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Region tax rate set for 1991

The average Halton household will pay just over \$34 more in Regional taxes this year over 1990, representing an average 5.74 per cent increase to the 1991 tax rate.

Halton Regional Council Wednesday approved a \$631.43 combined average tax rate for households in Halton. The average Halton household is based on the average assessment of Halton's four municipalities. Halton Hills' assessment is estimated at \$5,500, slightly lower than that of Oakville, Burlington and Milton. That means Town residents' Regional tax rate jumps 7.7 per cent from \$245.29 last year to \$264.14 in 1991.

Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy said during a press conference preceding council's vote on the budget, the increase could have been smaller but to do so would have meant significantly jeopardizing the existing level of service now provided by Regional government.

To keep the average combined tax rate under 6 per cent, which is almost four per cent less than that of 1990, marginal areas of service had to be reduced. "I think the level in key areas is at the same level as in the past," said the chairman.

The combined Regional tax rate is comprised of the tax rate for Regional services and that for water and sewage.

The Region's budget committee showed great restraint to keep the increase as low as it did, since a lot of the Region's expenses are beyond its control, said the chairman.

Provincial legislation require the Region to budget for an array of expenditures. Chairman Pomeroy pointed to the federal government's decision to raise Unemployment Insurance Premiums saying the increase will cost the Region \$150,000 this



Joe Rinaldo

year and up to \$400,000 in 1992. Meanwhile, the Region "tightened its belt this year" through such measures as implementing a rigid hiring system to limit the number of replaced job vacancies to a bare necessity, he said.

To further prove the Region was limited in its ability to reduce expenditures he provided the following example: considering only tax money for Regional services, each household on average will pay \$18.92 more over last year. Except for \$2.26 that increase goes toward Halton Regional police budget and General Welfare Payments - two expenditures Halton has no control over, said the chairman.

Asked if Council will be able to keep the 1992 budget increase as low as that of this year, Chairman Pomeroy said it will depend on the economy. An improved economy, said Chairman Pomeroy, will mean less General Welfare payments. He predicted, however, people shouldn't be optimistic.

Halton's Treasurer, Joe Rinaldo, is predicting an equally difficult tax year in 1992 or even worse, said the chairman.



Citizen of the Year

Mrs. Siena Van Hoekelen was the guest of honor last Tuesday evening at the Georgetown Lions Club Hall as she was recognized as Georgetown Citizen of the Year by the Georgetown Lions Club which has sponsored the event since 1972. The Lions Club Hall was filled to overflowing in tribute to Mrs. Van Hoekelen who received accolades from North Halton MPP Noel Duignan, on behalf of Ontario Premier

Bob Rae; Halton Region Chairman Peter Pomeroy and Town of Halton Hills Mayor, Russ Miller. In the picture above, Lions Club member, Mani Mitera, who acted as Master of Ceremonies for the evening, presents Mrs. Van Hoekelen with the Citizen of the Year plaque. For more on the Citizen of the Year dinner, please see page 8. (Herald photo by Colin Gibson)

Town road reconstruction raising residents ire

By BEN DUMMETT

The Herald
Halton Hills Engineering staff Tuesday was unable to convince some Georgetown residents that a proposal to reconstruct Main Street from Maple Avenue to 10 Sideroad is the environmentally safest way to accommodate future growth in Georgetown South. However, staff has been able to bring a majority of Town councillors on side.

Town General Committee, which is comprised of councillors, recommended the endorsement of a reconstruction plan that would ultimately result in Main Street being upgraded to a two-lane road, 30 metres wide, from Maple Avenue to 15 Sideroad. At this juncture the road will eventually be rebuilt to a four lane roadway extending to Sideroad 10.

The proposed four-lane strip would only happen when Georgetown South reaches its residential development capacity and more than 50 per cent of its industrial development capacity, according to the staff report presented to committee. Town engineer Bob Austin predicted this growth wouldn't happen until after the year 2000.

Asked by Councillor Pat McCarthy, a critic of the reconstruction proposal, why the Town should consider a four-lane highway that won't be required for a long time, Mr. Austin replied "it's prudent planning."

General Committee's recommendation will go before Council for final approval this Monday.

Residents attending Tuesday's Committee meeting either outright rejected the proposal or questioned the process Town staff has used to arrive at the chosen reconstruction plan.

One Main Street South (Eighth Line resident) told committee endorsement of the reconstruction design would be one more step in the destruction of Georgetown's "small town atmosphere," the primary reason people move to the community in the first place.

The gentleman predicted the Eighth Line would be transformed into a "death trap" if construction went ahead. It's virtually impossible to enter onto the road from his driveway now, because traffic is travelling too quickly, the man said. He also feared increased truck traffic resulting from the new road would present a danger to local residents currently using the roadway.

Town Engineer Peter Linn said the road construction would improve traffic safety in the wake of an unavoidable increase in traffic as Georgetown South grows.

Mr. Linn found support from Acton Coun. Norm Elliott, who said he travels along the Eighth Line and the traffic problems existing now will only get worse with time.

He lamented those people in the audience who claim the studies

done so far on the road reconstruction project are just a waste of taxpayer's money. The community expects the Town to plan for the future but then turns around and accuses the municipality of losing money when it does take action, said the councillor. He said it's a waste of money when the Town spends money to plan for future growth and then is asked to disregard the work that is done.

Georgetown resident Marilyn King complained the Town's approach to coming up with a plan to reconstruct the road is incorrect.

According to Mr. Linn, the Town is following the guidelines as set down by the province. That means it decided on a preferred road construction design that minimizes any environmental, social and economic impact. Once council endorses the preferred design a report is written incorporating the technical data

Continued on Page 5

Hospital shuts down waste incinerator

Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital announced Wednesday it has closed its incinerator and will not be conducting any further burning. The existing incinerator will be demolished and the space made available will be used for storage of waste awaiting haulage and/or recycling.

John Oliver, executive director at the hospital, reported that the hospital conducted an engineering study of the incinerator. At the February meeting of the hospital's board of directors, the decision was made to shut down the incinerator in the interests of protecting the environment and alleviating concerns raised by neighbors.

The hospital will be expending capital funds to demolish the incinerator, to improve the storage for waste and to acquire a document shredder to ensure that confidential patient and staff documents are not released from the hospital.

Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital is a 112-bed primary, acute care and long term care facility. As a preliminary health care provider, the hospital is committed to identifying health care needs for Halton Hills, and developing programs in co-operation with other health agencies.

Established in 1961, Georgetown Hospital celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

New commissioner named

Halton Region has a new Public Works Commissioner.

Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy announced Wednesday, Art Leitch, the current Public Works Commissioner of Durham Region, will take over his new position from Acting Public Works Commissioner Bruce Kitchen in late April.

Mr. Leitch brings to the Region extensive experience in Regional Government and a strong set of qualifications, experience and skills, said chairman Pomeroy.

Mr. Leitch holds both Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Engineering in addition to a Masters Degree in Business Administration.

An Inside Look

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