

# Local regional reps split on regional council review

**CYNTHIA GAMBLE**  
Staff Writer



**MAYOR RICK BONNETTE**

Halton regional council voted to review the number of politicians sitting around its table at Wednesday's meeting.

Regional council gave the go ahead to establish the Regional Representation Review Sub-Committee that will examine the appropriateness of the current number of council members.

Halton Hills' three representatives were split in their support of the review.

Mayor Rick Bonnette and Wards 3&4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal did not support the review. Wards 1&2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville, who voiced opposition to the review at the Administration and Finance Committee meeting last week, changed his mind Wednesday and supported it.

"I don't think whether we need more representation at Halton Region is the number one issue in the coffee shops," said Bonnette in an interview Wednesday.

The veteran politician said the discussion was déjà vu for him, reminding him of a similar debate about a decade ago. At that time, as a regional councillor, Bonnette objected when regional council downsized from 24 to 20 representatives. Halton Hills lost two of its five representatives.

"I told them at the time, they would be coming back to the table looking for more councillors, ... and here they are."

Somerville said after hearing there will be an open public process—that may not mean more politicians at the end of the

day—he had a greater comfort with going ahead with the review. He added the solution may not lie in more politicians at the regional level but at the local level—and that's something the process will discover.

The mayor will be serving on an all-mayor committee with the regional chair Gary Carr to review the current representation.

"I will be part of the process now," said Bonnette, "and absolutely I will be protecting the interests of Halton Hills. ... Put it this way, if any decision is made to give more power to Oakville and Burlington, I will be vetoing that."

Bonnette has received assurances that if one municipality of the four does not agree with the representation formula, it will not be approved.

Bonnette said the committee would likely not report back to regional council before spring of 2008—when future population growth resulting from Sustainable Halton decisions could be taken into consideration.

However, he noted any decision, which must be approved the provincial government, must be made quickly to ensure implementation before the 2010 elections.

*With files from  
Melanie Cummings, special*



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Paul is the Youth Culture Specialist for Youth Unlimited (Toronto YFC). He has been working with youth and parents for 33 years and has spoken extensively throughout Canada and the USA. Having raised four sons, he understands that today's parents are searching for answers to urgent questions on keeping the family strong.

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