

Friends and colleagues recall contributions of Ron Hackett

Former Wellesley councillor and busy community volunteer passed away just before Christmas at the age of 80

By [Whitney Neilson](#)
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Former Wellesley Township councillor, dedicated volunteer and community supporter Ron Hackett passed away on Dec. 23. He was 80.

Hackett served three terms on Wellesley council representing Hawkesville before retiring in 2006. While he retired from politics, he certainly wasn't absent in the community. He previously served as the chair of the Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society, as well as with the Wellesley Horticultural Society, the Local Architectural Conservancy Advisory Committee, Kiwanis Transit, the Hawkesville Community Centre board and the Hawkesville Cemetery board.

His love of sports was evidenced by his commitment to the Elmira Sugar Kings as a volunteer as well as serving as a director for many years. At home games you'd often see him selling apple cider or ice cream sundaes.

Former Wellesley mayor Ross Kelterborn remembers his fellow councillor and friend fondly.

"He really represented his area and the people really well. He was a true township councillor, not only did he look after his people in his ward very well but his interests were for the betterment of the township and the region as a whole," Kelterborn said.

He notes Hackett always did his research on issues discussed at council and was adamant about getting all the facts before he made up his mind. Once he made up his mind though, that was it.

"You couldn't have got a person that was more committed to doing for the people of the township what he did. He even used to attend regional council meetings, especially when the LRT was going on to express his opinion," Kelterborn said.

He was also known as the go-to guy around town when looking for information about nearly anything in the township, which is not surprising given the variety of groups and committees he volunteered for.

"He was very influential in bringing the information to people that it was necessary for and I think of Chervin Woodworks for an example. They were looking for a place to develop anywhere and he drew them to Hawkesville. I need not say any more about the success of that particular situation," Kelterborn said.

Kelterborn recalls Hackett attempted to develop a plan for Hawkesville to include sewers so it could have become a larger, more developed area. It wasn't successful, but the effort was there.

"He was a good guy. You were lucky to have him as a friend," Kelterborn said.

Current township Mayor Joe Nowak also served on council with Hackett over a decade ago when Nowak was a councillor.

"He certainly always knew his file and I think he worked very hard. He always had the wellbeing of the community at heart, that was his nature. He was particularly strong with his interest in the historical aspect of the community," Nowak said.

He notes he had a lot of respect for the way he treated people and the way he dealt with the issues presented to council.

"I know he was well appreciated in Hawkesville. He was always there for the people," Nowak said.

Sugar Kings president Dave O'Donoghue recalls Hackett was always the first one to volunteer to help out, regardless of the task.

"More than that, though, he was an idea generator, always looking for new ways to help us raise the money needed to run the team. With Ron, though, it wasn't just about raising money, he wanted to do it in ways that would help the community, contributed to a strong partnership with the township and ways that helped provide a better fan experience," O'Donoghue said.

Hackett played a large role in the Kings' annual charity jersey auctions, always approaching council to assist with ice and rental fees for the day. He also was the driving force in changing it from a silent auction to a live auction. Both of those efforts resulted in higher proceeds. He also helped with the Home and Garden Expo and took it upon himself to bring ice cream sundaes to the home games, like he had seen other teams do. O'Donoghue says his contributions didn't go unnoticed by the team.

Kelterborn retrieves the program from Hackett's funeral, which was held in December, and reads a line from it aloud.

"'Well done, a good and thankful servant.' I thought that summed it all up for Ron. I lost a good friend," Kelterborn said, his voice breaking.

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