

Delegations clash

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the Hickory Falls Ratepayers Association, asked council. "Would we be saving public tax dollars by taking control?"

Shropshall also referred to the regional staff report which outlined three options that the Region could take in assuming development control. "All three options are at an extra cost to Halton taxpayers," she said.

"It's not a question of trust," Georgetown resident Barbara Halsall said as she explained to council that she and other environmentalists aren't against the development power shift because they distrust regional government. Halsall, president of an environmental group called POWER (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources), said municipal and regional levels of government have many different areas to deal with, while the NEC is one body with virtually one mandate—to protect the escarpment. She urged council not to pursue

development control authority but leave it in the hands of the NEC.

Among those speaking in favor of regional control were a former NEC planner George Mckibbin and a Hamilton lawyer Herman Turkstra, representing the Niagara Escarpment Landowners Coalition (NELC).

"The increase in costs (to Halton because of a development control shift) would be minimal, if any," Mckibbin said, noting that some costs can be recovered if the Region charges administration fees for development permit applications. The Region already spends \$40,000 annually commenting on applications before the NEC, he said.

Turkstra argued that costs can be saved if the Region gets development control because costly duplication of services already exists. He said escarpment landowners with development applications must go through the full municipal planning process and then through a second full planning process at the NEC.



Pizza Hut and Nothin' But

Pizza Hut and the Love in Christ Food Bank will be having a fund-raising campaign on March 17th where lucky diners could win free meals.

Pictured above from left: Rud Whiting (Director of the Love in Christ Food Bank), Ken Bellamy (Publisher of the Halton Hills This Week) and Mike Stulz (Pizza Hut Manager) Photo by Simon Wilson.

Schools in grant squeeze

by Trish Tervit special

The Halton school board administration must go back to the drawing board and come up with yet more savings to the 1993 budget after the announcement of reduced provincial funding last week.

At last week's finance committee meeting, business superintendent Jerry Jenkins told school board trustees that lower provincial grant levels mean that the proposed 2.85 per cent budget increase would result in a 5.29 per cent mill rate increase.

The bottom line is that taxpayers would be asked to pay \$66.76 extra on their tax bill.

Trustees asked Jenkins to go

back and cut a further \$2.4 million from the budget to keep the mill rate increase at about 4 per cent, or \$50 extra in taxes.

The administration will report to the board with their further cuts on March 8. At the Feb. 15 finance meeting when the 2.85 per cent increase budget was introduced, education director Bob Williams said administration staff had cut everything they could.

Milton trustee Flo Belford suggested eliminating French immersion busing to save \$1.1 million.

Provincial grants have been steadily decreasing in recent years as the provincial government tries to balance its own budget. Last year Halton schools received 22.9

per cent of their estimated expenditures in grants. The 1993 grants represent only 20.8 per cent.

Separate school boards throughout the province usually receive about 75 to 80 per cent funding but they have fewer people paying education taxes, Jenkins said in an interview.

The initial budget presented to the board was \$297 million representing a 4.65 per cent tax increase.

Trustees asked administration to reexamine the budget and aim for an increase between two and three per cent. They came back with the 2.85 per cent and a proposal to create a task force to come up with ways of keeping future budgets at zero per cent.

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