

McKeough cites duplication under regional government

The province should have exercised a stronger hand in setting up regional government in Halton and other parts of the province, according to Provincial Treasurer Darcy McKeough. He visited Halton Regional Council on Wednesday.

McKeough criticized area municipalities within regions for not accepting their reduced status. He pointed out situations where area councils went out and hired expensive staffers to replace those people who were drafted by the regions.

McKeough noted costs had not been reduced at the area level of government as anticipated. He said the message he has received since the about duplication of efforts.

People's reps

McKeough said the plan behind regional government was that the area councillors would act as representatives of the people, getting a message across to the region. Election is a great annoyance

He said the area council was expected to handle those things most closely related to the people, while the region would handle those hard services and the matters that required more expertise staffers.

"The role of the lower tier hasn't been properly defined or carried out. You can see the lower tier has never adjusted to its reduced role," he said.

Councillor Gordon Brown asked if the minister had considered returning some regional functions to the areas to bring about efficiencies.

McKeough said he did not plan changes in Halton region, but said if responsibilities were handed back staff complements and salaries at the regional level would have to be cut.

McKeough told councillors that the province would not force the region to adopt the policy of equalized assessment or a shared cost across the region.



PROVINCIAL TREASURER Darcy McKeough

The free ride's over

Rural areas must pay

People living in townships and rural areas outside of towns and cities in Ontario have paid too little too long in realty taxes, according to Provincial Treasurer Darcy McKeough. McKeough expressed that opinion during a meeting he had last week with Halton Regional Council.

The treasurer was responding to comments by Esqueping Councillor Dick Howitt. Howitt said the mill rate in Esqueping had jumped with the advent of regional government.

McKeough referred to a financial overview for the region, its area municipalities and school board and noted the Esqueping residents now in Halton Hills had faced increases in taxes averaging four per cent.

He wondered who was being hard done by. "Are you concerned about the farmers who have their taxes cut in half, or the people at the lower income level who get substantial amounts of their taxes back in rebates?" he asked.

McKeough claimed that for years Esqueping residents have lived in the country and used recreation services, school facilities and fire and police facilities that were paid for largely by the urban people living in neighboring towns.

He claimed people were living on quarter acre lots in the country and paying only half the tax that they would have paid on a serviced lot in town.

McKeough looked at Howitt and said "You got a lot of services you never paid for. That's not right, you paid too little too long. The guy in urban Oakville has subsidized the guy in Esqueping and the guy in Esqueping has had pretty damn good service."

McKeough noted he lived in the country outside of the city of Chatham and the same inequity existed there. McKeough made it very clear that he had no sympathy for the rural resident who, he claimed, had enjoyed a free ride for years.

Pool, closed meeting rules at NEC changed

Construction of swimming pools should never have been under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, according to Provincial Treasurer and Minister of Economic and Intergovernmental Affairs Darcy McKeough.

McKeough told Halton Regional Council Wednesday that the swimming pools have now been exempted from the Niagara Escarpment Commission's control. He said in answer to a question that the commission was undergoing a shake-down.

He explained that applications would no longer be heard by the commission in private, but by smaller groups and the applicant could attend.

Montokayed

He said that 80 per cent of the 300 applications on file had been approved. He acknowledged that many people had been unduly held up with plans to construct pools and other minor additions that should have never been held up by the NEC.

According to McKeough, he went over the legislation with a fine tooth comb but never thought about swimming pools.

Burlington Councillor Tom Sutherland expressed the sentiments of many elected officials when he asked the minister why the commission didn't confine its rulings to the actual escarpment, rather than covering such a huge area.

Sutherland said he agreed with the need to protect the escarpment, but felt the commission was dealing with far too much land.

Weather

Monday's driving rain soaked walkers, and the strong winds toppled trees. If the rain had been snow, we would still be deep in it.

Speyside

Where's our identity? rural people wonder

By Pam Sheldon

The Speyside Ladies' Keep Fit group are planning an evening at the Acton Lions Indoor Pool, in place of the regular work-out in the Speyside gym. The date set is next Monday, November 17, between 9 - 10 p.m., and the ladies plan to meet at the pool.

