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> Sincerely, Elizabeth Kerr Manager, Discovery Toys Canada 873-8647

Tax committee approval expected

By Johanna Powell Special to This Week

A citizens' committee which has less than 12 months to come up with property tax reforms won't be officially appointed until 1993.

That's because Halton regional council must approve a plan for setting up the committee before municipalities can choose their representatives.

Approval of the plan is expected to come Wednesday (today), but that is Halton council's last meeting for 1992.

That leaves no time this year for Halton's four municipalities of Halton Hills, Oakville, Burlington and Milton to get their representatives approved at the regional level.

The decision to strike a committee to find some way of reforming the region's tax system without implementing region-wide market value assessment was made at a special meeting of Halton regional council which began Dec. 2 and went into the early morning hours

If the citizens' committee can't come up with a better tax system, regional MVA will come into effect for the 1994 tax year.

Today, council's administration and finance committee decided the new committee should be made up of three citizens from each municipality.

The administration committee also said a council member from each municipality should sit on the citizens' committee as a non-voting member. Council representatives will be denied a vote in an attempt to eliminate partisan politics. Halton Region councillors are evenly split on market value assessment, with Halton Hills and Oakville councillors in opposition while Burlington and Milton councillors support it.

The four MPPs whose ridings are involved also are to be asked to join as non-voting members or to designate non-voting representatives. Wary that the region may come up with ideas which would require changes to provincial legislation, administration committee members are hoping that close contact with elected provincial representatives will avoid a repetition of the recent fiasco in Metro Toronto. Metro's plans for market value assessment were rejected by the provincial government.

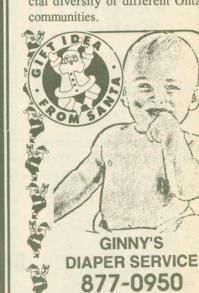
Under the proposed plan, the chair will be appointed separately by council, and an independent advisory group of tax experts may be named.

All of these decisions are subject to council approval next week.

When the citizens' committee does need, it will already have a wealth of material to study. At Wednesday's administration committee meeting, Oakville councilor Liz Behrens announced the property tax working group, a subcommittee of the province's fair tax commission, had just released its report.

That report concludes the current property tax system in Ontario is not capable of both meeting the revenue requirements of local government and school boards and imposing a fair tax burden on property owners.

It describes property tax as "regressive" and recommends that local governments get significant new powers to vary taxation policies in a way that reflects the financial diversity of different Ontario



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