

Get more industry region is urged

Halt Regional Council will be asked to authorize the establishment of a Business Development Department when council meets at Burlington headquarters today.

The region's Administration Committee recommended such an office after hearing a brief from the Regional Chambers of Commerce in Halton calling for increased industrial promotion.

The brief pointed to a sliding tax ratio putting an increasingly heavy burden on the residential taxpayer.

"For instance in 1970, before regional government, the Town of Milton had a 50-50 split of residential to industrial assessment. Today, that ratio is 29 percent commercial-industrial, 71 percent residential-farm."

"In Acton, the 1966 ratio was 52 percent industrial, 48 percent residential. The 1976 ratio was 20 percent industrial, 80 percent residential. "Population in the same period increased from 4,400 to 8,872. Industries increased from 19 to 24 but employment increased only from 1,100 to 1,240," the brief noted.

"There are 500 acres of vacant industrially-zoned land in Halton Hills in 1976 and 50 acres of serviced industrial land ranging in price from \$16,000 to \$30,000 per acre."

"Burlington's assessment picture is much the same. The current ratio of industrial-commercial vs. residential is 25 per cent industrial, 75 percent residential. Industrial construction, on a national basis, is down 22 per cent but Burlington, for the same time period (1974-76) is down 83 percent."

"Oakville has several of the Region's largest industries and employers but is currently in a position of imbalance in assessment. The result is an increasing tax load on shelter to cover inflation and cost increases for municipal government, schools, fire and police, engineering, and roads and parks."

"In 1966, Oakville's assessment ratio was 39 percent industrial, 61 per cent residential. In 1976, it was 32 percent industrial, 68 per cent residential."

"A typical 100 acre mixed-use industrial park could accommodate as many as 25 establishments; provide potential employment for 1,000 people and generate an initial building construction value of between \$10 and \$20 millions. At today's rates, this represents approximately \$700,000 to \$1 million in taxes annually. These are some of the more measurable benefits," the brief said.

Tony Wilson of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce presented the brief. Georgetown Chamber President George Gray said the brief came forward with the unanimous support of all four of the Chambers in the region.

The brief noted industrial development commissions in four other regions were staffed with anywhere from two to seven people with budgets ranging from \$73,000 to \$188,000.

Oakville Councillor Carl Eriksen and Milton Councillor Jim Watson provided the only opposition to the recommendation.

Both insisted that a good product sells itself and argued that Halton was in a prime location to attract industry, without spending a lot of money and bringing more bureaucrats into the system.

Eriksen suggested there was something strange when a region would claim it

wanted to preserve prime farmland and then go out and spend money promoting rapid growth.

Committee chairman Mac Anderson suggested the only alternative to attracting industry is "Taxing the people out of their skulls."

Regional Chairman Ric Morrow pointed out there had been recent plant closings in Georgetown and Burlington, leaving people out of work.

Both he and Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett saw the creation of jobs as the number one benefit that could accrue from the creation of such a department.

Councillor Eriksen said an industrial department could not have prevented the closings but it might have been able to create an industrial climate that made the closing unnecessary.

Burlington Councillor Walter Mulkeewich said the industrial commission would have to be tied closely to the planning department but would also have to relate with the public works, treasury

and other departments in the region.

Resource Recovery He spoke of the need for resource recovery and indicated the attraction of industry could have a very real effect on the location and viability of a resource recovery plant.

"We would need a very special sort of person, sensitive to the social realities," he said.

Burlington Mayor Mary Munro said the formation of the region had left Burlington hamstrung. She said the city had had an industrial commission for several years but that had to be abolished to meet the requirements of Bill 151. Only the region can legally initiate the service.

She acknowledged that Burlington does have a private member's bill before the legislature that would allow the city to have its own commission, but she added that was a second preference or a fall-back position.

Councillor Watson explained that Milton was

sceptical and claimed the industrial commission would lead to shared industrial assessment and eventually to a move away from the chargeback system.

He claimed Milton's industrial park will give the town 1,600 acres of industrial land to develop, "but we feel the land will sell itself."

