
1998: New use for old Inglis plant

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

Second week of April 1988

Council adopted five amendments to its bylaw to regulate signs in the city but it appeared unlikely that the changes would greatly reduce the number of requests council would receive from business and industry for amendments in the application of the bylaw. The sign bylaw had originally been passed on Feb. 20, 1981 and had undergone a number of revisions since that time. Changes to the bylaw included reducing the setback required for freestanding signs and increasing the maximum changeable copy area allowed on freestanding or fascia signs. One critic of the bylaw while recognizing that council might have something to say about the size and placement of signs in reference to the esthetics of the city as a whole city officials should not be concerning themselves with how the messages on the signs were presented. The bylaw stipulated that a wall sign, other than a fascia industrial directory on the side of a building, must consist of individual or script letters having no common background unless that background was transparent. That requirement, the critic argued, appeared an encroachment on the area of individual taste and creativity.

The chairperson of the Waterloo County Board of Education, Elizabeth Witmer, was complaining of insufficient funding for education that was supplied by the provincial Liberal government. Provincial officials had mandated a number of programs that the board was to deliver but neglected to provide adequate funding to cover the costs of those programs. Because the province did not pay enough of the cost the board would be forced to get the money directly from local taxpayers. At a time when there was increasing pressure to keep costs down this was something local trustees were loath to do and felt it was a burden unfairly thrust upon them. Though the Ministry of Education had promised to provide local boards with an increase in funding of 7.2 per cent over the previous year's budget the government, in a recent throne speech, had provided for only a 2.7 per cent increase in educational spending.

EVENTS FROM 15 YEARS AGO

Second week of April 1993

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) was given the task of creating a new economic strategy for the city. According to an EDAC representative, various groups and organizations had come up with plans to help pull the city out of a recession and put the community on the road to prosperity. The committee was now proposing to pull all of those ideas together to create a large co-ordinated package. The primary goal of the strategy was to find new ways of creating jobs for Cambridge workers left unemployed by the recession.

The Region of Waterloo unveiled plans for a new \$4.8-million water main project that was to see King and Fountain streets reduced to a single lane in each direction for at least part of the coming summer. The project was part of a two-pronged plan to ensure the city's water supply. The first phase of the development involved running a pipeline into the city from Kitchener by way of Freeport and hooking into the Mannheim water supply near the Toyota plant. The second phase involved running a second 18-inch water main from Doon into Riverside Park to link into the city's water supply.

EVENTS FROM 10 YEARS AGO

Second week of April 1998

The long vacant Inglis plant at the intersection of Pinebush Road and Franklin Boulevard was to get a new resident as Loblaw's Companies Ltd. leased the space for a new distribution centre. The company's senior vice-president of logistics reported that 50 new jobs would be created by the new warehouse operation that was to serve all of eastern Canada. Activity at the former Inglis plant was expected to begin immediately and the warehouse facility was expected to be operational by the summer. Eventually the operation was to occupy 277,000 square feet of the plant.

The dream of creating "Canada's Naturium" came a step closer as council deferred the \$15,000 development charges and waived the expected \$20,000 building permit fees on the proposed greenhouse complex to showcase butterflies from around the world. A 116-acre site had been purchased on Kossuth Road and plans had been drawn up for an 8,000-square-foot greenhouse. All the necessary approvals were now in place and construction of the first phase of the project was expected to begin later in the summer.

More often than not a growing population is considered a good thing but for Cambridge being redefined as a "smaller" community had definite advantages. As a result of efforts by Cambridge's MPP and the city's mayor, Cambridge was reclassified by the province as a smaller city and thus became eligible for larger grants to assist in offsetting the costs of provincial downloads of services to municipalities. Based on its true population Cambridge was entitled to just \$110,000 in provincial grants but by being reclassified the city was now to receive over \$2.6 million in grants.

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