

Target date is June 30, 2002

Town okays formation of bylaw review committee that would make Halton Hills smoke-free sooner

The town has taken another step towards becoming a smoke-free community.

At Monday's general committee meeting, council approved the setup of a bylaw review committee whose mandate is to come up with a strategy for a 100 per cent smoke-free community by no later than June 30, 2002.

This smoke-free date is a year earlier than the date (June 2003) approved by council last year, but six months later than the date (January 2002) Halton Region Health Department wanted.

The new bylaw would make Halton Hills consistent with other smoke-free bylaws in the Greater Toronto Area.

The committee will be composed of members of council, staff, Halton Region Health Department, Canadian Federation of University Women—Georgetown, William Osler Health Centre, Royal Canadian Legion, Chamber of Commerce, one restaurant owner and one bar owner.

June 2002 is a compromise, said Chief Administrative Officer Steve Andrews, and was selected to give the committee more time to develop the new bylaw, to inform the business community and still satisfy those people who want a smoke-free community sooner.

"I support the June 30 date but only as the absolute latest date," said Councillor Moya Johnson, a staunch smoke-free 'I support the June 30 date but only as the absolute latest date...The question is not if (Halton Hills goes smoke-free) but when.'

—Councillor Moya Johnson



supporter. "If the committee is formed quickly maybe it could be moved up faster....The question is not if (Halton Hills goes smoke-free), but when."

However, Councillor Bob Inglis said many businesses and industries have already created business plans to purchase expensive ventilation equipment using the June 2003 date and to shorten the timeline could create financial hardships.

Andrews said there is a greater urgency to achieve 100 per cent faster because there's a desire among Greater Toronto Area municipalities to create a "level playing field" of smoke-free bylaws. Some municipalities in Peel, York, Toronto and Hamilton which have already become smoke-free fear a loss of business unless similar bylaws are passed in Halton.

Regional Councillor Rick Bonnette questioned the inclusion of Legion repre-

sentatives on the committee. He wondered if that means the exemption Halton Hills legion branches now enjoy may be open for discussion.

Andrews said that was his intention, especially if it's the council's intention to accept the equal playing field principle.

Johnson agreed, "If we're talking consistency it's appropriate to have them at the table. It doesn't mean we're taking it (the exemption) away, but they shouldn't be left out of the process either."

Acton Councillor Dobbie Frizzell, a legion member, noted the Acton legion, despite the council exemption, is already controlling smoking in its facility, confining it to the bar area only. He suggested Andrews contact other legions in Halton to see what they're doing.

The committee is expected to be formed quickly with its first meeting in September.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer





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