024. Only marginal additional ca-

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capacity will result. Due to limited freshwater flow, there are no foreseeable plans to significantly expand capacity at this location.

The provincial government has clear goals to increase the housing supply. The southern municipalities have made pledges, tied to provincial financial support, to build a specified number of homes. Associated planning roles, once managed Regionally, are being reassigned to all local municipalities.

Residents deserve and expect responsiveness to concerns with Regional services. 311 service, established in 2023, continues to evolve to become a one-stop-shop. This service will be expanded in 2024 and broader communications will occur in parallel.

As the population blossoms, residents look for opportunities for good jobs and avoiding long commutes. Economic Development continues to lobby to attract employers to establish operations in Durham Region. Within Uxbridge, the focus is on helping new and existing businesses attract and maintain skilled staff.

Conservation Authorities, funded by various regional governments, face growing challenges to respond to the environmental impact of population growth. Uxbridge belongs to and has regional representation at the LSRCA, CLOCA and TRCA.

Durham Region is an incredible place to call home. It provides endless opportunities to work, raise a family and participate in every imaginable leisure activity. Maintaining the existing services while responding to the challenges of fast-paced growth is being dealt with head-on by regional council and staff.

Urban park plans, from page 6

(parcels won't be all together, but might be connected by trails or road access).

- Landowners who are interested in having some or all of their private property placed in conservation protection or included as part of the park can speak to a member of the land acquisition team about options and viability.

- There may be multiple expansions to the Park boundary over time and these will likely be completed in batches. This could continue for many years.

Members of the Working Group: MECP, Township of Uxbridge, Region of Durham, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Green Durham (NGO), Nature Conservancy of Canada (NGO), Schad Foundation (NGO).