

Council votes against donation policy

In a split vote, Halton Hills council voted against asking staff to prepare a policy on donations. Ward 3 Councillor Mike Davis brought the matter to a recent council meeting. He noted that the Town donated funds for the Southeast Asia tsunami (\$2,500) and Hurricane Katrina (\$5,000) relief, but did not contribute to the relief program associated with the Pakistan earthquake. In 2000, the Town of Halton Hills added \$1,000 to a Halton Region donation to send a truckload of water bottles to aid the Town of Walkerton during its contaminated water well crisis. Davis said the Town's donations in 2005 were not consistent, and asked that staff review the policies of other

municipalities and prepare a policy. "I don't think it should be onerous for staff," said the motion's seconder, Ward 4 Councillor Ron Chatten. "What is being asked for is reasonable. We can't support everything. Let's find out what other people are doing." But the majority of councillors wondered if a policy was really needed. "I hate to see we budget this and then get all kinds of requests," said Councillor Joan Robson. "I think it should be discretionary; it's worked well in the past." But Councillor Moya Johnson said it would be wise to have a policy to guide councillors when making these decisions. "I know personally I have a bit of problem donating town money.

In principle, I don't think municipal tax dollars should be going to world relief. I think that's a federal or provincial issue," she said. Acton Councillor Jon Hurst had heard similar sentiments expressed by some of his constituents but at the same time he's proud that council has stepped forward for two devastating situations. "I think the decision should continue to be made on a case-by-case basis," he said. Opposed to the policy were Robson, Hurst, and Councillors Clark Somerville, Mike O'Leary, Jane Fogal, Bob Inglis. Mayor Rick Bonnette also expressed his opposition. Proponents were Davis, Chatten, Johnson and Bryan Lewis

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