

Region benefits

Continued from page 1 because Georgetown taxpayers only had one collection each week. Acton workmen drive to Georgetown every day to punch a clock, then drive back to Acton to work, she added.

"You call that efficiency? I call it a lot of damn nonsense," she charged. The mayor explained the workings of the works department and said it was necessary to have one central garage where equipment is kept and where the men can be dispatched to the jobs.

Fire chief Del Cook wondered why Acton had its own full time fire chief with a car purchased by the town. The mayor answered one fire chief can't handle the whole town. Chief Mick Holmes had requested the car, he noted.

Later Chief Holmes rose to ask Mr. Cook if he was unhappy with the fire department, to which he answered "absolutely not." The chief reminded him Acton Council was making plans for a full time chief before the region came into being.

Chief Holmes wondered if Acton really had enough water on hand for the rapid development presently underway. "I am doubtful there is a source of water to supply all the development," he warned.

Regional works chairman Rattis said he wasn't aware there was any limitation on the supply of water for Acton. Alf Duddy reminded him an Acton report on the town's water situation had been filed with regional engineers.

Lawyer Ron Henry asked if regional government would "prevail" if the Conservative government lost the next election. "Is it here to stay, or just a passing fad?"

An election loss won't cancel out any present regions, MPP Kerr replied. Concern about citizen input was voiced by former councillor Norm Elliott. Acton has only three councillors at Halton Hills Council and just one at Halton Region, he noted. "You still have a great deal of local input through your local councillors," planning chairman Munro said. She said she personally favored local advisory committees on such matters as planning.

No control We have representation, but no control, chairman Dawkins said. Mr. Elliott wondered if the three official plans formerly in effect in Halton Hills are in limbo, but Mrs. Munro said they are continuing in use until the region's new official plan is finalized, likely by the end of 1976.

Bert Hinton suggested there was too much negative thinking about regional government. "We have to be more positive, and the key to it all is planning," he suggested.

Expansion Merchant Ed Bendicks wondered if the tannery will be allowed to hook its discharge into the expansion to the Acton sewage treatment plant, which Mr. Rattis had announced earlier in the meeting would soon be expanding to handle a 1,000,000 gallon per day capacity. It is presently rated at 625,000 gpd.

"Definitely, no," came the reply from the regional works committee chairman, "not in the foreseeable future." He explained the volume and the treatment needed for tannery effluent prevented the municipality from adding this waste to the plant.

Someone asked why the region didn't arrange to have the Beardmore effluent hooked in but Mr. Rattis replied, why wasn't it hooked in when Acton Council opened its own plant. Jack Carpenter said tanners in Kitchener dump their waste at the municipal sewage plants.

Lorne Younglut of Beardmore's said the tannery's sewage is pre-treated and could be at an acceptable level. Regional chairman

Masson said it's not uncommon for industries to handle their own waste treatment—in Oakville three large industries are doing this now.

Fast service Vic Bristow wanted the works chairman to promise fast service if sewers backed up into homes. His own sewers backed up once and five minutes after he called the town works superintendent, the man was at the scene and preparing to alleviate the problem. "Who do I phone and how long will it take?" he wondered.

Mr. Rattis offered a list of telephone numbers for such emergencies. There is a work force of 44 men in Halton Hills and much better equipment is available through the region now, so the town should receive better service than ever before, he said. Mr. Bristow said he would take him at his word but if his sewers ever backed up again and "if I don't get someone in 10 minutes, I'm going to get on the phone to you and you're going to clean up my mess," he warned.

"Name one region that is happy with the regional government predicament they are in," was a question from retailer Alma Sweetman, who said Acton's small-town atmosphere was being changed too rapidly. Mr. Kerr said most of the regions are new and it's pretty early to tell, but felt the Niagara and Hamilton-Norfolk regions are working out well. Metro Toronto, which is another form of regionalization, is "a roaring success," he answered.

Bring problems There are thousands of people moving to small towns to escape the cities but their influx into the smaller communities means growth and growth problems, Mr. Kerr explained. "The government is encouraging people to move out into communities like Acton and discouraging them from moving into already large cities, like Toronto, he said.

