

Pomeroy warns of further cuts

By SAL BOMMARITO
Special to The Independent/Free Press

Halton Region needs help from its boards and agencies to achieve cost-reduction targets imposed by provincial cutbacks in funding to municipalities, regional chairman Peter Pomeroy warned recently.

The region wants co-operation from nine boards and agencies to reduce about \$68,000 from Halton's base budget, Pomeroy said.

The boards and agencies affected are the tourism organization Festival Country, the Halton Region Safety Council, Royal Botanical Gardens, Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Grand River Conservation Authority, Halton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA), Halton Helping Hands, Halton Recovery House and the region's hospitals.

The agency most hard hit by the reduction is the HRCA, which stands to lose \$43,500. While most of the boards and agencies are powerless to stop the move, HRCA officials, bolstered by the Conservation Authority Act, are prepared to do battle with the region over the issue.

Unlike the other boards and agencies which receive grants from the region, the HRCA, backed by the provincial legislation, has the right to set a budget and then levy

member municipalities for their share.

In return, the authority manages and protects conservation areas, implements flood control measures and governs development permits near waterways and shorelines.

Halton was to contribute \$1.98 million to the authority this year. However, a 2.2 per cent reduction of that amount is being proposed by the region.

HRCA officials argue the region has no choice but to pay the amount levied.

"It's not the prerogative of the Region of Halton to change the levy. We're not a grant or transfer agency to the region," said authority general manager Murray Stephen.

Stephen said the authority operates under the control of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), which has already imposed its own expenditure control program on the conservation authority.

"We have to assert to the region and its finance committee (the authority) can't be treated in the same way as the other boards and

agencies," HRCA chairman Brian Penman said. If the authority were to give in to Halton's request, he said, it would also have to give in to similar ones from the other municipalities within its watershed.

"We're a government within a government and we want to be treated that way," Penman stressed.

Pomeroy said taxpayers aren't interested in hearing about legal wrangling between the region and the HRCA at a time of economic hardship.

"My understanding is the conditions of the Social Contract and Expenditure Control Plan supercede all of these supposed acts.

"The taxpayers don't want to hear about our problems with these agencies. All they know is we're in a new economy and let's get on with it," the chairman said.

"They've obviously been hard hit, especially in the case of the HRCA, with the MNR cuts. But I have to tell every other regional department the same thing. They've all reduced their budgets by a similar fashion."

Pomeroy stated emphatically that raising property taxes is not being considered as an alternative to the spending cuts.

"I don't propose to go to the taxpayer with a tax increase next year," he said.



PETER POMEROY

Officer assaulted

A police officer was knocked backwards into a police car Wednesday night, causing \$400 damage to the fender, but not injuring the officer. A police constable was called to an Acton residence when a husband and wife were in conflict. When he arrived, the officer was knocked backwards. A 33-year-old Acton man was arrested and held for a bail hearing. He was charged with assaulting a police officer, but no charges were laid in relation to the domestic problems, police said.

Disobey stop sign

A Georgetown woman was charged with failing to stop after an accident on Friday at 11:50

Police

Blotter

a.m., police said. The woman was driving an Oldsmobile west on McNabb St. when her car collided with a 1988 Chevrolet. The Olds was totalled in the accident, while the Chev was moderately damaged. There were no injuries.

Shoes stolen

A door lock and trunk lock were both damaged when someone broke into a car on Airdale Cres. in Georgetown Sunday, police said. Only basketball shoes were taken.

Tuning the radio

Two vehicles collided on Trafalgar Rd. at 6:45 a.m. Thursday when one driver was tuning his radio, police report. A Georgetown resident was driving a 1993 Mazda pickup south when it collided with an on-coming 1981 GMC. The Mazda was severely damaged, while the GMC was moderately damaged. The driver of the Mazda was charged with making an unsafe lane change.

Trim rings stolen

Four chrome trim rings were stolen from a car parked on Guelph St. between Friday and Monday, police said. The value of the missing trim rings is \$350.

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