

Hydro proposes rate hike of \$2 a month next year

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Staff Writer

Hydro bills for the average residential homeowner in Halton Hills will be going up about \$2.01/month starting in May, if the Ontario Energy Board approves a Halton Hills Hydro rate increase.

Bryan Boyce, chair of Halton Hills Hydro (HHH), updated its sole shareholder, the Town of Halton Hills, on the proposed rate increase at a recent council meeting.

Most of the proposed increase is a result of capital costs resulting from growth, including the need for a transformer station in 2010.

The average residential customer will see an overall bill increase of 1.8 per cent and the average general service <50kW customer will see an overall bill increase of 2.3 per cent.

HHH is requesting rebasing the rate base from 2004 to 2008. Rebasing will allow HHH establish their costs closer to actual time the costs (infrastructure improvements) will occur over the next two years.

"That way we can recover from the ratepayer as much as those costs as possible without incurring debt charges," he said.

"One of the main reasons for doing this rate application is to bring balance to our cost allocation methodology," explained Boyce. After a review, the utility is attempting to bring classes over-charged or under-charged closer to 100 per cent of actual costs.

For example, when Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary questioned the cost increase of street lighting from 52 cents per connection to \$1.01, Boyce said street lighting had been under-charged. The new rate will impact the Town's

operating budget by about \$30,000, said Boyce.

HHH filed for the application increase in August and two groups have asked for intervenor status: the School Energy Coalition and the Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition.

The 300-page rate application is available for review at the Ontario Energy Board and the Acton headquarters of Halton Hills Hydro. The public is welcome to call the HHH office to ask questions, said Boyce.

Council approves deal for Dufferin to build Third Line water pipe

Halton Hills council has approved an agreement with Dufferin Aggregates, which will allow the quarry company to construct a private steel water pipe under Third Line.

Dufferin owns land on each side of the Third Line as part of its Acton Quarry operation. Dufferin needs the pipe to facilitate the movement of groundwater from one section of the quarry to another section on the other side of the road. Dufferin Aggregates would pay 100 per cent of the costs of the installation (and eventual removal), the Town's administration and legal costs.

Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis asked for a change in the proposed agreement of 21 years, less one day. Instead, council gave permission for a term of 10 years, subject to a renewal of up to five years, following a review in the eighth year.

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