If you wish to go, but need a ride, call Gloria Watson at 853-0171 and she will put you in touch with one of the ladies who is driving.

Observation

With all we have heard from the Powers-to-be about accepting the concept of Regional Government and the new Town of Halton Hills, I couldn't help but make the following observation. Have you noticed the new sign on the East side of Highway 25 about 1/2 mile south of 5th sideroad, which reads, "Halton Hills 10", and underneath it parenthesis, (Acton)? Considering that the Town of Halton Hills begins at the 5th sideroad which is 1/2 mile north of the sign and not 10 miles away in Acton, it makes me wonder once again just where the rural areas really fit in!

Possibly I'm nit-picking as it is obvious to me they are only trying to indicate to motorists where Acton is, but would it not be more realistic to have the sign read, "Halton Hills 1/2 mile, (Acton 10)"? We are no longer the Township of Esqueping, yet time and again are overlooked as part of the Town of Halton Hills; so where is our identity?

Population up

Speyside is greater by one

this week, at least. A well-known local girl, Gail Jolicoeur (nee Douglas) gave birth to her first child on November 4, a baby girl named Sheila Norene. As well as being overcome with excitement, Gail's parents, Norm and Irene, are deeply touched that the baby's middle name is a combination of both theirs.

After their marriage two years ago, Gail and Gerry settled in the North, and only came home to Speyside so Gail could be near her family when the baby was born. They will continue to stay with Gail's parents for another month, after which they intend to return to the North where Gerry is employed. Best wishes to them all.

Assembly

Once again a Friday Afternoon assembly at the Speyside Public School has left me overwhelmed, this time with emotion and memories of my own elementary school days.

Mrs. Hopkins Grade 4 class took upon themselves the incredible task of explaining to the student body the meaning of Remembrance Day. Roger Moore, who acted as M.C., introduced five children who each gave a short narrative on the war, the brave soldiers who were killed in battle, the symbolic poppy, a place called Flanders, and the reason for the one minute silence on November 11.

The children told how the soldiers gave their lives so our homeland would be safe and we could go to the school and church of our choice, and make the friends of our choice regardless of race,

colour or creed. Their narratives were accompanied throughout by the tune, A Bridge Over Troubled Waters.

Donna Lee McPherson read The Story of the Poppy. Which was followed by a recitation of In Flanders Fields by Mark Armstrong. Lisa Ivany related how the money donated to the Poppy Fund is used and Arnold Ng read a true story entitled The Dog of the Battlefield. Mary McArthur read a poem about the bravery of the soldiers and Jeff Fischer and Joey Clare told the children about the Memorial Service held each year on November 11 at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

The Assembly ended with the singing of O Canada, and as everyone filed out of the auditorium they were given a poppy to wear. Although the concept of war is so remote to these young people, the Assembly was extremely well done and the idea of "honour" was conveyed to all. I found it a totally moving experience.

Where are you?

After last week's morning fog when the buses didn't run, Principal Norm Howell sent home a newsletter asking for a number of volunteers who would be willing to phone about six other parents on mornings such as these. This way, when the school finds out the buses won't be running, the children can be advised much quicker. However, he only got two replies and about 15 parents are needed. Where are you? Would you please call the school if you could help out in this way.

No more funds

Halton Regional Council was told point blank that it should not expect increased financial assistance from the provincial coffers this year or in the foreseeable future.

The word came from the Provincial Treasurer himself, Darcy McKeough told the council that the province could not afford to increase support to the municipalities beyond the terms of the Edmonton Commitment.

"It will be difficult, but what I'm about to tell you is I'm not about to tell you my taxes. The mill rate has declined and the only way that was possible was, we jumped the sales tax. We have raised our taxes and yours have stood still."

The message came through strong and clear that if the region needed more funds it would have to look to the rate-payers to provide the extra dollars.

