



1994: Grand River closer to heritage designation

Jim Quantrell, At A Glance

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Cambridge archivist Jim Quantrell takes our readers back for a glance at events which occurred 10, 15 and 20 years ago.

EVENTS FROM 20 YEARS AGO

Third week of January 1989

Junior kindergarten was about to become part of Catholic education in the Region of Waterloo. At a recent meeting of the Waterloo Region Separate School Board, trustees had recommended that a junior kindergarten program be offered at six schools throughout the region during the 1990-1991 academic year. If no significant problems arose, an additional 19 schools would offer the program in 1991 and another 18 schools would adopt the program in 1992. Elizabeth Witmer, the chairperson of the Waterloo County Board of Education, noted that the public school was not yet offering the program due to the lack of room in the public schools. The chairperson of the separate board noted that the program was to be offered only in schools where classroom space was available. The cost of the program for 1990 was set at \$68,000.

In its second round of budget discussions, the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) gave two area parks slated for closure a stay of execution for at least another year. In efforts to reduce the GRCA's operating deficit, executive members had considered shutting down Kitchener's Kiwanis Park and Cambridge's Shade's Mills Conservation Area. The decision to close the parks was put off to permit staff members at the parks to meet with city officials to see whether some form of operating agreement could be worked out. In supporting the decision to hold off closing the parks, the GRCA chairperson noted that it would be unfair to close the parks this coming year since doing so would give people who relied on the parks no real notice of closure, nor any real opportunity to find alternate sites for their activities.



EVENTS FROM 15 YEARS AGO

Third week of January 1994

The freezing winter temperatures and heavy snowfall that had gripped the Waterloo Region since Christmas were showing no signs of easing off. According to weather experts, the cold weather was tying or setting record temperatures for daytime highs and overnight lows. Daytime high temperatures of -19 degrees C broke the previous record lows for daytime high temperatures of -18 degrees C set in 1984 and -16 degrees C set in 1976. Overnight lows of -28 degrees C tied the 1984 record and more cold weather was on the way. Thus far in January, the area had received an accumulation of 48 centimetres of snow and was expecting more. The average total accumulation for the whole month of January was 40 cm. The record January snowfall was set in 1944 when 99 cm of snow fell on the region.

The Grand River came one step closer to designation as members of the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board put their stamp of approval on the application for designation. The recommendation for designation was then to go to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the federal Minister of Canadian Heritage for their endorsement. That process was expected to take about a month. It was reported that the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), in conjunction with the provincial and federal governments, had spent about \$420,000 and six years extensively researching the river system as an economic, recreational and environmental resource. The province was responsible for half of those costs, while the GRCA and the federal government split the remainder of the tab. Designation of the Grand River was expected to create a tourist draw that would bring millions of tourist dollars into the watershed.

EVENTS FROM 10 YEARS AGO

Third week of January 1999

Cambridge had endured a significant snowfall. While the exact amount of snow was lacking in the reports, the Cambridge Fire Department was advising parents not to allow their children to play in snow tunnels. It was noted that a collapse could potentially bury a child under tons of snow. On the positive side, at least for law enforcement, the fresh snow allowed police to track thieves who made off with a snow mobile that had stolen from a Saginaw Parkway home. The fresh tracks in the snow led police on a 15-kilometre search that ended on Highway 97, where the thieves and the stolen goods were found.

A city councillor who was “not interested in seeing Cambridge become a high-rise town” was to introduce a motion that would limit the height of buildings in the city to six storeys. While high-rise apartments and condominiums had not been a problem in the past, over the previous 18 months developers had approached the city to revise plans of approved subdivisions. Most of the requests for changes involved smaller lots and higher density it was feared that, in the long run, the requests for higher density housing would lead to requests for higher buildings.

City council was being advised not to be afraid to go into debt again if need be. That was the opinion of the economic development advisory committee (EDAC) following a presentation and review of the 1999 capital

budget. City staff had recommended putting one per cent of the budget (\$350,000) into a reserve fund for repairs and renovations to the city's 100 municipally-owned buildings. The EDAC chair advised that this figure be, at a minimum, doubled to \$700,000.

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