

# Regional council won't support area private school

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"I take no delight in doing this, in opposing my friends from Halton Hills," said Taylor at the regional council meeting discussing his amendment. "I approach this as a regional councillor and not as a town councillor."

Taylor said he made the decision based on logic and planning evidence. It would have been helpful if he had received "a coherent, logical, professional planning opinion supporting the residents who are opposed," said Taylor.

He added he didn't believe any Town OPA was required—a view not shared by some Halton Hills councillors, but supported by Town and Region staff. Taylor also said Region staff has accepted the position of Town of Halton Hills staff and consultants on traffic.

The Region consultant had accepted the hydrogeological evidence provided by the applicant and council hadn't received any other evidence in opposition, said Taylor.

"If we don't change the recommendation we will be in the position of having to hire a planner and lawyer to testify against planning staff and legal staff at the region (and) planning staff at the town. There is no evidence that action will be successful," said Taylor.

In response to questions raised from delegations at the meeting about why council didn't support staff recommenda-

tions Bonnette said, "if that's the case, why bother having councillors, just let the staff do it all."

He said he had a number of concerns about the application, including water. He said the school will use 40,000 litres of water a day, he also said he didn't understand the logistics of the busing for the school.

Bonnette described the current application for the school as "the thin edge of the wedge" for the property and believes it will lead to further applications on the site down the road, for example, a cafeteria.

He also said other schools in the rural area are located in villages or on major roads.

"This is a remote area," said Bonnette. "I have a tremendous concern about the amount of water being used," said Halton Hills Wards 1/2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville.

He also said 17 buses serve Pineview Public School, compared to the two the applicants say will be used at Keswick Sutherland, and that the private school won't serve the residents of the rural area. The impact on water and road safety were concerns raised by area residents about

*'If that's the case, why bother having councillors, just let the staff do it all.'*

**—Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette defending a decision to vote against staff**



the proposed school. "It's not historic for us to vote against something that staff have recommended. We have done that before for the right reasons," said Somerville.

Halton Hills Ward 3/4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal said it was the intent of the Town's

Official Plan to allow for institutional uses that would meet local needs but, "I think clearly the intent of the school is to bring kids from urban areas to the rural area."

Oakville Councillor Tom Adams, who voted in favour of Bonnette's motion at the Planning and Public Works committee meeting last week, said he planned to switch his vote based on Taylor's rationale for his amended motion.

In the end, Fogal, Bonnette, Somerville and 11 other councillors didn't support Taylor's amendment, and thus opposed the school.

Prior to making its decision council heard from Cordoba and his lawyer Bert Arnold.

Cordoba said the application "does meet the town Official Plan as highlighted by both Town and Region staff," that they have followed a "comprehensive and arduous process" done all the required studies,

met all requirements, and answered all public inquiries.

"What else do we have to do?" asked a frustrated Cordoba, adding he was "perplexed" by the position taken by Halton Hills Council and the Planning and Public Works Committee.

Arnold said that every concern raised about the application had been addressed to the satisfaction of Town and Region staff and the commenting agencies.

"It has to be acknowledged there's a simple resistance to change. It's common," said Arnold.

"The easy thing would be to turn the application down," said Arnold, adding, however, that would not respect the vigorous process the applicant had followed.

Council also heard from several area residents—both those opposed and those who support the application.

"We're disappointed obviously," said Cordoba following the decision. "But we still hold in our conviction."

"We're very confident in going to the OMB. It's unfortunate we have to go to the OMB. The last thing I want to do is cause the taxpayers any kind of financial burden," said Cordoba.

"It's (the hearing) going to be a big waste of money for everybody," he said.

The application also requires a development permit from the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

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