

Halton looks at property tax freeze

Staff present a 'no risk' budget with no new spending

Halton councillors wrapped up three days of committee budget deliberations today (Thursday), including public input into the Region's 2012 spending plan which would freeze property taxes for the third year in a row for services like public health, transportation and waste management.

That zero per cent increase, plus a 3.5 per cent increase in water and wastewater rates, and a 3.4 per cent increase for policing, results in a net increase of 1.3 per cent tax increase next year. That's \$874 for Regional services for the "typical" homeowner with a property assessed at \$350,000.

At a recent budget briefing, Halton CAO Pat Moyle said next year's \$733-million budget - \$603-million for Regional services and \$130-million for policing - would not put Council "at risk" in the future, regardless of potential fundamental funding changes from Queen's Park, which provides 21 per cent of Halton's revenues. He said the

proposed budget would not "mortgage the future" or limit Halton's response to any funding changes. He said the zero increase for regional services will provide Halton's four municipalities with some room in their own budgets to allow for local increases.

Jane MacCaskill, Halton's Commissioner of Corporate Services and Treasurer, said the budget's \$11-million in additional program costs will be offset by increased assessment and increased revenues for a zero per cent tax impact for regional services. The budget also includes a 3.5 per cent increase in water and wastewater rates which would cost a typical household \$778 next year.

MacCaskill said the budget has four recurring themes including responding to economic uncertainty, reinvesting in social services, delivering citizen priorities and financing the Region's infrastructure Master Plans. She said the focus on social services is in response to growing case loads and wait lists, which will be helped by \$10.7-million over three years in Federal and Provincial funding 300 new assisted housing

units, and up to 225 new rent supplements, and up to 110 new social housing units.

MacCaskill detailed the \$3.7-billion 10-year capital plan, which includes \$120-million for the expansion of the Mid-Halton Wastewater plant and \$90-million to construct the outfall for that plant - both necessary to bring Lake Ontario water - the Big Pipe - to Georgetown to meet provincial growth targets.

"The 2012 budget delivers a zero per cent increase for the taxpayers and a 3.5 per cent water and wastewater increase while maintaining the service levels of our core services and delivering on the Citizens' Action Plan," MacCaskill said.

When asked to "crystal ball" what Queen's Park might do, CAO Moyle said an across-the-board 20 per cent cut is not in the cards, and stressed if there is a "significant re-invention" of EMS funding or social service delivery, Halton would not be at risk. "Now is not the time to take any foolish risks...now is not the time to look at a different scheme for funding growth-related infrastructure," Moyle said. Now is the time to

stick to core businesses and utilize revenues to create flexibility," Moyle said, adding there isn't a lot of new spending in the budget, but a "re-allocation" of dollars, and "prudent" use of revenues.

Regional/Acton Councillor Clark Somerville asked staff to provide the impact on taxpayers of the 10-year rate-supported budget, and the projected rates in neighbouring municipalities.

The budget review committee meets on December 12, and Halton Council votes on the 300-page budget on December 14. The budget document is posted at www.halton.ca/budget and public input is invited.

Advertorial

Christmas Parties & Dinners



NATURALLY SPEAKING
with
Louisa McCarley
RHN, ROHP/RNCP

At this time of year a bit of healthy advice from an authority on digestion may come in handy for many. Brenda Watson is a N.D. (naturopathic doctor) and a C.T. (colon therapist). She is the co-author of "Gut Solutions", as well as a public speaker, researcher and formulator.

Poor Digestion, Heartburn, Gas & Bloating? NOT THIS YEAR!

Brenda Watson

Blame it on the turkey, Grandma's famous sugar cookies, or the endless parties but there's just something about the holidays that makes us toss our good intentions out the window. This overindulgence sends our insides into a state of constant turmoil leading to upset stomach, gas, bloating and heartburn. The good news? Adding a few digestive supplements to the menu can help ease holiday indigestion without bringing the festivities to an end.

Most Canadians suffer from some sort of digestive complaint on a regular basis. During the holidays these complaints (and the sale of drugs for indigestion) go through the roof. Renew Life offers a wide range of all natural digestive supplements to help alleviate even the most chronic problems. Regardless of your issue, we have a digestive SOLUTION for you. Taking a natural digestive enzyme supplement is the key to surviving the holidays with your digestive health intact.

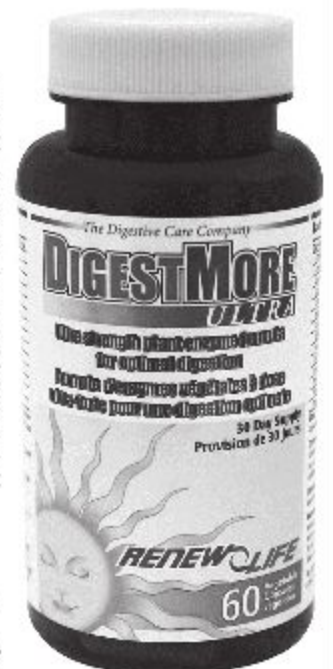
Yours in health,
Brenda Watson

~ Testimonial ~

My husband was taking antacids constantly. I finally got him to try DigestMore Ultra with each meal and he has not had to take any antacid in more than 2 years. DigestMore Ultra has helped with the bloating feeling he was getting after his meals and also stopped the acid reflux he was experiencing at bedtime.

Great product!

Thank you,
Sandy
02/09/2010



WILLOW LANE
NATURAL FOODS
75 Mill St. E., Acton
519-853-3051

"Serving your health needs, Naturally, since 1977"

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."
St. John 4:23 KJV

Mount Zion Full Gospel Deliverance Ministries Inc.

Pastor Andrew Paton
Mount Zion Full Gospel Deliverance Ministries
Sunday at 11:00am • Counseling available
Preaching the Kingdom of God, the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and God's plan for your life.

Our Church is located at the Ballinacree Community Center, Downstairs
For more information call
519-853-5657

Knox Presbyterian Church
44 Main St. N. P.O. Box 342
Acton, Ontario L7J 2M4
(519)853-2360
Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

In a world of change, come and worship the unchanging God.

Sun. Dec. 4 - ADVENT 1 - "God Sent His Son"
Sun. Dec. 11 - ADVENT 2 - Communion "God Sent His Son"
Sun. Dec. 18 - ADVENT 4 - "The Reason for the Season"
- Church School Presentation
- Return of 'Kim Petty Memorial Banks'
Sun. Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Family Service 7pm
- Call Him Jesus
Sun. Dec. 25 - Christmas Day 10:30am "Open the Gift!"

Swords & Stage
ESCAPMENT FENCING CLUB TO BE DETERMINED THEATRE COMPANY

Holiday Camp
Learn Fencing and Drama skills
with The Escapment Fencing Club & the To Be Determined Theatre Company at the Old Acton Town Hall
8:30am-5:30pm Jan 2-6th, 2012
3 age groups: ages 6-11 and ages 12 and up
Escapment Fencing Club To Be Determined Theatre Company
905-864-2897 416-801-0025

OPEN HOUSE/INVITATION FOR ED HILLIER'S 65TH BIRTHDAY
Acton Legion Games Room
Fri. Dec. 9, 2011 7pm - 1am
Dance & luncheon
"Best Wishes Only"