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John MORRIS

FIRST ELECTION FOR OFFICE

Ric Morrow wins regional chairmanship



RIC MORROW TAKES THE OATH FROM JUDGE WILLIAM SHARPE

Halton Hills Coun. Ric Morrow last week became the first part-time chairman of a region in Ontario when he surprised observers by defeating incumbent Allan Masson for the top political post in Halton.

Mr. Morrow, a 36-year-old commercial pilot, scored the stunning upset during a pre-inaugural caucus by members of regional council. Prior to the meeting Mr. Morrow said he was offering himself as "an alternative as a part-time candidate" in the five-man race.

He plans to support council for the next two years by reducing the powers of the chairman's office and seeking a redefinition of regional government services and powers.

His low-profile approach to the job will include a three-day week and increased discussions with area municipalities as "equal partners" in regional government.

"I would rarely attend public functions unless they happen to be of a specific regional nature," he cautioned council in a five-minute pre-election speech. "If you want the regional chairman to be that of a super-mayor, then I urge you not to vote for me."

Other candidates in the race were: former Halton County Warden James Swanborough; Burlington Coun. Jack Rafitis; former regional councillor Terry Mannell.

The upset occurred on the sixth ballot of the informal caucus as Mr. Morrow scored 13 votes to 10 votes for Mr. Masson. One member declined to vote and remained unidentified.

The question of the informal vote by secret ballot proposed by Burlington Coun. Ben Ciprietti caused concern and questions over the legality of the council action.

"If it is done in any manner other than private," Mr. Ciprietti told council-elect, "then there may be a tactical advantage for one candidate... and the most qualified or capable candidate may not be chosen."

Regional clerk Garfield Brown refused to take in the proceedings saying he was not empowered to conduct such a meeting as an interim chairman. Council, prior to its oath of office, is an assembly without any powers, he said.

"I won't vote," Mr. Anderson declared, as council-elect approved the secret ballot, by a show of hands. "This is against the law." He was the first to later confirm Mr. Morrow as chairman.

The balloting was marred by two consecutive ties between Mr. Morrow and Coun. Rafitis who also campaigned on a part-time ticket. Observers noted that a run-off ballot drew support from Masson voters to defeat Mr. Rafitis 14-10 and then placed Mr. Morrow in the running against Mr. Masson.

Mr. Anderson who didn't vote in the first and second

But Oakville Coun. McLean Anderson questioned the method of election saying the Halton Region Act calls for an open election by majority vote under terms set by the Municipal Act.

Mr. Ciprietti, however, said his checks with the ministry of treasury, economics and intergovernmental affairs (TEIGA) as well as three other regional governments had shown that prior to council being installed, any action, though not binding until officially confirmed could be taken in selecting a new chairman even by secret ballot conducted at an informal caucus.

Regional solicitor Robert Martin refused to comment on the status of the secret ballot election saying "in my view we do not have a council and I am not in a position to make any comment."

He said the procedure would be appropriate.

Most people prefer weekends off, but Mrs. Morrow said her family has "adjusted" to her husband's schedule, which has its advantages. For example she said weekdays are better for skiing and sailing since resorts are less crowded.

Coun. Morrow's chairmanship will consume some of the time he used to spend with his family, but Mrs. Morrow cannot see any drastic alteration in lifestyle.

However, one of the reasons he didn't get into Halton Hills' mayoral race was "because it is a full time job," said Mrs. Morrow.

Although Coun. Morrow's election as chairman left his wife "elated," she said nothing could match the excitement of his first election to Georgetown's local council.

"The first time was the most important, but in a way this time's the same because we have no idea of the outcome," said Mrs. Morrow.

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"Hooray! Daddy won!"

"Hooray! Daddy won!" was the reaction of seven-year-old Tanya Morrow when she heard her father Ric was elected chairman of Halton Region.

"I don't think she really understood what it means," said her mother Sandra "but she shared my excitement."

When Del French phoned Mrs. Morrow with the good news at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, she felt "extremely surprised and very pleased."

She added she is "proud" that the other 23 regional councillors recognized "the really good job and all the

background work" her husband has done during his nine years in Halton politics.

"Ric didn't go into it to win," said Mrs. Morrow, "he just wanted to speak his mind about several things that were bothering him at the region."

Coun. Morrow, a regional councillor since the advent of regional government in 1973, was acclaimed to continue representing Ward 4 in the Dec. 6 municipal election.

An Air Canada pilot, Mr. Morrow can make the formerly full-time position of chairman into a part-time job through "organization," said

Mrs. Morrow. She explained the commercial airline which employees him has a "block system" whereby bidding for shifts is done a month ahead of time.

"Ric has enough seniority as captain to get what he wants," she said, adding he opts to work weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) so he can fulfill his political responsibilities.

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Peel Region Chairman Lou Parsons who attended regional council Wednesday said the informal aspect of the meeting marred by legal and procedural conflicts because the members were not constituted as a council, was nothing short of a fiasco.

