

Rural issues are debated in Halton's official plan

Land use policies in the rural areas remain the main points of controversy in Halton Region's draft official plan.

Last week Halton Region's Planning Committee discussed the area municipalities' criticism of the plan. With the exception of two or three thorny areas that deal with residential development in rural areas and preservation of foodlands, the review amounted more to crossing T's and dotting I's than the debate of opposing philosophies.

The committee endorsed a general statement encouraging governments at all levels and agencies to adopt policies and programs which will promote the economic viability of the agricultural industry.

But in the same breath the committee removed from the draft plan a three-part clause urging the federal government to:

(a) Adopt a national food policy incorporating the production, processing, marketing, distributing and consumption of food so as to ensure an adequate supply at prices which are equitable for both the industry and the consumer.

(b) Enforce protective tariffs and/or quotas on imported agricultural products which compete with Canadian products.

(c) Provide incentives to farmers through income stabilization, a pension program for retiring farmers, expanded farm credit and loans to farmers, and general relief from Federal

taxes on the agricultural industry.

Planner Bob White defended the inclusion of the recommendations for the federal government. "We are saying this is what we want and this is your responsibility."

He argued that the region should go on record as endorsing a national food policy, incentives for farmers and tariffs to protect food grown or raised in Canada.

Oakville Councillor Ron Planche objected. "Whatever happened to free trade and have you considered what will happen to the price of food when it hits the counter? This sounds like welfare policies for farmers and looks like we are trying to bribe the farmer with the consumers' money," Planche told the

committee.

Planner Rash Mohammed suggested the clause could be reworded to indicate the three recommendations were examples of things the region would like the federal government to look at.

Oakville Councillor Archie Donaghey and Committee Chairman Roy Booth agreed with that recommendation but a motion by Milton Mayor Don Gordon recommended taking the three-part clause right out of the draft. It passed.

The committee endorsed a Halton Hills recommendation suggesting that once a person purchases a lot created by severance, that the person forgoes any right to complain about existing farm operations.

Milton Mayor Don Gordon said legally the action was only binding on the first owner, but Mr. Booth argued that the condition is registered with the deed and is a cloud on the title.

The move was an effort to protect farmers from urban people who move into rural areas and no sooner get there than they complain about the smell of pigs or the dust and dirt of the country.

The committee sent a staff recommendation urging that the tree cover in the region be increased from 20 to 25 per cent.

Councillor Booth noted there was no way the urban municipalities of Oakville and Burlington would ever come close to that kind of tree cover in the north. He complained that any new stands of trees would have to be started in the north, because there was no room in the south, and objected because there are already an adequate amount of forested lands in the north.

In an effort to control the number of lots that could be created either through plans of subdivision or separation, the committee agreed on a formula. The formula would permit the equivalent of an annual rural population increase of two per cent per year.

Earlier the staff had suggested 100 lots per year, but the committee and public felt that to be too rigid and too arbitrary.



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Fate of agriculture sealed, farmers say

Halton Regional Council's approval of a 14-lot rural subdivision near Five Sideroad and the Fourth Line has sealed the fate of agriculture in Halton according to Federation of Agriculture representatives Bob Merry and Ed Segsworth.

"By approving this they'll sell agriculture in Halton down the drain. This is the test case and the tip of the iceberg. It has been difficult for them to approve this one but with each new one it will be easier to approve," Segsworth said.

Merry said he was amazed to see council approve of the

development after turning it down on a decisive vote only two months ago.

The recommendation came from the planning committee and was accompanied by a report but there was next to no discussion of the matter.

The applicant for the project Fred Cunningham told this newspaper there were 21 homes already in existence there and he noted the development met the terms of the agricultural code of practice as applied to Mr. Merry's farm, across the road.

"I can't see that the development will be detrimental to agricultural

policies. Let's face it, the 400 acres south of our land is owned by a German syndicate and its fate as agricultural land is sealed. It won't be agricultural use forever."

Mr. Cunningham noted that there would only be three homes visible from the road and the rest would be "tucked behind trees."

