

Morrow pushes common rates

By Bob Burt
Regional Chairman Ric Morrow is bound and determined to have all water and sewer projects paid for out of a common fund, instead of each of the communities in Halton paying for projects in its own municipality.

He claims that only then will Halton Region be truly able to call itself a region. "I have a strong hope that all representatives on regional council one day will represent the community of Halton, and not sit as a representative from Acton, Burlington, or Oakville."

During a discussion at a public works meeting last week the chairman said there is no reason or justification why there should be five different water rates within the one region. "We have to act like a community, the community of Halton."

"If we throw it out for once and for all, we'll never become a region. Lord knows, the last council couldn't come to grips with it," he told the committee.

Morrow indicated that he'd push to have the matter of uniform water rates and equalized assessment brought before council soon after the budget is passed.

Some northern representatives have opposed that move in the past because they feel they'll lose control of public works projects in their home municipalities.

Both Halton Hills and Milton are badly outweighed in terms of voting power by the two municipalities to the south.

As it is now, each municipality pays for work in its own municipality and because the cost is shouldered by the benefiting municipality, no other councillor is apt to object.

Some Oakville councillors can be expected to oppose the move as well. Because they have the highest assessment in the region, they will be expected to share their assessment base over the entire region.

Some Oakville councillors have already voiced opposition.

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The resolution actually does no more than tidy up the bookwork and legalities of action the region took in 1974.

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The change would see the region collect its own capital levies and set its own rates for the levies.

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Lot levies are fee developers pay for each home they build in order to help offset the demands on the community's services.

Regional Treasurer Don Farmer and some councillors have complained about the current policy. They claim as long as area councillors control those funds the funds will be used on area projects and the region will be forced

swallow is a basic philosophical difference between Oakville and Burlington.

Oakville is traditionally "slow growth" while Burlington leans more towards a more rapid rate of growth. Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett and Oakville Councilor Carl Eriksen have argued against any change in the current method of financing water and sewer projects.

They argue that Burlington would be dipping into the Oakville coffers to finance growth in Burlington. They

claim Oakville would end up paying for growth in the region, even though the town itself staunchly supports a slow growth attitude.

There has been a considerable change in the makeup of the council since the matter was last broached. There are 10 new members.

The new members haven't really had the opportunity to become embroiled in debate on the matter and it could be that they'll look upon the change with more favor than the first regional council.

Budget chopping continues

For seven weeks now Regional Committees have agonized over budget estimates before them. As of Friday the \$34,000,000 budget had been cut by about four per cent. In its original form the budget called for an increase of 31 per cent.

At a special meeting of the Community Services Committee Friday at the Halton Centennial Manor the committee approved three departmental budgets, all carrying sharp increases.

In its original form the budget represented an increased expenditure of 31 per cent. After dozens of meetings and countless numbers of hours spent on the budget, that increase has been whittled to about 27 per cent.

according to Treasurer Don Farmer. Figures haven't been officially compiled and the 27 per cent is only an estimate.

Abnormal increases at both the Children's Aid Society and the Halton Centennial Manor account for part of the big increases in the regional budget.

The CAS budget called for an increase of 62 per cent originally. A shocked Regional Chairman, Ric Morrow, made headlines when he blasted the CAS at the annual meeting of the society for submitting the budget in that form. The CAS budget has been in the news ever since.

Finally after a number of meetings of the Region's

Community Service Committee, including some joint meetings with CAS officials, the committee reluctantly approved the budget with an increase of 39 per cent.

CAS officials managed to cut the estimates to 39 per cent by phasing in new programs and taking on new staffers later in the year than was originally proposed.

While the cuts will provide some relief this year the full impact will show up next year. Without introducing any new programs next year the CAS budget will jump by another 30 per cent.

It stands at \$1,385,528 and indications are it will go up to at least \$1,800,000 next year. Unlike most other budgets

the Region can not exercise full control of the CAS budget. If the region wants to challenge the budget it has to go before the provincial review board.

The Community Services Committee had asked the CAS to lop \$150,000 off the budget and come back and show the committee where those cuts would be made and what the impact would be.

When the CAS came back Director Ron Coupland presented a report showing where \$89,200 could be chopped from the estimates but warned that "those cuts would seriously retard and jeopardize the services of the Children's Aid Society to the Region's children."

"We cannot see how a further \$61,000 can be removed without sabotaging completely an already overstressed service delivery system."

The budget for Halton Centennial Manor presented by Administrator Stan Allen, calling for an increase of 54

per cent, was approved with only minor changes. The Manor budget calls for an expenditure of \$3,807,406 this year. The Region's share of that works out to about \$764,290. The region recovers a large percentage of the operating costs in provincial grants and fees paid by the residents.

A Social and Family Services Budget calling for the expenditure of \$2,644,676 was approved by the Committee and escaped any major cutting at Friday's session as well.

Most of the regional committees have approved or are about to approve budget estimates so they can be forwarded to the council for further cutting or ratification early in May.

BULLETIN—The treasurer's department reported late Tuesday an error had been found and the Manor levy increase was now nine per cent, not 54 per cent as discussed above. Some additional revenues were located.



PARENTS FIND OUT WHAT their kids have learned in music class as Thomas Lauk, Susan Auty, Sharom Laughton, Sherry Kirton and Brenda Buchanan perform a recorder quintet at Brookville School Open House.

No alternative to Milton dump

Halton Regional Council will not be deterred in its efforts to situate a landfill site in Milton according to Regional Chairman Ric Morrow.

