

Nuclear disarmament referendum approved

There will be a referendum on the question of nuclear disarmament in the municipal election ballot in November, Halton Hills council decided Monday.



After hearing a presentation from Eldon Comfort, RR 4 Acton, dealing with the importance of the referendum and the horrors of nuclear war, (see story page 1), council approved the referendum.

In the spring council approved the referendum "in principle" but ruled the referendum couldn't proceed until there was clarification of a legal question by Queen's Park or the courts. A number of legal opinions offered Ontario municipalities suggested because there was a referendum question on the ballot which wasn't of municipal interest the entire election could be declared null and void. There were also legal opinions suggesting that the referendum couldn't possibly have any effect on the election.

In a statement in the Legislature Attorney General Roy McMurtry reported he had consulted on the matter with his "senior Crown law officers."

"Although it is not possible to state categorically that no municipal election could ever be declared null and void as a result of a court challenge in such circumstances, it is my opinion and that of my senior advisors that it would be most unlikely that a municipal election would be declared null and void for a reason only that a question on nuclear disarmament appeared on the ballot," McMurtry said.

"An election could be set aside only if it were established that an irregularity occurred of a kind which affected the result of the election for

a particular candidate. It is almost impossible to conceive of a situation where any candidate could convince a court that the placing of such a question on a municipal ballot had affected the vote in relation to that particular candidate.

While the issue as to whether or not a particular municipal bylaw placing a referendum question on a municipal ballot is lawful or not may be for the courts to decide, I would offer the opinion that anyone seeking to upset the results of a municipal election because an unauthorized question was also put to the electorate undertakes an almost impossible task."

Comfort had observed the "willingness" to hold the referendum in Halton Hills had been "dampened" by the legal questions and council was "unnecessarily intimidated" by this problem. He noted McMurtry's statements cleared up council's concerns. Comfort added any remaining risk to the election results was minor compared to the risk of nuclear war.

Council passed a resolution directing Town staff to prepare the necessary documents to put the referendum question on the ballot.

Mayor Peter Pomeroy said the resolution was appropriate now that the legal question had been cleared up. He said the

referendum is very important and predicted nobody will challenge the election results in court because of the referendum.

Later in the meeting Councillor Walter Biehn raised his concerns about disarmament. He recalled in the 30s there was a disarmament movement and then there was World War II. Biehn said he has always wondered if there wouldn't have been a war or if it would have ended more quickly, if it hadn't been for the disarmament movement.

Certainly a nuclear war would be a horror, but any war is horror, Biehn said, adding with a "big bad bear" (Russia) on Canada's doorstep this wasn't the time to disarm. He concluded he won't be voting for disarmament in November.

Pomeroy said Biehn's points were well taken, but added the referendum calls for global disarmament, not one side or the other.

He explained he is concerned about the growing number of nations which can have nuclear weapons and said the fact the world can be "blown away" in a few days "scares me."

Pomeroy concluded a movement is needed against nuclear war at the grass roots, though he doesn't know how the "barriers" will be broken down in Russia.



Plants were on sale at the Hide House farmer's market on Saturday. Janis Freed shows off one of the plants.



What's Up Doc? Lynda Wiffis of RR 2 Rockwood is tempted to take a bite out of the carrots she was selling at the Hide House farmer's market Saturday.



Yvonne Rosenquist, Church St. buys baked goods from Elsie and Harvey Dewhart of Church St. at the Hide House farmer's market Saturday morning.



Marianne Timmings celebrated her 10th birthday Saturday selling vegetables at the Hide House farmer's market. She is from RR4 Rockwood.

This week thru the lens

The olde Hide House adds a farmer's market

Photos by Gord Murray



Carolin and Heather Thatcher of Acton were selling vegetables at the Hide House farmer's market Saturday morning for the Inglis farm near Rockwood.



Millie McDonald from Holmesway Pl. examines baskets and other weaving Sonja Amtastetter of RR2 Rockwood was selling at the Hide House farmer's market Saturday morning.

Simon Fraser

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