

# Tax committee faces tight deadline

By Dianne Cornish

Molly Monahan of Georgetown cannot remember ever doing as much homework since high school and former Halton sheriff Mac Sprowl of Acton is finding the whole experience very educational.

Both are members of the Citizen's Committee on Property Tax Reform, which is investigating property tax assessment alternatives in Halton in hopes of coming up with a system that taxpayers will see as fair and equitable.

Also representing Halton Hills on the committee, but unavailable for comment before press deadline, is Georgetown builder David McNally.

## Heavy workload

During separate interviews Monday, Monahan and Sprowl readily acknowledged there's a heavy workload for all committee members and a tight deadline for the group to come up with recommendations for regional council.

The 12-member committee held its first meeting Feb. 23 and has met six times since then. Between now and the end of August, the group is scheduled to meet 20 times before coming up with recommendations for a Sept. 1 meeting of Halton's administration and finance committee. Regional council will consider proposals by the committee at its September 8 meeting.

## Volunteer hours

"By early September, we'll probably have put in 900 or 1,000 hours," Sprowl said, while talking about the time commitments being made by committee members, all of whom are volunteers. The only paid member is the chairman, Bob Beach of Burlington.

Sprowl said the group's early meetings focused on educating members about the tax system and how it works. "We've got a lot of material to read and study," he remarked.

## Committee focused

Committee members are focused in their approach to find a workable and acceptable tax system proposal for Halton, Sprowl and Monahan said.

"I'm extremely impressed by the lack of (political) party or regional bias in the approach taken by committee members to find a fair and equitable solution," Monahan stated. "Nobody is approaching this from a biased point of view."

The committee has been divided into two working groups, Monahan explained. One will look at Market

Value Assessment (MVA), the system which Halton Region had expected to implement on a region-wide basis at the beginning of 1993.

## Unit system explored

The second working group will explore alternative tax systems. The unit system of property tax assessment, where taxes are based on the

square footage of land and living space, will be explored, Monahan said. The feasibility of dropping education taxes from the municipal tax roll will also be explored.

All committee meetings are open to the public. The next session will be held Thursday, 7 p.m. in Bishop Reding Secondary School in Milton.

# VON volunteers excel in Georgetown

By Oksana Buhel

Anne King, co-ordinator of the Victorian Order of Nurses' Hospice program, claims this is the most well-known program which the VON offers. Many terminally-ill individuals, their friends and family, have benefited from the service.

The program was established in 1987, but limited to Oakville and Burlington. In 1989, this program merged with the North Halton Hospice program, which serviced Georgetown, Milton, and Acton. The goal of the program is to provide terminally-ill individuals, residing in private homes, with supportive care.

Volunteers donate approximately 3-4 hours a week to the program. Their responsibilities may include anything from driving their clients around on errands, helping around the house, or simply sitting and talking.

As well as being dependable, caring, highly-motivated and emotionally mature, volunteers are instructed to respect the confidentiality and rights of the clients and their families.

The volunteers are not medically trained, but still must go through a 10-week training course. They are taught characteristics of various diseases, emotional and physiological aspects of

life-threatening illness, communication and listening skills, and other information which will enable them to make their clients more comfortable, and their days more enjoyable.

A 10-week training course began Thursday at the VON office in Oakville. The next course will be starting up in the fall and everyone, even those who don't think they have the time to volunteer, are welcome to participate.

King described how volunteers in Georgetown have been exceptionally hard-working. Between April 1, 1992 and January 31, 1993, Georgetown volunteers have increased the time which they spend in the program by 139%. Also, despite the fact Georgetown volunteers make up 10% of the region's volunteers, they donate 25% of all the volunteered hours.

Another feature which distinguishes the Georgetown volunteers is that they visit terminally ill patients at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital. Milton is the only other community in Halton region which provides this service.

For further information on the VON's activities in our area, contact Anne King, at 1-800-387-7127.



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