

# Region to make provision for effect of GST

By **BEN DUMMETT**  
The Herald

Halton Region's Administration and Finance Committee will hear today, (Wednesday), that a provision has been made for approximately \$664,000 to meet the expected increased Regional costs due to the Federal government's Goods and Service Tax, (GST), which is scheduled to come into effect Jan. 1, 1991, said the Regions Treasurer Joe Rinaldo.

Mr. Rinaldo predicts that the cost for water and sewage will increase by \$214,000, more than it

normally would have been without the GST, while garbage disposal will climb \$450,000 more than expected because of the GST, said the treasurer.

Mr. Rinaldo cautioned that these predicted figures, could differ from the actual impact the GST will have on these two regional tax areas. The actual impact won't be known for sure until the GST actually comes into effect, stressed Mr. Rinaldo.

The impact on the costs of sewage and water and waste disposal would have been

significantly greater, said Mr. Rinaldo, if the full amount of the GST - seven per cent - was applied at the Regional level. The Federal government is offering a four per cent rebate on municipal items affected by the GST, said the treasurer. That means the GST will only have a net effect of three per cent on Halton Region. If not for the rebate, said Mr. Rinaldo, "we would have been in real trouble."

The GST will replace the three existing federal government taxes affecting municipalities: the 13.5

per cent Manufacturing Sales Tax, the nine per cent Building Supply Tax and the 11 per cent Telecommunications Tax. Mr. Rinaldo explained that the biggest positive effect the GST will have is in the area of telecommunications. Instead of paying 11 per cent on items such as telephone bills, the Region will only be required to pay 3 per cent.

The reduced tax rate will mean a \$150,000 savings next year, predicted Mr. Rinaldo, but several other departments under the Region may increase by approximately one to two per cent, he said. If these increases happen, the affected departments are to try and absorb the costs. Any increases that can't be absorbed will chip away at the expected \$150,000 telecommunications savings, ex-

plained Mr. Rinaldo. As for the Region's capital budget, Mr. Rinaldo was unable to say what effect the GST will have. The positive or negative impact will depend on whether the Region's suppliers for capital projects pass on their savings because of the GST, he explained.

Halton's Director of Purchasing, Cam Wheldon, said he is hopeful that they will pass on any savings but the suppliers have yet to say anything definite. "They're still scrambling to figure out how the GST will affect them," said Mr. Wheldon.

This uncertainty means the net effect of the GST on the combined expenditures of operating and capital costs is still up in the air, said Mr. Rinaldo.

## Halton Hills planning process is 'tainted' claim developers

By **BEN DUMMETT**  
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The developers behind a Ballinafad subdivision proposal argue the Halton Hills planning process, as it involved the Niagara Escarpment Commission was tainted by emotion and thus unfair.

Kent and Lois McClure, who are behind the Beechbrook development, a 20-house development on the east side of the Eighth Line between the Erin/Halton Hills Town Line and Sideroad 27, said the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), made an "emotional" decision rather than one based on fact.

The NEC was asked by the town to comment on the Beechbrook application because the property is included in the commission's area of jurisdiction.

Ms. McClure argues the NEC should operate in the same way as the Halton Hills council is required when deciding on the legitimacy of a development proposal.

Under the province's Planning Act once the town receives a development application, the town's planning department circulates the application to various affected agencies for their comments on the appropriateness of the application, said town planner Glen Wellings. After receiving the comments, the staff then asks council for approval to hold a public meeting on the proposal.

During the public meeting, the town's planning department, said Mr. Wellings, lists the concerns raised by the public and carries out an investigation to determine the validity of the comments. The planning department then writes a report including a recommendation either supporting or rejecting the application. The report and recommendation then go before council where a final decision is made, he explained.

Town staff has already indicated it supports the Beechbrook application and the town's general committee, which is comprised of the councillors, voted on the recommendation yesterday night (Tuesday). The decision was unavailable at press time.

The NEC originally followed its staff recommendation and supported the Beechbrook application with the exception being, the developer could only build 18 instead of 20 houses. But six months later the commission overturned the same staff recommendation and opposed the application.

The commissioners reversed their decision after considering, for the first time, written letters and a presentation protesting the application. The letters highlighted issues ranging from the land in question being good farm land to an increase in traffic that would result if the development was permitted.

The commission did not question its staff on the validity of the arguments put forth by the residents or defer making a decision until the staff had time to investigate the claims, confirmed NEC planner David Johnson.

Mr. McClure points to this fact as proof that the NEC decision was emotional and not based on fact. "How can they (the commissioners), do their duty if they don't test presented facts or don't take steps to do so, he argued.

Mr. Johnson said he is sure the public input had quite a bit of influence in getting the commission to reverse its decision. He explained that the commission doesn't always consult with staff before making a decision that is partly based on new information.

The planners said the commission, based on the staff report coupled with the letters and one

presentation, decided the application was inappropriate for the land in question.

According to the NEC report, the commission opposed the application because the proposal wouldn't maintain the scenic value of the lands, wouldn't maintain the open landscape of the area, and that the lands represent good farmland.

Mr. McClure also questions why the NEC reconsidered the application six months after first approving it. According to the commission's rules of procedure, a copy of which was obtained by Mr. McClure, the commission can only reopen an application on the same day the decision is made or during the following meeting, which should render the second decision invalid.

Cecil Louis, manager of the Plan Administration at the NEC, said the commission has referred to their rules of procedure for direction but it considers none of the rules cast in stone.

## Police apprehend jewelry store thieves

Halton Regional Police have charged two Sarnia men with one count of robbery each, after a civilian alerted police to a suspicious vehicle leaving the Guelph Street Van Jewelry store Aug. 29.

One male, who wore a mask when he demanded jewelry from the store owner, was charged with wearing a disguise while committing an offence.

Police investigators located the suspect vehicle the next day in Mississauga and subsequent investigations resulted in the arrests of the two 28-year-old Sarnia men at a Highway 401 service station in the Cambridge area. The stolen jewelry, except four rings, were recovered.

The two males were held in Milton pending a bail hearing.



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