



1995: Hospital in deficit

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.

20 YEARS AGO - Third week of June 1990

Although city council had decided not to support a \$20-million museum and Omnimax Theatre project for downtown Cambridge, that did not mean that an environmental resource centre that was to be part of the museum project could not be built.

At least that was the opinion of one member of council who was also a director of the proposed Environmental Resource Centre of Cambridge. The centre was intended to provide a permanent forum for industries to display their innovations in environment-friendly technology and to promote their environmental policies and practices. Supporters estimated that the centre would require at least 15,000 square feet of permanent display space and would likely not seek any financial assistance from the city.

The Region of Waterloo was about to embark on a major new study of Cambridge's road needs but it promised to be many years before city residents saw any significant improvements resulting from the study. The \$200,000 study was to be undertaken by Proctor and Redfern Ltd. and was to re-examine the need for additional arterial roads in the city. It was also to determine the most appropriate solutions to the city's road woes and map out general route locations, functional design, construction staging, property requirements and cost estimates.

15 YEARS AGO - Third week of June 1995

Council approved a zone change application that would allow a seven-storey high-rise condominium behind St. Luke's Place in Hespeler. The decision came after weeks of debate between representatives of St. Luke's Place and area residents who had complained that the tower was too high, provided for too high a population density and was simply not compatible with the neighbourhood. A spokesperson for the developers noted that ten informal neighbourhood meetings had been held and the developers had made all the compromises that were possible while maintaining the economic feasibility of the project.

A shortfall in anticipated revenue and the postponement of government funding were major contributors to the Cambridge Memorial Hospital's \$1-million deficit. This was the second year in a row in which hospital expenses had exceeded revenues by a fairly significant 2.7 per cent of revenues. In attempts to reduce expenses and thereby minimize the deficit hospital staff had reduced the average length of stay in acute care areas from 5.62 days in 1993 to 5.52 days.

Galt Collegiate Institute opened its newly created archives to the public in conjunction with the Heritage Cambridge downtown guided walking tours. A display of old graduation photos and team photos dating back to the late 1800s could be seen at the school each Sunday until September. Former students and school staff had been working for several weeks on cataloguing and preparing the archival material for the display.

10 YEARS AGO - Third week of June 2000

Despite many indications that members of Cambridge city council were unhappy with the options being presented for regional government restructuring and were considering leaving regional government and "going it alone" those attending an all-councils meeting on restructuring were "surprised, shocked, horrified and taken aback" by the announcement of the city's desire to be independent. The decision to announce the proposal came after North Dumfries mayor Joe Martens stated that the township wanted nothing to do with a proposal the Cambridge and North Dumfries merge to form a municipality independent of the Region of Waterloo. One Cambridge councillor, while favouring independence if all other options failed, felt that the announcement was premature and created "a dangerous situation".

It was announced that Cruickston Park was to remain in local hands when the heritage property was purchased

by Mark Fretwurst and Jan Chaplin. The North Dumfries couple along with a small group of investors were successful in their bid to purchase the 913-acre farm from the University of Guelph. The sale price was not disclosed but it was reported that it was "more than the \$2.5-million that the property had been assessed at". In 1996 Fretwurst and Chaplin had purchased a 53-acre portion of the estate that included the Cruickston Park manor house. The couple intended to place the majority of the lands in a charitable trust as a means of preserving its unique qualities.

A consultant working for the city unveiled "an exciting final draft" of their plans to revitalize the river in the downtown core. The changes were presented as a number of small projects that could be accomplished over time. Prices for the multi-year projects were estimated in the multi-millions but how much would come out of city coffers was unknown. It was anticipated that part of the work would be paid for by private sector investment or other partners. Among the anticipated projects were a new landing at water level just south of the mill race in Mill Race Park; a Discovery Centre that would depict the history, culture and environment of the Grand River; an elevated boardwalk overhanging the river between the old library and Main Street bridge and a new water level walkway.

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