

# Cost concerns local regional politician Fogal, eight other councillors to study need for lobby registry

By **TIM FORAN**  
Metroland Media Group

A sub-committee set up to determine options for a lobbyist registry in Halton now has more local politicians on it— nine— than the 21-member council's three main standing committees, each of which have seven.

Halton's council voted Wednesday to add two more regional councillors to the lobbyist registry sub-committee to the six already recommended by the administration and finance committee a week earlier. Regional chairman Gary Carr will also automatically be a member.

The popular sub-committee will examine whether a lobbyist registry is needed, how much it would cost, who constitutes a lobbyist, and what people would have to do when they wish to lobby regional officials.

Even putting forth the notion of such a publicly available online registry in Halton, as already exists for Toronto and the provincial and federal governments, has been controversial.

It was the administration and finance committee that almost killed the idea of setting up a lobbyist registry in early September when it voted not to bother exploring the issue. However, regional council rejected that recommendation a week later



**JANE FOGAL**

and instead sided with staff's suggestion that a sub-committee be set up to look at options for the registry.

Some councillors complained last fall the suggestion to look at one, as recommended by Oakville Councillor Alan Johnston, implied the existence of corruption at the regional level.

The makeup of the sub-committee is evenly split:

- Halton Hills Councillor Jane Fogal and Milton Mayor Gord Krantz voted last fall against investigating the registry, mostly due to concerns expressed about administrative cost versus the necessity
- Oakville Councillors Alan Johnston and Allan Elgar are the two main backers of the registry

- Burlington Councillors John Taylor and Peter Thoem, Oakville Councillor Jeff Knoll, and Milton Councillor Colin Best are neutral but voted last fall to at least examine the idea.

Halton staff have said they believe the clerk's department could maintain the registry with no additional cost to the taxpayer, one of the major concerns expressed by Fogal previously.

Elgar, meanwhile, has noted, even if it cost \$200,000, the money would be a small part of the Region's budget.

Halton's 2010 budget is \$1.1 billion, about 40 per cent more than the budgets of the four lower tier municipalities combined.

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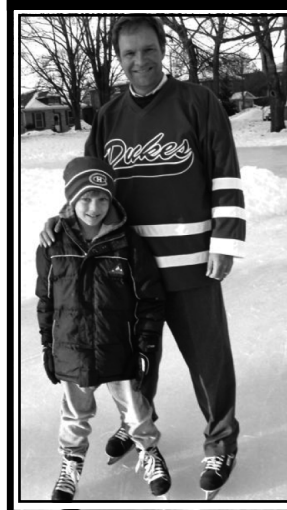
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