



1988: Proposals sought for Capitol Theatre building

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 August 1988

The city's business development department was accepting new proposals for the use of the boarded up Capitol Theatre building on Water Street South. The city had purchased the property from Famous Players a year earlier and, since then, city staff had "supervised the shape the 56-year-old building will take through three proposal calls". By "re-marketing" the building, the city hoped to get developers to propose something more imaginative for the city to do with the property than simply selling or demolishing the structure. The city had elicited a response from Rosssdeutscher Holdings Ltd. following an earlier call for proposals the previous fall. That deal had progressed relatively well until an unsolvable snag led to an unravelling of the deal. While redevelopment discussions were proceeding the building that had once made a significant contribution to the Water Street streetscape now stood empty and forlorn, lacking its marquee, much of its original faade and its once gracious interior trappings.

Knob Hill Farms Ltd. was cutting it close with respect to construction deadlines for its \$20-million Pinebush Road superstore. The company had finally submitted a "letter of guarantee" for \$304,000 to cover its share of the \$1.2-million reconstruction costs. The region's roads department had requested a more financial secure "letter of credit" and negotiations were underway to upgrade to financial commitment. In the meantime, regional officials were going ahead with discussions with the contractor for the roadwork. The 27,880-square-metre superstore was supposed to be complete by Jan. 11, but it was thought that construction would not begin for another four weeks at least. Delays were attributed to ongoing discussions between the region and Knob Hill Farms to determine who was to pay for the widening of Pinebush Road, which was made necessary by the construction of the superstore. Initially the region had asked Knob Hill Farms to pay \$889,000 to the reconstruction. Under the most recent agreement, the region, the City of Cambridge, Knob Hill Farms and Cadillac-Fidra, owners of the mega-mall site across Pinebush Road from the Knob Hill Farms site, were to share the costs of the roadwork.

EVENTS FROM 15 YEARS AGO

Third week of August 1993

The social contract was blamed for a planned four-day shutdown of the city's transit service at Christmas. Under the terms of the social contract agreement between the city and union local representing the transit workers, Cambridge Transit would cease operations between Dec. 28 and 31 in order to schedule the unpaid days off for employees that were required to meet transit's \$71,297 share of the cost cutting target required by the province. The transit terminal was to remain open during those four days to allow for connections with inter-city bus service, but there was to be no city bus service at all.

Single sculler Bill Ingraham of the Cambridge Rowing Club won the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta C-category (ages 43-49) 1,000-metre race.

EVENTS FROM 10 YEARS AGO***Third week of August 1998***

The first Rock the Mill Festival was set for launch at Mill Race Park. The organizers of the free rock festival hoped to attract 1,000 to 3,000 young people to the event that they hoped would gain positive exposure for youth culture in the city.

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