

Scheduling

by SHERALYN ROMAN

I don't envy the task of town planners; truthfully I don't know much about the role of a town planner. Perhaps scheduling isn't even one of their responsibilities. If it isn't, I wonder who IS responsible and I feel virtually certain it isn't someone who is a parent. Scheduling is a monumental task, involving a myriad of possible outcomes and it's one we rely upon daily to exist. It's a task that parents have down to a science, often even "scheduling" for the possibility of a change in schedule. With so many apps, tools and project management software now available to help with the process, why is it so difficult for the town to get scheduling right?

I recall fondly (yes, I am being sarcastic) the fiasco of Old School Rd several years ago. Ripped up between Heart Lake and Kennedy and then again between Kennedy and Highway 10 (or perhaps it was the other way around, it's all a blur now) residents were left with an east, then west, option for exiting their neighbourhood being shuttered for months. Briefly re-opened, it seemed like the very next summer it was closed again for more work. Why? Was there a reason all the work couldn't be done at once and how much rework had to be completed? We'll never know and I'm sure at the time there was a very good reason but one wonders if better scheduling coordination might have played a role in increasing efficiencies and reducing downtime?

Not wanting to lay all of the blame at the feet of town officials, a reasonable person might also acknowledge the role that other towns and cities (like Brampton), the Region of Peel, and even entities like the MTO might also play in scheduling. How else to explain the nightmare that has resulted in an already catastrophic intersection at Mayfield Rd. and Kennedy Rd. being reduced to the hot mess it is today and has been for months? It doesn't matter how many words are at my disposal, "hot mess" is the only adequate (and newspaper-friendly) description for the chaos that now exists. Even if Caledon is not solely responsible, please explain to me how, in this age of advanced tools for planning, scheduling and communications, the work required to fix whatever the heck they are fixing here, could not have been better coordinated?

This isn't just a road issue either. The latest brouhaha over planning finds us contemplating the closure of four different parks while work is being done to repair or replace equipment and make upgrades. Now, I'm not naïve, of course. This work cannot be done in the middle of winter with snow and ice covering playgrounds but does it need to be done in the middle of summer just as schools close and children are let loose to run wild and enjoy carefree days playing at the park? Actually, in these days of the overscheduled child are they even allowed to run wild and enjoy "carefree" days? But I digress.

The Town announced the closure of several parks, starting July 10 and running through July 31, "weather permitting" (their words) while work is done to rehabilitate them. Rehabilitation is good, timing - not so much! Obviously, the weather needs to be conducive to work being done on park equipment but since that work can only be done with the caveat of "weather permitting," the last time I checked both May and June, generally speaking, are pretty good weather months. For that matter, so too is September. What these three months also offer is the added benefit of NOT having to close parks to foot traffic in the exact two months that children are home from school and could, at least in theory, have unfettered access to them.

If you've ever known a parent with three children in sports, school, taking music lessons and requiring tutoring - who also works full time, supports an aging parent and never forgets a birthday party, a special event for friends, and who also gets the groceries, the kids' new shoes and everyone where they need to be on time, dressed appropriately with teeth brushed, a lunch and snacks packed - THAT'S the person you want for the job of town scheduler! Honestly, if parents can do it - surely the Town must be able to do a better job.