

# Bringing departments together is more efficient, says Mayor

By BEN DUMMETT  
Herald Staff

"Efficiency" is the word Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller uses to explain the difference between working in the new Civic Centre on Maple Avenue and working in the old administration building on Trafalgar Road.

Having the town's different departments now under one roof means day-to-day problems can be addressed in a matter of minutes instead of two hours, Mayor Miller said.

A typical scenario Mayor Miller gave describing the time wasted when departments were scattered, went like this: A 9:00 a.m. meeting is scheduled but one of the participants is delayed. The meeting isn't cancelled because rescheduling would mean more wasted time.

People are therefore waiting when they could otherwise be working. Now if someone is delayed for a meeting the participants can walk back to their offices and work until everyone has arrived.

Meetings themselves are easier to schedule since the move, Mayor Russ Miller said.

The administration building lacked committee rooms but the Civic Centre houses a large committee room and a smaller one for each department, he explained.

The public also benefits from the town's departments being in one building, said the mayor. A contractor recently told Mayor Miller he was able to complete his business in 20 minutes whereas in the old building the same work took two hours.

A better work environment is

another benefit of the Civic Centre. Employees are able to get to know each other, creating a family feeling, he said.

But a family feeling doesn't make for good working conditions alone. A building's physical attributes also play an important role, Mayor Miller said.

He pointed out it was difficult working in the administration building because it was poorly ventilated, some offices were without windows and there were only two small washrooms.

The administration building was also uncomfortable for the public, he said. The council chambers were small, there were no public washrooms and it was inaccessible to seniors and the handicapped.

The new council chambers were designed to hold 70 people but it can hold up to 100, Mayor Miller said.

The chamber's circular design also means a more "homey feeling" for both the public and councillors, said the mayor.

If the Chambers has a problem it is the lack of a public announcement system, Mayor Miller said.

However, this problem could be solved as early as 1990, he said.

A new microphone system will be included in the 1990 budget agenda, he said.

If approved a microphone would be installed to be used by the public and delegations when addressing council. The councillor's seating places would also have microphones, he said.

The necessary wiring is currently in place, it only has to be hooked up, he said.

Surprisingly the building's cafeteria is playing a role in allowing the public to better enjoy the council chambers.

Delegations are now provided with the opportunity to take a break while waiting to make their presentation.

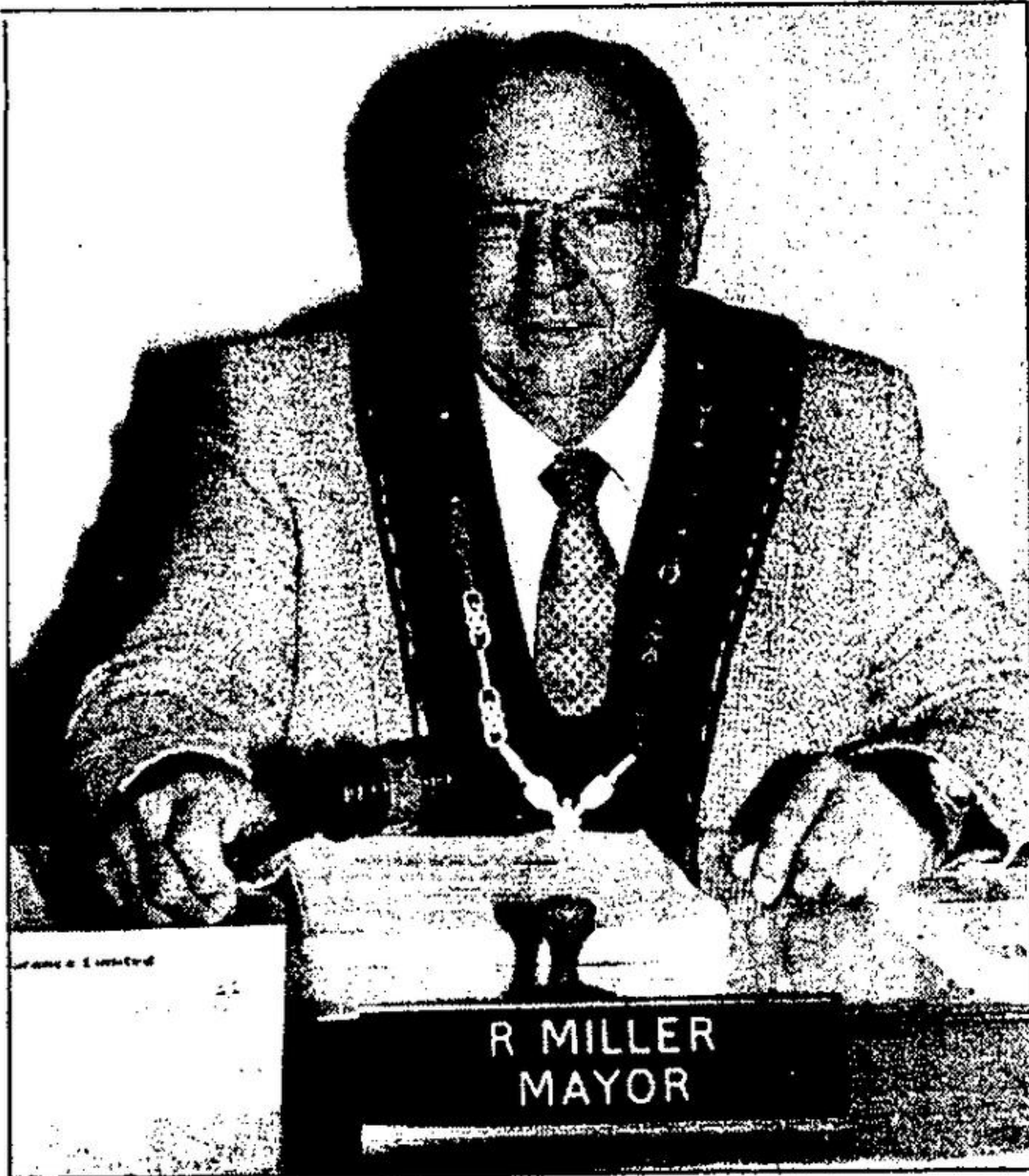
But the Mayor just couldn't leave everything about the old building behind. He brought along his one-hundred-year-old desk to his new office, saying "I like to feel comfortable, this is more important than anything else."



Town Planner Glenn Wellings explains applications for rezoning land during public meetings from the new podium in the rounded council chambers. The public won't have to jam the halls to hear Mr. Wellings speak from the podium any more because the public gallery is twice as big in the new building. (Herald Photo)



Town engineer Bob Austin (left) and treasurer Ray King take meticulous notes during a recent council meeting. The department heads sit immediately in front of the public gallery. (Herald Photo)



Gavel in hand Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller donned his chain of office at the new civic centre during a council meeting recently. Plans call for a microphone system so the public can hear the councillors better. (Herald Photo)

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