

Losing trustee 'not the end of the world'

Continued from pg. 1

She said the trustee would have to be taken from Halton Hills.

"I think it's nice we have two trustees," said Halton Hills Wards 1 and 2 Trustee Gerry Ockenden, who is seeking re-election. "But if we have one, I don't think it's going to be the end of the world."

He said with Milton's population on the rise in the years to come, "they're going to have to do something."

"We've got a lot of things on the go right now. Whether or not there is one or two trustees is not on the top of my list," said Ockenden.

At press time Halton Hills other trustee, Gillian Tuck Kutarna who represents Wards 3 and 4, could not be reached for comment.

Burlington and Oakville, which have populations estimated at under 175,000 each, have four public school trustees.

Unlike previous election years, adding an extra trustee to the board is not an option. As per a new regulation (412-00) under Ontario's Education Act, school boards can't increase the number of trustees they will have for the next municipal term.

However, to ensure proper representation and accommodate population shifts within the region, both school boards have other options available, including reducing their number of trustees by one, re-distributing the existing amount of trustees from one community to another, or creating new geographic boundaries.

As both boards represent the entire region, they don't have to choose boundaries that coincide with the ward boundaries for councillors in the lower-tier municipalities, though that has been the tradition.

Catholic board staff indicated they expect no changes to how trustees are elected in the next election, which means both Milton and Halton Hills would continue to have one trustee each.

That's because schools boards don't use simple population estimates to determine the number and geographic distribution of trustees. Rather, the boards use their population of electoral groups—the number of property owners declaring which school board they support, as per January 1, 2010 statistics from the crown agency, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.

Though the public school board received their own numbers prior to February 15, it will not release them to the public before the agenda for the next board meeting on March 24 is released online. That happens generally the Friday before the meeting.

Individuals wishing to make a delegation to trustees on the issue at either the Catholic or public school boards must contact the board's secretary at least one week ahead of the respective meetings. For the Catholic board, visit www.hcdsb.org. For the public board, visit www.hdsb.ca.

—With files from Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

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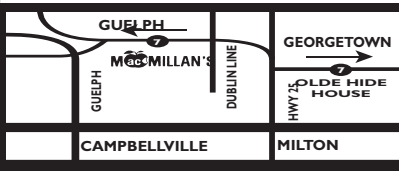
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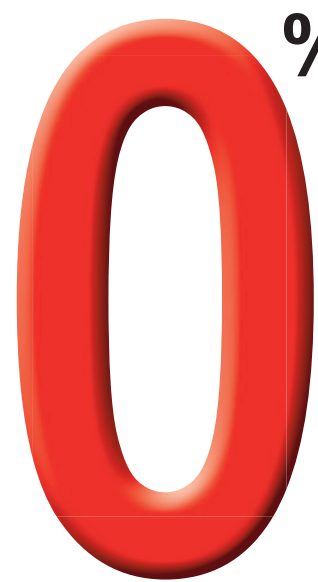
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