Mr. Morrow told reporters

Miller plan

At least one regional councillor who voted to go ahead with a landfill site in Milton at Site F (Tremaine-Britannia Rd.) is prepared to support a plan that would see more than one site used as a dump in Halton.

Halton Hills Councillor Tuss Miller told this newspaper that if a motion was put to consider smaller landfill sites and more of them in the region he'd have to support it after a decision handed down by the Ontario Supreme Court. The decision quashed a by-law designating Site F as the future landfill site for the region.

Councillor Miller was among several councillors who supported Site F on March 2 because of the critical time frame the region has to work with.

"Yes I'd have to support that now, either that or give it back to the areas and let them each find their own. Georgetown is getting into bad shape and we have to take care of garbage," he said.

Had one more councillor voted in opposition to Site F in the March 2 meeting the proposed landfill site would have been defeated on an 11-10 vote. Instead the choice was confirmed by an 11-10 vote.

the region would continue with work on phase three of the consultants report and would apply for a rezoning to the Town of Milton in about six weeks.

Morrow discussed the matter with reporters on Wednesday after learning the Supreme Court of Ontario had quashed a by-law passed by the region indicating the Milton site in the Britannia-Tremaine area as a future landfill site.

He said the region did not have any contingency plan if the current landfill sites were filled up prior to a new one being opened.

"I don't see council moving towards any alternative. The only alternative the region has is to spend another quarter of a million dollars studying another site and even then people would hire a lawyer and we'd have the

same legal problems. There's no easy way out. There is no major change in the process that is evolving," he said.

Morrow told reporters that there are ways and means to intervene on behalf of the majority of the people if the region wasn't able to go ahead.

"We might have to do it through public safety when we have no dump and garbage is piling up a year and a half from now," he said.

Morrow reiterated his claim that consultant's reports have indicated Site F is a good site. "Council ruled on it and we have to follow the ruling," he said.

Council voted 11-10 March 2 approving Site F as the site for the future landfill site for the region. Many of the councillors who voted against approving the site have levelled harsh criticism at the way the decision was made

Committee says

Abolish Health

Halton Region's Board of Health should be stripped of its autonomy according to Regional Council's Bill 151 Review Committee.

The committee passed a resolution at its meeting Friday urging council to petition the province to abolish the Board of Health and make the Health Unit a department of the region.

Regional Chairman Ric Morrow told the committee that under existing legislation the Regional Council has no jurisdiction and the Board of Health isn't legally bound to report to, or seek permission of the council for any of its programs.

Acton area councillor Pat McKenzie agreed the change would give council full control over the board of health budget.

Oakville Councillor Laurie Mannell noted there were two citizens on the Board of Health and the rest are

regional councillors. He said he was impressed with the time Board of Health Chairman George Gray spent on the job.

"Will we toss it back to a committee of council who never show up for the meetings," he wondered.

Mr. Morrow expressed concern about a document prepared by the Ministry of Health which favored removing the Board of Health operation even further from Regional Council and having the board report to the District Health Council instead of the council.

Mr. Morrow is on record as opposing the creation of any further autonomous or semi-autonomous boards or commissions like Halton Region Conservation Authority or the Children's Aid Society.

He said council should not only tell the province it opposes further autonomy but in fact wants revisions in legislation to go the other way.

If the legislation is changed the way the committee wants it the board of health as it exists would be abolished and the two provincial appointees would be removed from the board. Stuart Cramp and George Gray now hold those positions.

Mr. McKenzie said there were no problems with the Board of Health exercising its autonomy now, but there had been in the past and could be in the future.

TECO (The Technical Co-ordinating Committee) set up to study regional government in the late 1960's and

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Regional Treasurer Don Farmer and some councillors have complained about the current policy. They claim as long as area councillors control those funds the funds will be used on area projects and the region will be forced

to debenture more projects than would otherwise be necessary. But Barrett doesn't concur.

The change in policy came to light during consideration of a plan of subdivision at the Administration Committee meeting Wednesday.

Several of the councillors on the committee were surprised to learn that they had unknowingly approved of the change at the previous council meeting.

The matter was put before council at the meeting as later business and some never read the minutes of the meeting.

"I'm sick and tired of this nonsense. The same things keep coming back and coming back until it slips through," Barrett charged.

After checking the resolution Councillor Carl Eriksen said the approval was only in principle. Both he and Barrett will seek to halt the change when the matter comes before council again.

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A cash award of \$500 is being offered for the best Canadian article of 250 to 700 words dealing with the energy crisis, that is published in a Canadian weekly newspaper.

The Acton Free Press is participating through the Canadian Community Newspapers Association in the contest sponsored by Dominion Textile Ltd.

The winning article, selected from those published in a Canadian community newspaper will be awarded \$500. The article will be chosen, based on its impact on readers in calling attention of other Canadians to the seriousness of the current energy crisis and the need for all Canadians, individuals or groups, to take urgent steps to conserve our energy resources and expend them wisely.

The Free Press will select three entries from those received by Thursday May 5, 1977 and these will be published in the May 11 or 18 issue before being forwarded for participation in the national contest.

The three local winners will receive \$10 cash awards.

All entries must be addressed to The Editor, Acton Free Press, 59 Willow St., Acton, Ont. and marked Contest Entry.

It is understood the rights to republish the winning entry will be available at no cost to the Canadian Community Newspapers Association, the Dominion Textile Ltd. and the Office of Energy Conservation in Ottawa.

The Acton Free Press