Funds for housing

Burlington Councillor Mary Munro noted there was pressure on the region to provide housing but the region did not have the funds to do this and there are no financial returns to make it possible.

Burlington Mayor George Harrington said he felt there were too many people getting a free ride through the farm tax rebate. He felt the rebate should apply only to those farmers who are principal occupants of the land.

Darcy says 'no'

As far as Provincial Treasurer Darcy McKeough is aware, there will be no provincial inquiry into the operation of the Halton Board of Education.

Regional Councillor Jim Watson told McKeough of the "real problems" that had given rise to Halton Renaissance Committee. McKeough said in answer to Watson's question that no inquiry is planned.

"Does discontent fall on deaf ears?" the councillor asked.

McKeough said he felt there were a lot of problems manifest in society generally, but were being taken out on the school system.

"We just finished one inquiry that was supposed to be monumental, the Hall Dennis report. We had some of the best talent in the country working on it and it cost \$2,000,000," McKeough explained.

Subdivision approved by Erin twp. council

After many months of negotiation with Erin Township council the Armstrongs of Erin finally met with a measure of success in gaining approval for their estate-type subdivision located south of Erin village.

At Erin Township council meeting last week, Councillor Tom Ormisher and Councillor Jack Marshall presented a motion to give approval in principle to the Armstrongs for a subdivision of not more than 20 homes on the 18-acre parcel of land. The approval is subject to strict subdivision agreement with the developer, however, and it is understood that council will have to be involved in any future transfer of land. The motion carried.

Third reading was also given to a bylaw authorizing Howard Barbour to stop up the unopened road allowance between the west halves of lots 27 and 28 on the 9th concession in exchange for a parcel of land at the intersection of the present travelled road and the 8th Line, for road widening purposes.

Hydro needs

Reeve Donald Matheson proposed that council attend a meeting at Wingham on November 26 when the Porter Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Arthur Porter will discuss the long-term needs of Hydro in Ontario.

The Ontario Municipal Board hearing of the appeal by Premier Concrete Products for zoning changes to allow for gravel extraction on sites southeast of Erin village

will be held in Hillsburgh November 12.

A two-man delegation of concerned citizens sought council's aid in furthering their fight to preserve the land presently zoned agricultural. As an appointment had previously been made for another delegation from the local snowmobile club to meet with council, the concerned citizens outlined their request briefly but due to lack of time were forced to retire before council discussed the issue or came to any decision.

Snowmobiles

The snowmobilers represented by Bill Thompson and Rick Start felt that Erin should have a by-law similar to the one in force in Halton to regulate the operation of snowmobiles. Mr. Thompson asked that club representatives be allowed to sit in on the drafting of any by-law restricting the club from the roads. He also sought permission for the club to establish trails on blind side roads which are municipally-owned property. Reeve Matheson doubted that this could be given out of respect for farmers' property rights, unless such property were fenced.

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Start suggested that the bylaw include such things as clauses governing speeds on public thoroughfares. When queried by council, they suggested that on highways where a speed limit of 50 mph is in force for automobiles, a speed limit of 30 mph be imposed for snowmobiles. On village or township roads having a 30 mph limit, snow-

mobiles should be reduced to 15 mph they felt. They pointed out that members of the snowmobile club would see that the by-law was enforced.

Discussion ensued on the advisability and cost of erecting snowmobile crossing signs on county and township roads. Reeve Matheson pointed out that the council had no authority over county roads but it was agreed to look into the possibility of erecting such signs on township roads.

Annexation

A rather lengthy discussion took place when the Erin Village Council approached the Township Council about the possibility of annexing 130 acres of township land to the Village for industrial purposes. It was explained by the village reeve that a 20-acre parcel of land was needed by a new industry which hoped to locate in Erin Village.

A present, the village does not have a 20 acre block in its industrial land bank and would like to annex the land north of town to facilitate

Erin's growth which hitherto has been residential not industrial. Counter-proposals by Reeve Matheson met with divided opinion from the village council. Therefore the village delegation decided to discuss the matter further privately and no decision or opinion from the township was forthcoming at this time.

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