He said the chairman's position is not part-time and "he (Mr. Morrow) will find that out and so will council."

In three years as chairman of Peel prior to election two weeks ago, Mr. Parsons said he had difficulty finding any regularly scheduled time off.

He stressed that Halton regional council is "split by divisive forces and obvious camps"

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Status report called for centre, Acton hall

Finance and administration committee has recommended council hire Alan Zeegen and Associates to examine Acton's old town hall and the Cedarvale Community Centre to see how much it would cost to make the two structures sound.

The move came Monday following a slide presentation by Mr. Zeegen and a verbal report of a preliminary study of the buildings.

The committee recommended also that the cost of the next report not exceed \$1,500.

Mr. Zeegen said Acton's old town hall, which now serves as a police station and senior citizen drop-in centre on the main floor only, had quite a few cracks on the outside, the worst being above the main door. The wooden bell tower "didn't seem in too safe condition at the time of the study," he said.

As the building had only one

crack which extended through to the foundation, Mr. Zeegen felt that the "basic fabric of the structure is fairly good shape."

He noted that on the second floor there was no cracking in the plaster, a good sign but added that the floor would need to be examined and to do this required that part of the ceiling be removed.

His preliminary study of Cedarvale Community Centre, where two wings were closed in December, showed that the building is in worse condition than Acton's old town hall, Mr. Zeegen said.

The second floor of the east wing is in bad condition, Mr. Zeegen said. The floor beams, which are three inches out of alignment, are 500 per cent overstressed. "It really shouldn't be standing."

At the opposite end of the building in the auditorium

wing, both the floor and the roof are 300 per cent overstressed, Mr. Zeegen said. The beams for the floor are too small and rotten and infested with wood worms. In the pitched part of the roof the rafters are also overstressed, Mr. Zeegen said.

He estimated a complete study which would include the costs of repairing the two buildings would take about a month.

Present at the meeting were Carol Elliott, president of the Maple Nursery School which had to curtail some of its activities as it was locked out of part of the building and representatives of Area 1 firefighters in Acton.

Mrs. Elliott anticipated that the non-profit nursery in its ninth year of operation would support the building being repaired. Other groups which use the building would also support its repair, she felt.

An area 1 firefighter told the committee that the addition of another firetruck to the three already housed in the fire hall adjacent to Acton's old town hall would mean the meeting room would no longer be there. The firefighters wanted first chance to get space in the old town hall.

Recreation director Glen Gray told the committee that the second floor of the town hall could be used for some of the department's programs.

Mr. Zeegen is the consulting engineer who designed the repairs to the Georgetown Memorial Arena which was closed in the spring of 1976 and re-opened last month.

Armstrong replaces Morrow, March 7 election in Ward 4

Michael Armstrong was appointed Monday regional councillor for Ward 4 replacing Ric Morrow who was elected regional chairman last week.

Council called a by-election March 7 to fill the vacancy

created by Mr. Armstrong's appointment to regional council despite an objection from Ward 1 Coun. Peter Marks who stressed council should advertise the position.

"I think it behooves us to

find everyone, or anyone, else that would be interested in the position," Mr. Marks said as Mayor Tom Hill called a vote on a challenge resolution put forward by the Acton councillor. Council ruled that the proposal out of order.

Council later ratified Mr. Armstrong's appointment unanimously.

Clerk Doug Prichard said nominations for the area council seat will be held Feb. 10, 11 and 14.

Mr. Armstrong's appointment came following the receipt of a 150-name petition raised in Ward 4 calling for a delay until next week of any action in filling Mr. Morrow's vacant post. Under a section of the Halton Region Act, council has 60 days in which to name a successor. It can't call a by-election for a regional position.

The petition called also for consideration of defeated mayoral candidate Harry Levy as a potential appointee to regional council. The petition cited his willingness to serve as mayor, which includes election to the senior local government, and Mr. Levy's eight years as representative of the constituents of Ward 4.

The calling of a by-election is a significant departure from two precedents set by the first Halton Hills council. Appointments of runner-up candidates were made to replace vacancies created by the deaths in office of Graham Ripley which Mr. Armstrong originally filled and for the appointment of George Malby following the death of Len Cox.

Marilyn Serjantson, who ran third in the four-man Ward 4 race in December said she was "surprised they (council) have done this because they have not done this before." She cited the cases of Mr. Ripley and Mr. Cox.

"I do not think the people will be enthusiastic about this election," she said. Earlier Mrs. Serjantson commented that she had learned of the vacant position only at 4 p.m. Monday. Mr. Morrow was

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Meeting a fiasco, Peel chairman says

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In three years as chairman of Peel prior to election two weeks ago, Mr. Parsons said he had difficulty finding any regularly scheduled time off.

He stressed that Halton regional council is "split by divisive forces and obvious camps"

and that Mr. Morrow's concern over eradicating packhamism will need more time, not less time to bring it together.

