

News at a Glance

Realistic reaper reappears in town budget forecast

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

Cuts and more cuts, that appears to be the town budget committee's focus in dealing with the 1992 proposed capital budget.

The committee recommended Tuesday \$51,000, which would normally be raised through the tax levy, be cut from the \$7.6 million capital budget.

That brings the total amount of expenditures raised through taxes so far eliminated from the budget to \$183,850.

Aside from these cuts, committee members only recommended \$1,200 be given out in grants to groups in town.

Comparatively, the town handed out \$10,400 in grants last year.

Both budget committee recommendations will go before town council for final approval sometime during the next two months.

The committee is comprised of town council members.

Groups slated to receive grants this year include Arts Alive, Glen Williams Town Hall Board and Halton Hills Ambulance Service.

Committee members recommended Arts Alive receive \$700; Halton Hills Ambulance Service receive \$300; and Glen Williams Town Hall Board receive \$200.

Grant requests rejected include those by: Georgetown Girls Pipe Band; North Halton Literacy Guild; Georgetown and District Red Cross Branch; Air Cadet League Squadron 756; Halton Hills Gymnastic Club; Georgetown and Acton Agricultural Societies; and Georgetown Horseshoe Club.

In defence of the low number of grants, town Mayor Russ Miller said Wednesday, "I believe people should have to pay more for services they want, but others may not."

Committee members deferred deciding whether the Acton Citizens' Band should receive a \$5,500 grant requested by the group.

Committee members also defer, until March, whether or not to approve the new \$4 million Acton arena project.

Mayor Miller justified the deferral saying, a decision can't be made until the committee has more information concerning where the arena should be located and the cost to service the building.

As well, committee members first want to compare the arena expenditure with that of all other expenditures required this year before making a decision, explained Mayor Miller.

According to the 1992 proposed capital budget report, the town's 1993 tax levy would automatically increase by 4.3 per cent if the building was constructed during that year.

Approval of the arena in 1992 means financing can be arranged to build the project next year. Therefore, approval this year would have no effect on the 1992 tax increase, the report indicates.

REGION NOTES

Composting system questioned

The establishment of a central composting system to service Halton and perhaps Peel, received lukewarm support from the region's Planning and Public Works Committee Wednesday.

Committee members recommended the region spend \$77,500 to hire a consultant consortium to investigate the project's feasibility, but not before a heated debate transpired.

The recommendation will go before regional council this Wednesday for final approval.

Burlington regional councillors Bob Brechin and Barry Quinn raised the most concerns about the project.

Visibly angry, Coun. Quinn said the region should "tread slowly because fantastic costs are involved."

Indeed, Public Works Commissioner Art Leitch said following the meeting, the construction of a central compost facility to service Halton and Peel would cost approximately \$25 million.

If the facility served Halton and Peel the \$25 million price tag would be split between the two municipalities, he said.

Mr. Leitch wouldn't estimate the cost to build a facility to serve only Halton.

A composting system converts organic waste, such as food waste, into fertilizer.

The feasibility study will determine whether a region or inter-regional composting facility would be more economical.

Coun. Brechin asked why staff couldn't carry out the study instead of spending \$77,500 on consultants to do the work.

"We (regional staff) need a detailed investigation done into the



ART LEITCH

technology and regional staff doesn't have the expertise to deal with this cutting edge project," replied Mr. Leitch.

Mr. Leitch pointed out no such facility currently exists in North America.

The technology for large scale composting operations are based in Europe, he added.

While satisfied with this explanation, Coun. Brechin was angry when he learned the study wouldn't include a detailed cost analysis concerning the project.

He was particularly upset to learn regional staff wouldn't include the cost each of Halton's four

municipalities, including Halton Hills, would incur if the project goes ahead.

Municipalities would incur costs in doing the curbside collection of the material that would go to the compost facility.

Coun. Brechin said regional staff would be required to find out these costs and include them as part of the feasibility study before he would consider approving the project.

Picking up on this topic, Coun. Quinn said, "We (regional councillors) are so concerned about the province forcing additional costs on us, yet we're doing the same thing to the municipalities."

In response to these concerns, Mr. Leitch assured committee members the costs local municipalities would incur because of the project will be included in the feasibility study.

Local environmentalist Diane van de Valk says a large compost facility isn't feasible because there is no way of preventing contaminated material from entering the compost facility.

If this happened then the compost material would be useless as fertilizer.

Questioned about this criticism, Mr. Leitch said Ms. van de Valk is wrong.

Technology exists to prevent the contamination of compost material, he said.

Expenditure recommended

Halton's Planning and Public Works committee recommended Wednesday, the region spend \$634,000 to provide Halton residents with household hazardous waste collection and disposal services.

The recommendation calls for Burlington-based Laidlaw Environmental Services Inc. to provide the services.

While acknowledging the service's relatively high cost, committee members agreed the environmental costs in not providing the service would be higher.

The recommendation will go before regional council this Wednesday for final approval.

Burlington regional councillor Bob Brechin asked whether or not a user-pay system should be employed to collect hazardous waste instead of the Region covering the expense.

However, staff warned people would be less likely to have their hazardous waste properly disposed of if they had to pay directly for the service.

According to a staff report, Laidlaw will have hazardous depots in Milton to serve North Halton residents and in Burlington to serve South Halton residents.



