

Saturday's TECO conference

Reject Milton's plea to form central region

Major controversy at Saturday's TECO Report meeting centred around whether or not an enlarged Milton should form a separate central Halton borough or join with the two towns and two townships to the north. Although Milton delegates pressed hard to keep the town separate as one of four lower-tier local councils, the battle was lost when the majority of the Oakville, Burlington and northern councillors decided Milton would be best in a northern unit with Esquesing, Nassagaweya, Georgetown and Acton.

Milton Mayor Brian Best, who claimed his brief was backed up by hard facts while other Halton councillors appeared to be making what he called "spur of the moment" decisions, was upset when it appeared clear the rest of Halton didn't want Milton to stand on its own. He pressed for the TECO Committee to make a financial feasibility study on breaking Halton's lower-tier government into both three and four areas, but failed to win enough support.

Support from Acton

"Let Milton do its own study," Oakville Reeve Allan Masson shouted from the rear of the room. Best's motion calling for a three and four borough financial study was seconded by Councillor Peter Marks of Acton, who told this newspaper he saw a lot of merit in Milton's proposal to stand alone in a Halton region.

It also won support of north Oakville's two council representatives, Rick Day and Don Gordon. "Milton is the only municipality which offered the same deal to the rural people as the urban people," Councillor Gordon told the conference. "The rural people in north Oakville will get the best deal of all from Milton."

Fellow councillors did make some concessions, however, on the southern boundary line of the proposed northern municipality. Following afternoon caucus

Secret ballot rejected

When Halton's first regional government is formed, the chairman should be elected by secret ballot by members of the regional council, according to Burlington Councillor Mrs. Ella Foote. She told Saturday's TECO conference in Milton that proposals to have the first chairman appointed by the province would lead to a "patronage position" and "we may not get the best chairman."

Mrs. Foote sponsored a motion calling for such a secret ballot, but it was defeated when only 10 signified they were in favor. It was generally agreed the first chairman should be a provincial appointee, but succeeding chairmen should be elected from among the regional councillors.

meetings Oakville came back with a suggestion that the south boundary of the northern unit be half way between 10 Sideroad (Derry Rd.) and Britannia Rd. Burlington felt a central Halton unit would be too small to operate efficiently, Mayor George Harrington reported. The southern boundary should be the centre line of 10 Sideroad, he said.

To 10 Sideroad

Northern municipalities felt if Milton was included in their unit the new southern boundary should be just south of 10 Sideroad, which is known as Derry Rd., in Oakville.

Mayor Best replied such a large unit would be unwieldy. The mayor would have to run for election at large in an area larger than the present Halton federal riding and the Halton East provincial riding. He also claimed the other towns were basing their decision on outdated Milton population and assessment figures.

Best warned the group the government's "design for development" promises that this fall the government will unveil proposals for Peel and Halton, Wentworth and Hamilton. Following a period in which local response will be accepted, legislation will be introduced early in 1973 to make regionalization effective in 1974.

Warden Jim Swanborough of Burlington, who conducted Saturday's meeting, noted Peel County last week opted for a two-tier system of regional government for Peel with a south, a central and a north unit the lower tier.

Large area

Milton's brief envisioned a central Halton unit of lower-tier government centred on Milton and stretching from the east to west boundaries of the present county. In Nassagaweya the north boundary line would be a lot above 10 Sideroad; in Esquesing it went north to 10 Sideroad in the first three and a half concessions, north of Five Sideroad in the next four and a half concessions; in Oakville to one lot south of Britannia Rd.; and in Burlington south to Eight Sideroad in the Western four and a half concessions, just south of Five Sideroad in the next two and a half concessions.

The land to be included would include Guelph Junction, Campbellville, Milton Heights, Hornby, Drumquin, Omagh, Boyne and Kilbride areas, but would exclude Lowville and Cedar Springs.

"The town of Milton has demonstrated during recent years, its ability to provide and work on a well planned basis to provide and operate municipal services adequately and economically, and to provide a reliable and economic administrative unit and as a result, has established a viable basis for a community of 28,000 people within the framework of Zone 1 of the Toronto Centred Region Plan," said the Milton brief.

Although the town agreed with many points in the TECO Report, the boundaries proposed by TECO "do not reflect the areas of influence around the urban areas

in respect to the services that will be provided out of those urban areas, such as libraries, recreation, fire protection, planning, etc.," the brief noted.

The town recommended lands south of Highway 401 to the Lower Base Line Rd. in north Oakville, from the Eighth Line east, should be considered as being part of the same municipality as Streetsville in Peel County. The majority of this land is included in the Erin Mills Development.

Former municipal affairs

minister Darcy McKeough, in a proposal issued in January of 1969, had suggested a central Halton unit going as far south as Lower Base Line Rd. and north to 10 Sideroad in Esquesing and Nassagaweya, the Milton mayor pointed out. But after consideration it was felt these limits weren't practicable and the boundary lines of the proposed Milton area were retraced.

Follow study

Boundaries proposed in what is now Esquesing Township were set to conform closely to those

recommended in the recent Georgetown boundary study, with a slight modification, he noted.

Both the TECO Report issued earlier this year and a Halton County Reeves Committee in 1969 recommended a central Halton unit, it was noted.

Mayor Best noted the Toronto Centred Region Plan, when it was amended to include Milton in the growth area called Zone One, permits the Milton urban unit to develop within its own resources to a population of 28,000. The present water supply system is capable of servicing up to 35,000. The first phase extension to the water pollution control plant now under construction will accommodate 18,000 persons by the spring of next year and proposed additions will handle a capacity of 28,000.

