

Fire

Briefs

Hydro pole sparks

The Halton Hills Fire Department was called to Guelph St. near the Dairy Queen Friday at 11:03 p.m. Sparks were coming from the top of a hydro pole and firefighters stood by until Halton Hills Hydro arrived.

Hay fire

Halton Hills firefighters spent two hours at the scene of a hay fire on Sixth Line, south of Steeles Ave. after relieving the Milton Fire Department at 11:51 p.m. Friday. Bails of hay caught fire in a field through spontaneous combustion, police said.

Motor accident

Halton Hills firefighters provided lights to help police search for a second victim after a motor vehicle accident on Ninth Line, north of Ten Sideroad on Saturday at 11 p.m. No one was found.

Region to examine Milton growth plans

By **ROB KELLY**

Special to the Independent/Free Press

The latest Halton regional think tank exercise concerning possible long-term growth plans for Milton will take place in June. Senior area government officials are expected to get their first look at details of town expansion options then.

The \$3.5 million Halton Urban Structure Review (HUSR) study has been going on since the late 1980s. Originally it focussed entirely on Milton growth scenarios. There was no water or utility plant capacity left to fuel town growth, the rationale went, so the next few years were to be spent planning long-term expansion, which could lead to a doubling in Milton's population over the next 25 years or so.

Eventually the study came to embrace north Oakville and Burlington too. As it magnified in scope it also grew in cost, from a few hundred thousand dollars to the present tab. It is now, essentially, a wide-scale effort to map Halton's future. But Milton is still the key

feature in that blueprint, because on a per capita basis it is expected to be Halton's fastest growing centre eventually.

The game plan is to gather members of the various local councils as well as regional council, planning staff from both jurisdictions and any interested provincial and federal officials for a one-day session at Halton's administration centre in Oakville on Friday, June 19.

Officials will review the data, and then basically have the summer to digest it. The same will be true for all the residents who have shown an interest in the report.

There are 1,400 people in Halton on the HUSR update mailing list and more than 200 attended the last open house on the subject in Milton. The week after public officials have their meeting, they'll circulate briefings to those on the mailing list.

In the fall regional staff will bring the public input back to councillors. Final recommendations

from the consultants as to how to tackle growth issues in Halton are expected to be clarified by June, 1993.

After that, it's up to the politicians to make the necessary decisions about implementing plans for utility system expansions that could cost as much as \$100 million. That includes the bill for the so-called big pipe, a water pipeline from Lake Ontario north to Milton.

Halton recently completed the first round of public opinion soundings, to find out just where people stood with regard to the massive planning exercise. Regional officials viewed this as an important step in the long, involved legal process that will eventually lead to new homes and businesses being built.

In the past, large area projects have become bogged down in a tangle of provincial red tape. This was true of Halton's long search for a landfill site, which took more than a decade, and of residential development schemes in Halton Hills.

So regional council is trying to

bend over backwards to build a case supporting that they did widespread public consultation on this development issue. That way, delays with the province are expected to be minimized. Halton senior planner David McCleary warned that if such an exercise isn't completed, "It'll come back to haunt you."

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