Special blood donation

Volunteers Anna Ewen (far right) and Elaine Chatten present Elizabeth Neilsen with a Red Cross certificate after her 51st donation. The clinic was held Monday from 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Holy Cross Church hall Georgetown and was sponsored by the Georgetown Optimist Club. (Herald photo)

Donors have right stuff at Red Cross clinic

Red Cross officials reported 281 donors attended the Blood Clinic Monday, and donated 269 units of blood. This clinic was sponsored by the Optimist Club; their help with distribution of posters, setting up clinic, loading equipment and general assistance at the clinic is appreciated.

Thanks to the Dr. who was on call, volunteers, staff, nursery help and drivers, the clergy, John Ollivier of Halton Cable Systems, Halton Hills Hydro for displaying promotional banners, Dairy Queen for donation of juice and cups, Pizza Hut for tea and serviettes, Miracle Mart for coffee, Loblaw's for donuts, Mr. L. Ferguson of Mac's Milk and C.W.L. for kitchen help and Mr. C. Domingos for use of Holy

Cross Auditorium.

Special thanks to Betty Milton and her telephone committee, to Shirley Chaplin for publicity and promotion and to Anna Ewen and Elaine Chatten convenors of this clinic.

Clinic organizers would like to thank all people who took time out to give the gift of life.

Donor Awards were given to:

75 - Allan Moore.
50 - Robert DeCosta.
35 - Janet Duval.
20 - Christine Williams, John McDonald, Helen Weststeyn and Mike Foskett.
10 - Hal Caruso, Hugh Fraser, Linda Mitchell, Kelly Crawford, Peter Ramsy, Lore Calhoun and Jason Horwood.

The next regular clinic for Georgetown will be Monday May 11.

Criminal activity drops

Criminal activity in Halton Hills decreased 1.5 per cent in 1991 from 1990, reveal Halton Regional Police year-end statistics released by Detective Sergeant Michael Eacrett Thursday.

In 1990, there were 2418 reports of criminal offences while last year, there were 37 less.

All crime categories except for sexual offences, theft over \$1,000, offensive weapons and property damage were down-some as much as 25 per cent.

"Having any decrease in reported crime is significant because we have to assume the population has increased," he said. "We're pleased with the figure because it indicates that our efforts in crime prevention and community-based policing are on track."

Assaults (not including sexual assaults or domestic assaults)- 166, 168, 1.2 per cent decrease.

Domestic Assaults- 48, 57, 16 per cent decrease.

Robberies- 6, 8, 25 per cent decrease.

Break and Enters- 263, 295, 11 per cent decrease.

Auto thefts- 64, 67, 4.5 per cent decrease.

Thefts Over \$1,000- 95, 80, 19 per cent increase.

Thefts Under \$1,000- 675, 720, 6.2 per cent decrease.

Possession of Stolen Property- 34, 34, no change.

Fraud- 175, 184, 4.9 per cent decrease.

Offensive weapons- 19, 17, 11.7 per cent increase.

Property Damage- 561, 508, 10.4 per cent increase.

Other Criminal Code (includes threatening calls, trespass by night, intimidation and obstructing justice) 241, 260, 7.3 per cent decrease.

Murders- 0,0, no change.

Attempted Murders- 0,0, no

change.

Sexual Offences (not including invitation to sexual touching, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation) 34, 20, 70 per cent increase.

The biggest increase in crime was in sexual offences but Det. Sgt. Eacrett said he doesn't believe this area has had a sudden increase in sexual offences, but rather, that more people are reporting this type of crime.

"I think the problem has always been around but it's just being reported more," he said. "There's been a greater awareness about sexual assault due to increase in media attention and education in schools. As people become more aware and learn what to do, they report it more."

Halton Hill's neighboring municipality, Milton, also has seen dramatic increases in the number of sexual assaults being reported.

Reports of sexual offences were up 112 per cent.

Milton's overall crime rate also jumped significantly by 11.2 per cent.

All the crimes in Milton and Halton Hills are investigated by one Criminal Investigation Bureau containing six detectives and they were able to solve 40.5 per cent of crime this year. (The percentage of how many Halton Hills crimes weren't was not available.)

This clearance rate is lower than 1990's 44.2 per cent.

"We've had more long-term, serious investigations last year, which reduced the time detectives had to investigate less serious crimes."

As well, the success of the bureau in 1990, when they solved 44.2 per cent of cases meant detectives had to spend more time in court in 1991. This also restricted the time spent on criminal investigations.

Library Board slashed budget

On Wednesday evening, Halton Hills Library Board Trustees endorsed library staff proposals cutting \$95,000 out of the library's draft operating budget in an effort to meet the target 5.5 per cent increase initially set by Council.

The majority of the cuts will be made in the personnel budget and will require the Board to reduce public service hours at the Acton and Georgetown branches by 12 each week.

The new schedule of public service hours recommended by staff is based on a survey conducted during 1990 in which users show

ed strong preferences for afternoon, evening and weekend hours.

Effective February 18, Library hours will be: Tuesday - Thursday 12 noon to 8 p.m.; Friday - Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday (Georgetown only) 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (Oct. to May).

Library Chair Jay Jackson noted the Board greatly regretted this step but the requirement to trim personnel costs left little option since library service cannot be provided without staff.

In the event that the financial situation is eased the Board will give priority to reinstating hours.