Council approved the Southcott property development on a 12-7 recorded vote Wednesday. The proposal has been on the books for more than a year now and the decision has been reversed a number of times at both committee and council meetings.

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96th birthday party for local woman

A family birthday party was held for Mrs. McLean of Brock St., on Sunday. Mrs. McLean celebrated her 96th birthday at the home of granddaughter Mrs. James Johnston in Brampton.

A cake was made and decorated by another granddaughter Mrs. Bryan Marshall. Family members totalling 15 helped Mrs. McLean celebrate the occasion.

A surprise gift from her neighbours on Brock Street was also presented in honor of her birthday.

A week ago Mrs. McLean attend a reunion of her

mother's family and descendants. Approximately 130 relatives attended.

The right front window of a 1974 Dodge Charger was smashed by vandals who entered the L. L. Ford lot on Main Street North last week. The car's front fender and a tire was also damaged. The auto was parked at the rear of the lot.

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Foodland designation lacked farm support

Lack of support from even the conservationist element within the Federation of Agriculture and the farm community in general for measures aimed at preserving foodland, is being touted as a major cause for failure to have those policies implemented in Halton's official plan.

Halton Regional Planning Director Ed Cumming said in an interview that there seemed to be an evolution of opinion among the conservationists in the Federation. "It seemed to come about after the government's green paper on agricultural land."

Regional planners had pushed for inclusion of strong measures that would have designated broad swaths of land as foodlands.

Cumming explained the regional planners wanted to point the way and set out broad designations of land with capacity to grow food

and leave the more restrictive designations to the local councils and planning departments—because that's where the local knowledge is greatest.

"They wouldn't buy that. The only way we could have got it through was on the urban conservationist lobby, but that isn't good enough. When we thought we had a faction of the Federation with us we might have been okay, but their opinion seemed to change."

Asked if he was disappointed by the lack of protection the plan now includes for agricultural lands, Cumming acknowledged he was.

"Yes, I think we are disappointed, but it is a plan for people—not for the planners. Sometimes we have our biases and preferences that the decision makers and the people just can't afford."

The committee not only sounded a complete retreat

on that score, but backed off on recommendations it had made to the federal government as well.

The staff had urged that the committee encourage all other government levels and agencies to adopt policies and programs which will promote the economic viability of the agricultural industry.

That much the committee accepted.

But the committee balked when staff recommended the federal government develop a national food policy, protective tariffs, pensions for farmers and general relief from federal taxes on the agricultural industry.

Committee members suggested neither the staff nor the committee understood the complexities of the problem and shouldn't encourage the federal government one way or the other.

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Sixth Line pits may be reopened

Three pits on the Sixth Line, two just rehabilitated, have been listed by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications as an aggregate source.

The Odorico pit, the Spitzer pit and the Pilutti pit, known as the Bessey pit, are three of the 23 sources listed for the contract for the construction of Highway 403, from Highway 401 to Eglinton Avenue.

The MTC states there is a substantial saving by allowing these pits to be listed, even if they are not used. "The fact they are available for use controls the price of granular material in the Halton Hills area," says the MTC.

The MTC guarantees all roads will be returned to their original condition and all pits rehabilitated.

Councillor Roy Booth said the Niagara Escarpment has not given the Odorico and Spitzer pits development permits. He emphasized they were opened up last year and

have since been rehabilitated.

"Between the MTC and the N.E.C. I think the MTC will win the fight," commented Mayor Tom Hill.

A motion saying the town had no objection to the listing of the three pits as aggregate sources ran into opposition. Councillor George Maltby asked it be referred back to works for discussion.

Councillor Pat McKenzie said works committee could do little. "At least this time they are telling us before the fact rather than after."

Booth pointed out the letter does not mention 200,000 tons were taken out of the Odorico and Spitzer pits last year, and was now completely rehabilitated. "Now they want to reopen them further back, after we told the people on the Sixth Line it was all finished." He said the town might get the pits anyway but they should object.

Maltby said he had been under the impression last year's amounts would exhaust the pits.

The matter was referred back to works committee.

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