He said Milton Council had taken a position in opposition to the regional development commission.

Halton Hills Councillor Russ Miller said he wanted to see Halton attract industry and jobs, even if the majority of the industry settled along the lakeshore corridor.

"Even if it is in the south, if it is still in the region our people can drive to it. They don't mind that, but when they have to move their families it can be upsetting."

Miller is an employee of Domtar and among those who stand to lose their jobs when the plant closes.

If council ratifies the committee decision, it will mark the end of an issue that has been popping up ever since the implementation of regional government.

Lois do The matter was brought up shortly after the region was formed but councillors felt that the transformation from a county to a regional system of government left them with more than enough to do.

The matter comes up on an annual basis and each time it has been referred to the budget the following year each time.

Council did vote to spend \$10,000 last year to set up an office near the end of the year and made provision to hire one clerical type person.

Utility structure study requested

Halt Regional Council will be asked to give its formal approval to a study on the restructuring of municipal electrical utilities by a provincial steering committee.

The study, if conducted, will be one of several such studies concerning restructuring. The prospect of yet another study didn't excite Regional Chairman Ric Morrow.

"Another study won't help. We've been going around circles on this for three years now. What can be solved by this?"

Council and the hydro commissions had earlier rejected the offer of such a study. But now the region's administration committee and the hydro commissions are advocating such a study be taken.

The commissions in the region conducted their own study but have never made public the findings of that study.

Some regional councillors have suggested the results have been kept quiet because they indicate a substantial savings would accrue through restructuring.

A study team composed of the four mayors, a regional representative, union representatives and hydro commission representatives will work with the steering committee on the study.

W. McEachern of Acton, T. Graham of Burlington, O. Van Sickle of Campbellville, W. R. Rowney of Milton and A. Green of Oakville are commission representatives on the study team.

Want assurances

Prefer approval of mosquito program

Final approval of the mosquito abatement program in Halton has been deferred, pending assurances that the chemicals used will have no detrimental effect on the ecology.

arrangements for the program but withheld final approval. A seminar on mosquito

abatement is planned for Feb. 23 in Burlington. Staffers were instructed to get the assurances the committee wanted and report back.

Medical Officer of Health Dr. J. H. Chamberlain said the program ran last year and there were no harmful effects reported.

MPP George Kerr will address representatives of Halton and other regions at the seminar.

Region to consider grants

Halton Community Services Committee will consider grants requests from at least 29 different groups and organizations Tuesday, Feb. 22.

Some of the grant requests that will be entertained are statutory and some others follow an accepted formula.

Regional treasurer Don Farmer told the committee in a memo that he could arrange deputations for that meeting.

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'Pull the plug' on development

Halton Region's Public Works Department will no longer insist on restrictions on new development in Burlington with regard to sewage plant capacity.

The Public Works Committee considered the problem Wednesday after receiving a report on the matter from Works Director Bob Moore.

Until now the region has told all developers in Burlington that no building permits would be issued until the expansion of the Pollution Control Plant is complete.

But the committee agreed that the plant expansion is close enough to completion

that nothing significant enough to cause overloading at the plant could take place.

"What can anyone build in eight months? Why don't we pull the plug," committee chairman Jack Rafitis suggested.

Both Burlington and Georgetown have experienced next to no residential growth in the last year or so because of plant restrictions. A plant expansion is currently underway in Georgetown as well.

The decision to allow development to continue is subject to council approval today.

Old Age Pensioners Guaranteed Income Supplement Application forms.

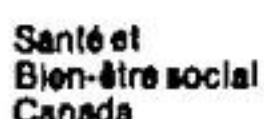


Fill them out! Send them in!

Guaranteed Income Supplement application forms were mailed recently to all pensioners now receiving the Supplement. To make sure that your Supplement to the Pension continues beyond March 31st you must reapply. So make sure you fill in your form and return it in the addressed envelope enclosed with the form, as soon as you possibly can.



Health and Welfare Canada Marc Lalonde, Minister



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