"They (council) will not stay together just because they voted for him," Mr. Parsons said.

Several members of council indicated following the meeting that Mr. Morrow, who filed papers last week but did not confirm his standing until Tuesday, had entered the race to support Mr. Masson in the face of a strong bid by Coun. Jack Rafitis. Mr. Morrow conceded prior to the meeting that he was standing "as an alternative" if council wished a part-time chairman.

Election may stop clean air crusade

Coun. Ric Morrow's election as regional chairman may end his crusade to freshen up in the air in Halton Hills council chambers.

Recalling his bid 14 months ago to have smoking banned during council and committee meetings, Coun. Morrow, an occasional smoker himself tabled a motion last Tuesday night to have a ventilation system installed in the

chamber.

"At the inaugural last week you couldn't see from one end of the room to the other," he complained.

In a turn-around from its narrow defeat of Coun. Morrow's no-smoking resolution in November, 1975, council last night agreed to have town engineer Bob Austin investigate the cost of installing ventilating fans.

Levy OKs appointment

Defeated mayoral candidate Harry Levy is prepared to accept appointment to either regional or area council to replace Ric Morrow elected as Halton Region chairman last week.

But Mr. Levy a member of Georgetown and Halton Hills councils prior to his defeat Dec. 6, says he's not prepared to fight a costly by-election.

Speaking Saturday, Mr. Levy commented that he made immediate commitments following the election and he's unsure of the amount of time he'd have in the next two months to conduct a campaign for a by-election. As well he added, it is a costly venture.

A major concern to Mr. Levy and to several supporters who have been circulating a petition calling for his appointment rather than a by-election

is the \$5,000 to \$6,000 cost of holding the election to replace Mr. Morrow on local council.

"I'd sooner serve at the region, but I would be willing to serve on area council by appointment," Mr. Levy said.

The petition circulated in Ward 4 calls for Mr. Levy's appointment because of his past record of (eight years) and the possibility of having two inexperienced members of council serving Ward 4.

Twelve people were circulating the petition Saturday and response was reported as good.

Of the three members of council from Ward 4 only Coun. Mike Armstrong served on Halton Hills council during its first three years, there is a regional seat vacant by Mr. Morrow's election and Coun. Peter Morris is serving his first term.

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Acton keepers get no help

About 20 Acton merchants, any relief for the loss of sales. Treasurer Ray King and clerk-administrator Doug Prichard told the committee that there was no provision in the municipal act for such action and that to do otherwise would be to set a dangerous and costly precedent.

Committee chairman Russ Miller said a petition from the merchants complained of the timing of the reconstruction.

Ward 1 Coun. Peter Marks called the timing of the Mill Street's reconstruction "disastrous." It cost the merchants a minimum of \$500,000, he said.

"We've learned that we should include those affected by such reconstruction in the planning stages," Coun. Marks said.

A better time to have done the work is in July and August when "Acton closes down," Coun. Marks said. He suggested that the works department consult with the merchants when the reconstruction is finished sometime in the spring.

Coun. Peter Morris pointed out that there is more to reconstruction than just doing the work. Grants from the province must be spent in the same year or they won't be forthcoming, Coun. Morris said.

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AREA SKATERS COMPETE IN DANCE TESTS

Three members of the Georgetown Figure Skating Club who attempted the Silver Dance test Monday night at the Gordon Alcott arena. From left to right, Laura Yerxa, Cidney Sherry and Sherry Smeaton. See Sports pages for story.

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- Page 5-Letters to the editor



DR. AND MRS. ROBERT PETRIE

DOCTOR EMIGRATES TO ILLINOIS

Canadian nationalism has been overruled by economic practicality leading to Georgetown's Dr. Robert Petrie to set up a practice in the United States.

"I don't prefer to live in the United States," he told The Herald Friday, "but I can't afford to live here."

The 400 families Dr. Petrie served from his office in the Georgetown health unit have been referred to his replacement Dr. Tranter.

Dr. Petrie, who launched his career in Georgetown almost two years ago, explained it's not easy to make payments on his medical education, his Delrex Blvd. home and keep a wife and child in Southern Ontario.

He listed two reasons: "Southern Ontario is over-doctored" and he's "fed up with government mismanagement of economics and economic policies which interfere with medical practice."

In Canada, he said, the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan (OHIP) compensates doctors for the number of patients they attend to.

"So the more people you see, the more money you make," Dr. Petrie said, adding, "that's not always best for the patients."

On the other hand, he is free to set his own fees at the private practice he started in Rockford, Illinois Monday.

Another advantage of American living is the privilege of tax deductions on house mortgage interests, he said.

The Petries, reluctant to leave Georgetown because they "enjoyed" living here and made many friends, said their objective is to return to Canada if the medical situation changes.

Dr. Bob Porter of Toronto accompanied the Petries to the United States.