

# Region costly, bureaucratic, Task Force is told

The Liberal Task Force on Regional Government was told that the implementation of regional government in Halton has led to the loss of community identity, an inequitable power balance with the two large communities calling the shots as well as increased bureaucracy and increased costs.

The task force held one of its many meetings in Milton Wednesday night and Halton residents confirmed the trend the task force has detected in other regions across the province, according to Task Force Chairman Herb Epp. Epp is the Liberal MPP for the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

In an interview Epp said there appeared to be considerable unrest and dissatisfaction with regionalism.

"What I've been gathering is that people think the regions are too large and they'd like to bring them down to a more moderate size. But they don't want to go back to square one and above all, they don't want one-tier government," Epp said.

If it is horror stories the task force is looking for, Halton residents didn't let them down. Norm Elliott of Actonians for Action Committee told the Task Force of the demoralizing effect regional government has had on the community spirit in Acton.

Elliott explained his group's beef wasn't as much with the region itself, but the fact it meant that Acton is no longer a community of its own and that its destiny—both locally and regionally—is decided by people who don't live in the community.

Dave Katz of Milton told the Task Force that regionalism has eroded the spirit of concern and involvement that used to be found in small communities.

"People used to stand up and be counted when a community issue surfaced, but now they say 'what's the use?'"

He said he resented the idea of Big Brother (the region) taking care of everything.

Both he and Elliott said that under regional government, elected officials are not held accountable for many of the decisions they make.

Citing the landfill issue as an example, Katz said Oakville and Burlington councillors can vote to put the dump in Milton and people in the south will be happy. "We could throw the whole Milton Council out and it wouldn't change anything at the region," Katz said.

Gerry McAuliffe said the whole idea of regional government, both in the municipal and educational spheres was supposed to be to end disparity within the region.

But because of the prevalent attitudes, McAuliffe said he could see the day in the next five or 10 years that a visiting regional chairman or the chairman of the board of education would travel in an armored car and the streets would have to be "cased" a

## Reduce region role

Oakville Councillor Carl Eriksen will propose sweeping changes in the structure of regional government during a meeting of the region's administration committee today.

In a letter to the chairman and members of the council Eriksen says the number of councillors sitting on council should be reduced from 24 to 14, the four committees should be reduced to two and strict measures should be taken to reduce staff complements where possible.

In his letter Eriksen says the major tasks of regional government are almost completed and as a consequence the role of regional government in the future will be different.

"Clearly, the activities will not only be different but they will also be reduced in scope. It does not seem unreasonable to expect a reduction in all departments except police and social services," Eriksen said.

week ahead of time to make sure no one was out to get revenge.

"The board of education looks at everything north of Highway Five as a demilitarized zone. To them it isn't Acton, Milton or Georgetown, but it is the north."

He cited the lack of any place in North Halton where children could take vocational training in high schools as example of how effective and fair the system is.

He spoke of students traveling 110 miles per day to school in the south. "Oakville and Burlington wouldn't stand for it, but it is okay for the north."

Regionalism came under attack by two of the three regional councillors in attendance at the meeting. Milton Councillor Jim Watson said people were served better under the county system.

"All of the hard services are independent of one another. If there was a trunk sewer line from Milton to Oakville I could see it, but it isn't so."

"Nassagaweya and Milton came together well under the

regional system, but my beef is at the regional level where we have no control," he said.

Oakville Councillor Ron Planche said the true cost of regional government had increased 79 per cent in the first three years. But municipal taxes never reflected that increase, because of generous provincial infusions of tax subsidies.

He complained about the province adding boards and commissions, particularly in the health field, and confusing the issue of who had proper jurisdiction for what.

A third councillor, Don Carter from Burlington, offered no comment other than to thank the Task Force for digging into the problem.

## LDC denies bid by Speyside woman

The Land Division Committee stuck to its criteria in denying a separation to a Speyside woman during a meeting in the Halton Hills offices January 17.

Milton lawyer Ron Flanagan, acting for Brenda Gignac, told the committee that under the proposed regional official plan, Speyside would become a rural cluster. Within the cluster severances would be permitted for infilling, he said.

LDC member Des Morrow told Flanagan he is not swayed by the draft plan, nor by the Halton Conservation Authority, which also refers to the proposal. It's the region's interim plan that counts, he said. Under the interim plan, the Gignac separation in some ways fits the concept of infilling, he said.

Another committee member, Tom Marshall of Oakville, however, countered by saying the separation would represent more urban development in a rural area. "Because it could be infilling, doesn't mean you have to fill it," he said.

Marshall's motion to deny was passed.

## Task Force member takes landfill rap

A member of the Liberal Task Force on Regional Government was criticized for actions he had taken when he served as a councillor in St. Catharines in earlier years.

Jim Bradley, MPP for St. Catharines, said that as long as there are regions there will be landfill sites, because there is always someplace in a rural area where a new dump can be opened. Necessity is the mother of invention and if large urban areas had to, they would find a way to go to incineration or another form of resource recovery, Bradley said.

He said he knew that to be the case because as a councillor, he had voted to approve two different landfill

sites in St. Catharines. That admission brought heavy criticism from Milton dump fighter Dave Katz. "That's disappointing. How can you say you favor resource recovery and vote for

landfill?", Katz wondered. Both Bradley and fellow Liberal Julian Reed emphasized the fact that Bradley wasn't promoting landfill, but pointing out the reality of the situation.

