
1998: Council vetoes downtown canal

JIM QUANTRELL, AT A GLANCE

Published on Mar 13, 2008

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 March 1988

More than 150 members of business, church and labour groups rallied to voice their opposition to the introduction of widespread Sunday shopping in the city. Opponents argued that expanded Sunday shopping would benefit only the large chain stores and would do harm to small "mom and pop operations" and convenience stores. In a survey conducted by the chamber of commerce, 78.3 per cent of respondents were opposed to Sunday shopping on religious, humanitarian and economic grounds. Those in favour pointed to freedom of choice and less government meddling in their personal lives as reasons to favour the move to Sunday shopping. Many supporters of Sunday shopping pointed out that with both adults in many households holding down full-time jobs the time available for shopping was at a premium and Sunday store openings would be a definite benefit.

City and regional leaders met with provincial Minister of Transportation Ed Fulton in an 11th-hour bid to save the designation plan for the Highway 8 by-pass around the west end of Cambridge. Fulton had announced that he intended to remove the freeway designation plan in a move that would allow the development of lands formerly earmarked for the bypass. Both regional and city leaders were disturbed by the decision that actually killed two freeway projects - the provincial bypass and the region's east-west arterial road. Both had been in municipal official plans for years.

EVENTS FROM 15 YEARS AGO

Third week of March 1993

After going three years without any pay increases in spite of recommendations that they take one recommended by an independent task force, council members finally voted themselves a one per cent wage increase. As a result, a local councillor's remuneration jumped from \$11,900 a year to \$12,000. A number of councillors felt that the pay they received was adequate for their part-time positions but argued that the mayor's salary should be higher than the \$38,700 base pay assigned to the position. The mayor also received allowances for serving on the regional council and the hydro commission. The base salary paid to the mayor of Cambridge was the second lowest in the area.

EVENTS FROM 10 YEARS AGO

Third week of March 1998

In spite of council's decision not to build a canal along Main Street, the Cambridge councillor who proposed the "off the wall" idea declared that the fight "ain't over yet, this is just the beginning". During a slide presentation in support of her concept the councillor showed how San Antonio, Texas had used a canal to rejuvenate its downtown. She also dusted off plans drawn up for Cambridge in 1983 that proposed creating a canal system in the downtown core running down Thorne and Warnock streets. In the end, council decided to pump \$150,000 into a simpler plan to re-energize Main Street.

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