

Halton wants more power in police commission

By BEN DUMMETT
the Herald

Despite objections from some Halton Regional councillors, including Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller, Regional council passed a resolution calling for a restructuring of the Halton Board of Police Commissioners.

The resolution, which was originally introduced by Oakville Councillor John Graham, calls for the majority of board members to be Regional councillors.

Currently the board's membership consists of two Regional councillors and three provincial appointees. The changes would result

in four Regional councillors and three provincial appointees.

The resolution comes in the wake of the board's recommendation for a 14.9 per cent increase in the 1990 police budget.

Mayor Miller says no changes are needed to the board's composition because it is acting responsibly. He is referring specifically to the board's decision to recommend the hiring of 34 new staff members instead of following the Ontario Police Commission's recent recommendation to hire 49 new staff members.

The board's recommendation showed fiscal restraint while maintaining a reasonable quality of police protection, said Mayor Miller.

The OPC based its recommendations on the increased growth in population and the number of service calls to police in Halton.

New staff is the single largest cost in the police budget which represents well over 50 per cent of Halton's 1990 proposed tax-supported operating budget. If approved, police will spend just over \$31.6 million in 1990 compared to \$28 million spent last year.

The operating budget, including the police budget will go before council for ratification in early March.

Coun. Graham doesn't question the work of the Regional police. He says the issue is a matter of "accountability." And councillors can only be expected to be held accountable for the police budget if the majority of board members are publicly elected officials, he says.

The current elected police commissioners are Oakville Coun. Fred Oliver and Burlington Coun. James Grieve.

Both voted against the resolution

saying if passed, an "unhealthy" situation would result.

Before the board was established in 1962 it was controlled by local politicians, said Coun. Oliver, and there was "trouble almost on a daily basis."

"It (the resolution) is a step backwards."

The resolution also calls for the Ontario Solicitor General to grant Regional councillors final say over the allocation of funds to meet Halton's police needs.

Currently if Regional council objects to a proposed police budget, Halton police could appeal to the OPC. Its decision is final.



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Blaze causes \$775,000 damage to Chudleigh's

By ALAN MACKIE
the Herald

A fire destroyed the main barn and the playbarn at Chudleigh's Apple Farm on the west side of Highway 25 north of Sideroad 5, killing two animals, Feb. 13.

The \$775,000 blaze started at 4:42 p.m. and kept firefighters from Milton, Georgetown and Acton busy "throughout the night," Deputy Fire Chief Bob Hyde said.

Tammy the goat and Rambo the sheep perished in the fire, Tom Chudleigh, the owner of the farm, said. He added the two pets were well known by his regular customers.

Mac and Tosh, the two yellow Labrador dogs, were not injured, Mr. Chudleigh said.

No other injuries were reported by the fire department.

The fire trucks left the scene at about 9:45 p.m. and were forced to return at 2 a.m. to put out another fire that started from the smouldering remains of the barn, Mr. Hyde said. He added this happens frequently with barn fires but since the bulk of the burning is in the centre of the barn area there is no real danger. He said it is basically a nuisance more than a problem for the fire department once the original fire is extinguished.

"Mother Nature may very well put an end to it for us," Mr. Hyde said speaking of Wednesday night's ominous weather forecast.

The main barn housed the gift shop, the restaurant and facilities for the Chudleigh line of pies.

The Chudleigh residence adja-

cent to the main barn was saved from the fire. In total four structures were engulfed in flames.

Mr. Chudleigh said the fire was a "temporary serious setback." He said goals have already been set to continue with the operation.

The year-round operation has offered cross-country skiing since 1965. It has also allowed visitors to pick their own apples, from the nine varieties grown on the 100-acre farm, since 1967.

Pie production started again on Thursday using alternate facilities and Mr. Chudleigh has set a goal for himself of using a tent for the visitors starting today. Facilities are limited but "every day our production will be increasing," he said.

Mr. Chudleigh noted the farm will need a major facility to handle the apple crop during the late summer months. He also said some of the 144 employees of the company will have a short disruption with their jobs.

"Possibly, in two weeks they'll all return," he said.

The Ontario Fire Marshall, Gord Mugford, is investigating the blaze.



\$775,000 blaze

Four buildings were destroyed when a fire at Chudleigh's Apple Farm on Highway 25, near Milton, caused \$775,000 damage, Feb. 13. The fire started around 4:40 p.m. and continued into the evening. Three fire departments - Acton, Georgetown and Milton - were called to the scene to extinguish the blaze. Firemen had to return to the scene at 2 a.m. the next morning to extinguish a fire that started from the smouldering remains. No one was injured in the fire but two pets died: Rambo the sheep and Tammy the goat. The farm is visited by almost 500,000 people each year. The Chudleigh's has already started to rebuild the business. Pies were once again in production Feb. 15. (Herald photos by Alan Mackie)

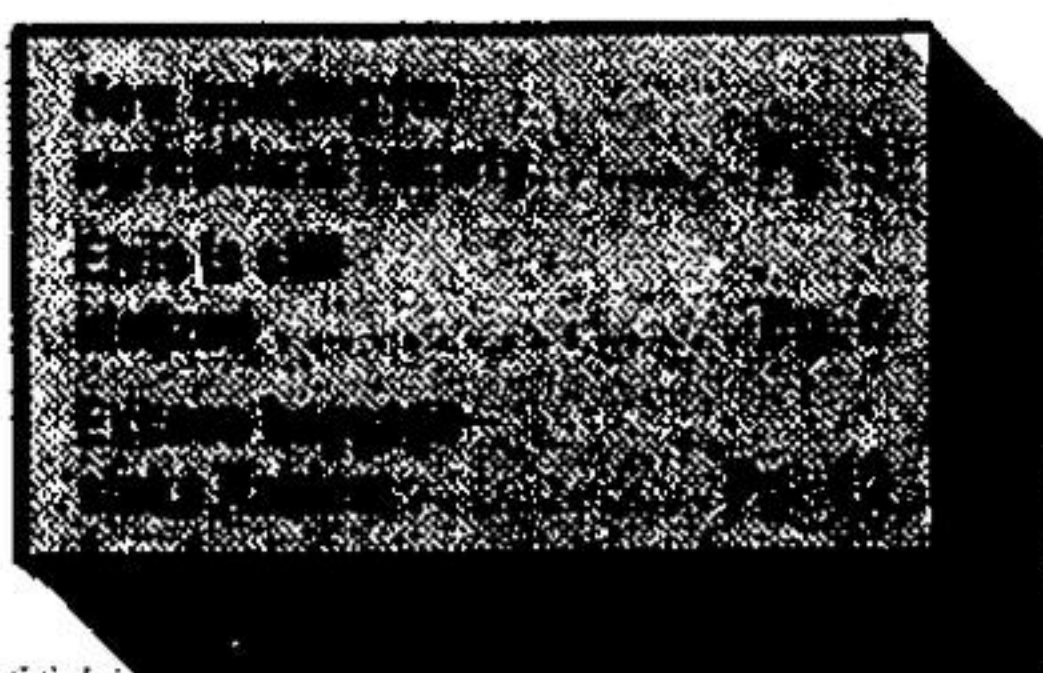
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