

Police social contract agreement ratified

By Oksana Buhel

With the exception of two opposing votes, Halton Regional Police Service members voted unanimously to accept changes outlined in the social contract.

The vote, which took place Tuesday and Wednesday evening at the regional headquarters in Oakville, involved members of the Halton Regional Police Association, Halton Regional Senior Officers' Association, Police Chief James Harding and Deputy Chiefs John Barratt and Wayne Jessop.

"I think we're the first police association in Ontario to reach an agreement," boasted Paul LaFleur, Halton Regional Police Services Board member and chair of the negotiating committee. "This region has always been very progressive in initiating

positive changes. It acted very responsibly."

LaFleur attributes the brevity of negotiations to Chief Harding, who was "very supportive" throughout the talks.

Cuts to the police service are expected to save \$3 million in three years. A wage freeze will save \$780,000 in 1993, approximately \$1 million in 1994, another \$1 million in 1995, and a further \$250,000 until March 31, 1996.

Another cut, which LaFleur described as "a big one," will deal with overtime work, which will no longer be paid, but will be taken in time off. LaFleur estimates \$150,000 will be saved this year, and \$386,000 will be saved in 1994.

Floating holidays, which enable police service mem-

bers to take one day paid holiday during the year, will be eliminated. Financially, this translates into a \$100,000 saving in 1994 and another \$100,000 in 1995.

A cap has been placed on court time, requiring officers take time off for hours accumulated in court during days off. LaFleur explained some officers may be tempted to spend more time in court to compensate for money lost in other areas, and this was one reason the cap was placed.

Reduced costs, "mostly in uniforms," will save the police service \$35,000 in 1993, and a further \$54,000 next year. Uniform purchases will be cut by 50 per cent and officers will have to pay for their own requirements above their allotment. All members of the police service will be required to take 12 days off in unpaid leave.

The final decision made during social contract negotiation was that a portion of the \$114,000 police service pension fund will be used to pay for negotiation costs. LaFleur added, if not enough money is saved during the three-year period, a further portion of this money will be used, "but we will not use the principal."

By coming to an agreement before the Aug. 1 deadline, the police service has saved 20 per cent, which translates into \$600,000. LaFleur said this money will improve job security, and will ensure no layoffs will be required.

He described the economic situation as "a difficult time for Halton Region," but insisted, "we've swallowed what had to be swallowed in the best way."

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Fireworks at council meeting

Continued from page 1

Councillor Ron Chatten and Al Cook agreed with Rutherford regarding the lack of necessity for immediate designation. "This is the last piece of property like this," said Chatten, "and we have to be very careful what we do with it." Cook added he would hate to see only lanes of commercial enterprises on Guelph St.

MacLean argued councillors could make use of check policies in the Master Development Plan and individual Site Plans to ensure what types of developments are established in the area, but councillors were not appeased.

Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson admitted "there's an uneasiness here (regarding land use designation)."

MacLean further attempted to address councillors' concerns when he said, "It's better to have a vision for development for this area. There's a greater risk if you don't have any (visions)." He said the year-and-a-half long Urban Area Study had thoroughly analyzed the

best uses for the land, and compared the situation to the one in Georgetown South, in which councillors designated the land before development was outlined.

"In Georgetown South, we knew what would be there," countered Cook. MacLean maintained councillors did not know what would be developed; they only had proposals, but Cook did not agree. "I'll argue with you later," he promised MacLean.

Chatten's frustration became evident when he insisted "not in a million years will we need all this development."

Currie, with the support of Miller, pointed out how much time and money had been put in to the study. "Why should we defer it again?" she wondered.

The amendment was carried in a 7 - 5 recorded vote.

Three other OPAs, dealing with general residential and commercial policies, and with community improvement policies in Acton/Georgetown, were discussed during the meeting, and carried without substantial debate.

Town addressing social contract

Councillors approved a social contract plan for non-union employees at Thursday's Town of Halton Hills special council meeting and anticipate the agreement will be a basis for securing separate agreements with union employees.

Approximately 50 of the town's 155 employees are represented by Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 73 and the Halton Hills Firefighters Association Local 3327. Town staff is still negotiating with these unions and must come to an agreement by Aug. 10.

The Town of Halton Hills has been directed to cut \$1,059,558 from its three-year budget, but this amount may be reduced by 20 per cent - \$211,884 - if deadlines are met.

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