

# Community

## Delmar French to step aside

By BEN DUMMETT  
the Herald

There are probably few Halton Hills residents who have not had some contact with Delmar French at one time or another.

As the Town's Deputy Clerk for the past 17 years, Mr. French, 64, has been the liaison between the public, Town Council and Town staff. If you wanted to know about a council policy, or how to apply for a building permit or wanted to appear before council as a delegation, Mr. French was probably the first Town official with whom you came in contact.

Undoubtedly there are some residents who have not met Mr. French but if they've attended a Town Council meeting at any time during the last 17 years, they have at least seen him.

He's the officious looking gentleman who sits to the left of Town Mayor Russ Miller during council every Monday night. But this familiar council sight will soon come to an end as Mr. French plans to retire July 31.

Town Administrative-Clerk Dan Costea, who has worked very closely with Mr. French said Friday, the thing he'll miss most about Mr. French is his "dedication to the job." "He's a real professional," said Mr. Costea.

This professionalism shows up in his extremely high ethical standards, said Mr. Costea. Coming from the old school of strict discipline, Mr. French adheres to regulations and has incredible respect for Council and the hierarchy of Halton Hills (in its capacity as a corporation)," explained Mr. Costea.

It's no wonder then Mr. French would shed no light on how the current council compares to those of previous years or if he could remember some of the more bizarre or controversial episodes involving councillors and the public.

Mr. French, along with his wife Marguerite, have lived in Georgetown since 1952. For the next 13 years he held positions first with a Guelph machinery dealership and then Canada Post.

His first municipal position was as Assistant Clerk-Treasurer and Tax Collector for the former Town of Esquesing which lasted from 1965 to 1968.

He then held positions of Deputy Clerk and Clerk Treasurer until the formation of the Town of Halton Hills and the formation of Regional government in 1974.

Mr. French said during his tenure, town council has grown from five people to the current number of 13.

Mr. French describes his role "as a guide for council" in what it can and cannot do, according to the province's Municipal Act.

Over the years, one of the biggest changes Mr. French has noticed involves the public's perception of both Town staff and politicians. During the last five years, said Mr. French, the general public has become less and less appreciative of politicians.

Asked if he would ever run for council he quickly said no.

"I don't envy their jobs, said Mr. French. A councillor's job is much more difficult than people think it is because more of the public is participating in the system. Councillors are required to consider more opinions than ever," he said.

Regarding people's attitude towards Town staff Mr. French said the public unfairly attributes political decisions to staff. Staff's role is only to interpret council's policies, he explained.

Among other things, running municipal elections has been one of the job's highlights. "No two elections are the same. During

every election there are new problems to tackle," he explained.

Mr. French said he's looking forward to his retirement and hopes to spend some of his increased free time doing volunteer work.

The Town has yet to name Mr. French's successor.

One person who will be sad to see Mr. French leave is Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller.

Mayor Miller, who has known Mr. French since 1964, describes the Deputy Clerk as someone "who is concerned about the public and its needs. I have the greatest respect for the man," the mayor added.



Halton Hills Deputy Clerk Delmar French, who plans to retire from his position this summer after 17 years on the job, describes his role as a guide for Council. Working so closely with councillors, he's come to know them and what their jobs entail. If there is one thing he's learned, it's that he doesn't envy their job. (Herald photo)

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