Merchant Wayne Moss felt Acton was losing services since Halton Hills was formed. The works crews used to sweep the downtown area by hand every Monday morning but last year from Victoria Day to Labor Day the Acton streets were only visited six times by the street sweeping machine. Snow removal was

also less efficient now, he charged. "Why, with all the increased manpower, can't we at least maintain the services we once had?" he asked. "It is impossible to keep our store clean due to the condition of the streets," Mr. Moss told the mayor.

Mayor Hill said he was in his office every day and would do his best about this type of complaint. "The number is 877-5185," he said. Any one can complain at a council meeting or works committee meeting if they're not happy with the services," he said.

Extra staff When Diane Spielvogel asked how all the extra staff and department heads could be justified, Mr. Kerr said that even without regional government there would be a certain amount of growth in Halton and some extra staff would be necessary. He said he couldn't promise the mill rates won't rise but he didn't think regional government was causing an "extraordinary" increase in mill rates.

He had said earlier that the 1972 residential mill rate in Acton was 90.7 mills, it dropped to 86.5 mills in 1973 and in 1974 stood at just 92.07 mills. "This represents a tax increase of roughly 1.5 per cent," he said. This was partly possible through provincial start-up grants for Halton, \$1,000,000 in 1974 and a second million spread over 1975 and '76.

"Halton Region received more in start-up grants per capita than other region established by the provincial government. It has helped to defray the financial impact of the changeover to a minimum for homeowners," the MPP pointed out.

The water and sewer installation cost emerged as another problem when former town superintendent Alf Duddy complained of a \$1,440 charge levied against an Acton man a few weeks ago. Acton used to do it for \$350, he said, and in 1974 he had recommended that figure be doubled. Works chairman Rattis defended the charge, noting the old Acton price didn't cover the cost of the work and a survey in Halton showed the average rate was \$700. A contractor would charge \$1,000, he said. "We aren't trying to make money," he concluded, but Mr.

Duby said he would gladly do the work for \$1,400 "and put \$1,000 in my own pocket."

Police Regional police taking over Acton was also discussed briefly. Jim Lindsay wondered if the OPP were not doing a good job but Mr. Kerr said the OPP contract was expiring and it was "natural" the regional force would want to cover as much of Halton as possible. As for the OPP he called the force "one of the best police forces in the world." But he cautioned the region should go slow on policing expansion as police costs are going up.

In his opening remarks the Halton West MPP had described regional government as "really just a streamlined version of the traditional (county) system. It really isn't a new layer of government."

Acton and north Halton can look forward to many long term benefits, as this area is just beginning to encounter some of the growth pressures that have been felt in Oakville and Burlington for many years. Excellent examples of what can be achieved through unified efforts are the Halton Board of Education and local conservation authorities, he said.

Chairman Masson, who reviewed the progress of the region in the past 14 months, also had a word of praise for Halton Hills councillors. He paid tribute to their leadership at the regional level—"the people from Halton Hills show the way."

Councillor Duddy had to carry the ball last night for the three Acton men on Halton Hills Council. Councillor Pat McKenzie was away on a planned holiday trip and Councillor Joe Hurst had to attend a council meeting to make it a quorum.



MARCH IS Red Cross campaign month and the Red Cross flag was raised Saturday at the library. Assisting Mayor Tom Hill are, Paul Farkas, campaign chairman; Doug Tucker and Margaret Pope.

Bristow on Committee

Vic Bristow, 12th Elizabeth Dr., Acton was appointed to Halton Hills Committee of Adjustment, Monday night. Mr. Bristow was a member of Acton Planning Board, and a member of Acton Public School Board, before the establishment of Halton Board of Education.

He will fill the unexpired term of Hank Ruppert, of Acton, who resigned. The term expires at the end of this year.

Nine Charges

There were three liquor charges, three charges of being impaired and three charges of underage drinking laid by Acton police during the past week.

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Toyota Community Calendar
What's doing in the North Halton Area!

"WORLD DAY OF PRAYER"
Annual World Day of Prayer services are this Friday. All welcome to the ecumenical services at Trinity United Church, Acton, Friday afternoon at 2 p.m. and Sacred Heart church, Rockwood, at 8 p.m.

"WINTER CARNIVAL PARADE"
The Acton high school is putting on a parade Thursday, March 6 in conjunction with their winter carnival. The parade leaves the high school at 7:30 making its way to the arena.

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