

Makeup of Regional council won't change before next Census

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Staff Writer

Halton Region will wait until after the 2010 Census before considering the number of councillors representing the four Halton municipalities.

This means there will be no change in the regional representation for the 2010 municipal election—any change would not occur until the 2014 municipal election at the earliest.

Halton Regional Council made the decision earlier this year, after receiving a report by the Regional Representation Review Sub-committee, of which Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette was a member. The sub-committee was set up late last year, after south Halton councillors stated more councillors were needed to represent the growing population in Oakville and Burlington.

"I think it was a good decision we made," said the mayor. "It's what I've been saying all along, that we didn't need any new councillors. Let's wait for the Census and the Places to Grow/Sustainable Halton Plan determines the numbers."

However, regional staff was directed to report back in September to the Regional Representation Review Sub-Committee on seat distribution changes in Halton since its incorporation in 1970s and on municipal models or provincial legislation that deal with regular reviews of representation.

The sub-committee will then decide on developing a regional policy on regional representation, including its impact on the four municipalities, and a public consultation process.

Bonnette won a concession from his south Halton colleagues to direct staff to investigate a policy change

that would see another regional councillor from the same municipality vote at committee meetings, should the regular committee member from that municipality be unable to attend.

Bonnette, who is vice-chair of the sub-committee, said, as it is now, the Town's three regional representatives sit on three different committees, Planning and Public Works, Administration and Finance and Health and Social Services. If one of the Halton Hills' representatives is not at a meeting (although all three have excellent attendance records), this municipality does not get a vote (unlike Burlington and Oakville). Bonnette wants the rule changed so that one of three Halton Hills regional councillors can step in and vote in place of his/her absent colleague.

"It really puts us at a disadvantage when we (Halton Hills) don't have a vote," he said.



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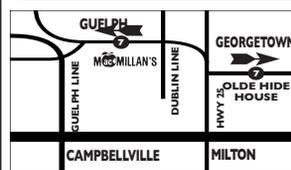
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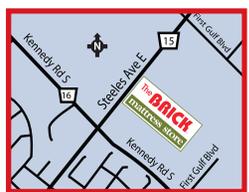
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