

Halton Regional Police budget up 11.2 per cent

Although the Halton Regional Police reduced their Regionally-funded budget by \$30,000 this year, some councillors say the cut was not a serious attempt at budget reduction.

This year's police budget is approved at \$27.5 million, an 11.2 per cent increase over the 1988 figure of \$24.8 million. About 85 per cent of the total budget pays the force's 330 uniformed officers and 134 civilians.

This year's increase will help pay for 20 staff to be added to the Halton police force this year. Half

that number will work in the Oakville area.

But the police budget "was not a true attempt at a serious budget reduction," said Oakville Coun. Peter Arch. He was joined in his criticisms by Burlington Coun. Rob Forbes.

"The police budget does not seem to be receptive to the fact that there are other burdens on the Region as well," said Coun. Forbes.

He said the police budget has increased "well beyond the rate of inflation."

But several regional councillors stood behind the police force, including Milton Coun. Bill Johnson and Burlington Mayor Roly Bird.

"I'm not really here to defend the police budget. I've always just accepted it," said Mayor Bird. He pointed to other budget-increases approved by the Region that were higher than the force's 11.2-per cent hike.

Mayor Bird said business development was approved at 18.5 per cent, culture and special grants increased by 30 per cent and day care funds jumped by 25 per

cent. Oakville Coun. John Graham said this is the first year the police have co-operated with the Region by reducing their budget.

"I tremendously object to what I consider to be a cheap shot at Halton police," said Coun. James Grieve, past chairman of the police commission.

He said that Halton's force is a "role model" for police, and its costs are "among the lowest in the province."

Police chief James Harding agreed with Coun. Grieve. He said

the Halton police force has one of the lowest per-capita costs for policing.

But he added that he wasn't surprised councillors criticized the police budget.

"It is never wrong to scrutinize the police. That's what keeps our society democratic," he said.

But "the request (for increased budget funding) have just kept us up with population growth and nothing more," he said.

"If (councillors) don't want the police force to grow, stop the community from growing."

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Mixed reactions to Watchtower expansion

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

There were mixed reactions Monday to proposed additions to the 172-acre Watchtower Bible and Tract Society property in Georgetown.

Several residents living near the Highway 7-Trafalgar Road location spoke at a public meeting Tuesday night in the Town of Halton Hills council chambers. Some called Watchtower a "good neighbor" while others complained about smells and noises coming from the property.

Watchtower is requesting a zoning bylaw change to allow for the construction of a second residence (to be three-storeys high) and a new administration building. The society would also like to expand an existing residence, two service buildings, and an existing printing and distribution building. All these changes would be to the eastern half of the Watchtower property, which covers 84 acres. Under the present zoning bylaw, Watchtower could not make these changes.

Watchtower representative Glen Howe said the proposed changes would have "no serious impact" on the community.

"What we're doing is very influential and helpful on the site... it isn't going to hurt the municipality."

"The facility is already here and the facility is very well kept. (It) is a credit to the municipality," he said.

But some neighbors disagreed. Richard Knoepfli, who lives on Highland Avenue, opposite the Watchtower site, says a horrible smell is coming from the property.

"It seems like someone's opening a valve and the smell comes right over," he said at the public meeting. Mr. Knoepfli said that although the proposed Watchtower expansion "is a very noble undertaking," the sewer facilities "are not in good shape."

Watchtower has its own sewer

treatment plant on the premises, which it will expand if rezoning is approved for reconstruction and additions.

Mr. Howe said that the health department is satisfied with Watchtower's system, and has taken tours throughout the grounds.

"We have not been receiving complaints," he said. He told Mr. Knoepfli that Watchtower would like to be informed when there are problems concerning the Watchtower property.

Nearby resident Marian Middleburg said she is in favor of the Watchtower expansions. "I felt more secure because there's not any crime or vandalism coming from there," she said.

"They have been a good neighbor," said Bob Tate, who lives on Wildwood Road on Watchtower's eastern boundary. "I have a beautiful view of the barn (on the property), and it is kept in good shape," he said.

But the view from Gabrielle Voros' home is of a "junkyard," says the resident, who lives north of the Watchtower property. "It used to be bush there but now they've cut everything down... now it looks like a junkyard," she said.

Mrs. Voros said she just wants privacy and to stop the noise of machinery that "continues from morning to night."

Mrs. Voros' son John said there is a heavy machinery sitting on the property.

Residents also expressed concerns about the local water supply. Watchtower's engineer Archie Arbuckle said if approved for expansion, Watchtower will be putting in a 350-mm water main. This main would improve water service to outlying areas.

The water pressure would also be increased for the area at Watchtower's cost, he said.

Mr. Arbuckle said "there is adequate water available to service this site (but) it's the town's responsibility to allocate (water)."



"It's in the book"

The University Women's Club is holding a book sale at Knox Presbyterian Church, Main & Church Streets, on Saturday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Women's Zelek (3), and Alanna Zelek (6). Back row, Craig (Club organizers were busy sorting books last week and Ashton (5) and Ian Steinwack (5). (Herald photo)

Crazy boaters raise \$10,000 for MS

Crazy boaters who raced down the Credit River last weekend brought in over \$10,200 for multiple sclerosis.

Lions Club crazy boat race chairman Bob Gordon said the figure for Saturday's event is up significantly from last year's race although the number of participants was about the same.

With more than \$10,200 already in, the Lions Club is still expecting more money to come in from pledges.

Almost 60 crazy boats and 12 canoeists braved the frigid Credit River in the 23rd annual event.

"We had good success considering the weather prior to the race. It

was colder than last year," said Mr. Gordon.

The Lions Club floated 200 rubber ducks down the Credit River as an additional fundraiser this year. Each duck was sponsored by a company and the company whose duck came across the finish line first had money donated to the charity of its choice.

The first crazy boat across the line in Class "B" was the big white canoe entered by Robert Miller and David Elwood.

The best presented crazy boat to cross the finish line (that is, the craziest boat to cross the finish line in the best condition), was the Refugees, entered by Rich Hynd-

man, Ian Neve, Jim Brewster, Pete Allan and Judy Brewster.

In the Commercial category the S.S. Seaman II crossed the line first. That entry was guided by Jeff Atkinson, Dean Campbell, David Campbell and Dan Atwell.

In the Commercial "D" class the Mold Masters-MFI entry guided by Denis Babin, Mario Vettor, Thomas Schuster, Patric Bennett and Gino Colonico took top honors.

And the first innertube boat across the line was entered by Keith MacDonald, Derek MacDonald, Scott Walker and John Recagno.

The first canoe across the line in Class "A" was entered by Andre Ouimet and Tim Desjardins.

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