Housing study debated

Despite Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett's assertion that the controversial housing study was discussed "ad nauseaum" at regional council last week, the administration and finance committee began debating the issue again.

3Walter Mulkewich from Burlington put forward a resolution that would add $12,000 to the budget for a municipal housing statement.

"In that way, we'll be eligible for the $35,000 grant," he said, adding he strongly believed that the region needs a municipal statement to obtain any future funds for housing from the province.

The resolution lost, after a tie vote of 4-4, broken by chairman of the committee Oakville councillor Keith Bird.

Director of Planning Rash Mohammed reiterated his view that a $47,000 housing study is useless without determining the region's role in housing. Originally, he asked council for a $70,000 study, subsidized 50 per cent by the province.

"It is my view that unless the region determines it's role, then the $47,000 study could very well sit on a shelf," he stated, adding he is "very hesitant" to do the study without the role of the region.

But four councillors believed it would eventually get funds from the Ministry. "We're not going to be considered for funds from the province if we don't take the first step," said Oakville councillor Anne Mulvale.

"Staff clearly said half a study is no good, so I won't support it," commented Burlington councillor James Grieve.

The region's Chief Administration Officer summed up staff's position advising councillors against the $47,000 study.

May be Conservation Authority layoff

Layoffs may be in store for some employees of the Halton Region Conservation Authority because of declining financial support from government.

In presenting his annual budget to members of Halton's administration and finance committee HRCA general manager Murray Stephen said some cuts in staff may be necessary.

"We aren't allowing for any new staff in this budget and with the cuts in provincial grants we are facing I very much expect there will be some layoffs among our staff,' he said.

"I'll carry them as long as I can but when the money runs out the staff will have to be reduced," he added.

Total HRCA spending for the year is predicted at $2.7 million, an increase of 6.7 per cent from 1982. Halton taxpayers will finance $1.1 million of the total in addition to special levies of $25,650 on Burlington and $129,296 on Milton.

Provincial support for the Authority, Mr. Stephen said, is down from past years because of changing priorities at that level.

"The reduction in provincial grants reflects a Ministry (of Natural Resources) decision to reallocate provincial money to other conservation authorities in 1983 to finance what the ministry considers other higher provincial priority conservation projects," he said in a letter to the committee.

The grant cutbacks, he said, have meant a stop on some projects.

Other changes in the 1983 budget include an allowance of five per cent for wage increases to conservation employees, "but we haven't decided yet how that will be divied up among the employees of the authority."

While skiers will remember this winter as a disaster, it hasn't been as bad for the conservation authority, he added, saying he expected to break even on the cost of operating the Glen Eden ski area.

While unseasonably mild weather has allowed very few skiing days, it has also greatly reduced the costs of operating the area, he said.

"We won't make a big profit on our skiing operation this year, but we will break even," he said.

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