## Approve addition to Kuiken home

Halton Hills Committee of Adjustment gave Jake Kuiken the go-ahead to build a garage with two bedrooms above it on his home on Highway 7 near the Fourth Line.

The committee allowed the reduction in sideyard requirements from 15 feet to 8.5 feet, because they felt the addition is compatible with the surrounding area, and there has been no objection from neighbors.

Brian Murdoch, planning assistant, said there is 26 feet between the house and

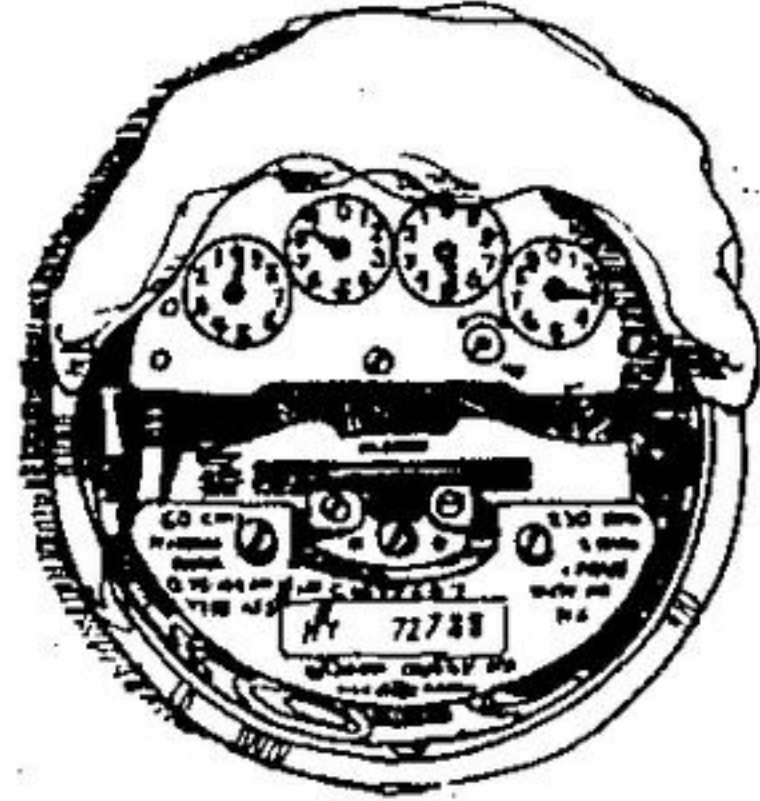
property line. The planner pointed out the 15 foot sideyard requirement is for a 125 foot lot, and seems excessive on the 70 foot Kuiken lot.

Mr. Kuiken told the committee he needs more space for his family of four, and said his neighbors are aware of his plan.

The committee directed him to have all drainage run to the front of his property.

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## U.C.W. meeting held in church

The United Church Women meeting which was delayed from January 12 to January 17 on account of weather conditions was held in the ladies' parlor of Trinity United Church starting with a pot luck dinner which all 18 members enjoyed.

Mrs. Lidkea welcomed all and read a poem Happy New Year. All repeated the purpose and the Lord's Prayer.

Mrs. Shoemaker had charge of devotions and opened with Hymn 571, and read Lord Show Us The Feather and We Will Not Be Afraid.

Mrs. Veldhuis read Give God Thanks in the Morning, Hymn 570 and prayer ended this part of the meeting.

Dorothy Simmons gave report on cards sent out. The Rev. Beaton spoke briefly to the ladies thanking them for all the different kinds of work they do in and outside the church.

Mrs. Shoemaker gave her report on sick and shut-ins and paid special tribute to Mrs. Radcliff for her constant care of her invalid husband.

Mrs. Force read a letter from the group's adopted child who seemed to be so grateful for their help.

Helen Little read correspondence from so many people thanking the group for their Christmas gifts, also a very interesting letter from Mr. and Mrs. George Bowman. They are close to church, about three blocks to walk, and seem to enjoy their new home. A letter of appreciation will be sent to Mrs. M. Taylor and Mrs. Middleton for their work with the flowers in the church.

There were 23 home calls and three hospital calls made during the month.

The meeting ended with Mizpah Benediction and a light lunch was served.

## School signs

At the request of Acton Councillor Les Doby, school area signs will go up on Churchill Road North. Monday Halton Hills works committee approved the erection of school area warning signs in the vicinity of the new Acton High School to warn drivers.

## Dog tags

Dog owners have recently received invoices in the mail from the town of Halton Hills reminding them to renew their dog tags.

Costs for a spayed female is \$5, and \$8 for an unspayed female. A neutered male tag is \$5 and unneutered is \$8.

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## Hookup costs jump

Acton resident Lou Bonnette told the Task Force on Regional Government that he went through no end of trouble to finally have sewer and water services hooked up to a new home he built last year.

When it was time to have services hooked up, Bonnette said he went to the Georgetown municipal offices to get the necessary permits but was advised to go to Burlington. After contacting regional offices in Burlington he was told Georgetown was the place to go.

"I went back to Georgetown and they told me I had to go to Burlington."

Bonnette claims he had to pay \$1,500 for the same work that would have cost \$350 immediately prior to regional government.

Once that was all straightened away and workers did appear on the job, Bonnette said he was amazed at the number of men and pieces of machinery that did arrive.

According to Bonnette, workmen there to hook the water up no sooner arrived before it was coffee time.

Finally they laid the pipe from the road to the house but had to wait for someone from

Burlington to come and make the connection.

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