Esquesing recognizes certain areas of the township are oriented to Milton, as the township is making a grant to Milton for library and recreational services, it was noted. Esquesing representatives were quick to point out they make similar grants to Acton and Georgetown.

Tier within system

Milton Council rejected suggestions the town should be linked with the other four northern municipalities, said the brief. "This in effect would

create a single tier system within a two tier system comprising over two-thirds of the area of the county, without the apparent advantages of the single tier system. The brief noted the past "shortcomings" of the North Halton high school district board and the defunct urban board.

The town also expressed concern about the strong possibility of the new borough's administrative offices being located in Georgetown—19 miles from Kilbride, 15 miles from Campbellville and 12 miles from Milton. The flexibility in services such as garbage collection, recreation, libraries would not be possible without a multiplicity of tax structures, it was added.

Not in best interests

"It was unanimously agreed that it would not be in the best interests of the residents of Milton and district to concur with such a proposal."

On representation, Milton proposed a 23-man regional council with six members from Oakville, nine from Burlington, four from North Halton, three from central Halton and one chairman elected at large. The local council for the Milton unit was suggested as nine members, elected on a ward system.

"In the event that a four unit second tier form of restructuring is not acceptable, as opposed to a three unit second tier system with Milton as part of a north Halton unit, this municipality goes on record as favoring a SINGLE TIER SYSTEM" concluded Milton's brief.



MAYOR BRIAN BEST shows his disappointment in the outcome of Saturday's TECO conference. Against Milton's wishes, the other Halton councillors favored Milton joining Acton, Esquesing, Nassagaweya and Georgetown to form one north Halton unit in a two-tier regional government.

(Photo by R. Downs)

Anna lowers boom on Milton "hogs"

Mrs. Anna MacArthur, Nassagaweya Township's outspoken lady reeve who has been dubbed "The Voice of the North", lowered the boom on Milton Council at Saturday's TECO Report meeting in Milton.

Milton Council proposed creation of a central Halton local council including Milton and large portions of all four neighboring municipalities—Nassagaweya north to above 10 Sideroad, Esquesing mainly north to above Five Sideroad as far east as the Seventh Line, Burlington south to Kilbride and south of Five Sideroad, and Oakville south to Britannia Rd., plus stretching out to the east and west boundaries of Halton.

"I didn't realize this meeting was an annexation application," Reeve MacArthur exploded, "but I must congratulate Milton for going whole hog." Her statement brought a round of laughter from the approximately 40 Halton councillors and 20 staff members attending.



NORTH HALTON COUNCILLORS listen to discussions during Saturday's TECO conference in Milton. Burlington Councillor Roly Bird and Esquesing Reeve Tom Hill are pictured in the first row; Esquesing's Wilfred Leslie, Dick Howitt, Len Coxe and Russ Miller in the second row; Nassagaweya's Don McMillan, Mrs. A. MacArthur and Arthur Gibson in the third row. Oakville councillors and visitors make up the fourth row.

(Photo by R. Downs)

Oakville and Burlington do agree on some points

Briefs submitted to Saturday's TECO Report meeting from Burlington and Oakville indicated the two south Halton councils were thinking alike in several areas but had wide differences of opinion in other areas.

Burlington's brief had the unique distinction of representing a 5-3 decision at the council table, but before the TECO meeting was half over two councillors—who had missed the council meeting when the brief was approved—alleged themselves with those voting against the brief's main recommendations and forming a 5-3 split on council. The brief recommended a single tier system of regional government with councillors elected on a ward or area system, but in the event a single tier region was not acceptable to the majority of Halton councillors, opted for a two-tier region.

Support two tiers

Councillors Steve Toth and Bill Sutherland told Saturday's meeting they missed the council meeting when this decision was made but both support and the two-tier system.

If East Flamboro and Waterdown want to be included in the Halton region, as the original TECO report had recommended last May, the boundary of Burlington should be extended westerly to Highway 6, said the report. If they want to remain in Wentworth County no change in boundaries was foreseen. In any event Burlington was satisfied to go as far north as Derry Rd. (10 Sideroad) which runs in an east-west direction about a mile and a

half south of the town's present northern boundary, Steeles Ave.

Burlington felt members of the regional council should be directly elected on a ward system and that mayors of each lower tier municipality should also be members of the regional council.

Try five or three

Oakville Council's brief supported TECO's recommendations for the external boundaries of the county, based on watershed areas and the Toronto Centred Region Plan. On internal boundaries, they agreed with TECO's plan for five lower tier councils but also suggested consideration be given to

creation of three internal units, one with Oakville south of Lower Base Line Rd., one with Burlington south of the same road extended to Burlington, and one comprising the remaining north part of Halton. If this plan was adopted Oakville felt each lower tier council could have seven representatives on the regional council.

Elections should be by the indirect method, Oakville submitted. It was the only council favoring indirect elections. Indirect elections would give local councillors the greatest ability to participate in decisions made at the regional level, reasoned the brief.

As well as the whole of Esquesing, the north's brief

Split over hydro services

Divide regional, local responsibilities

General agreement on most areas under the heading "division of responsibilities" was reached Saturday at the municipal councillors' conference on the TECO Report.

Most agreed the regional council of the yet-to-be-formed Halton region should handle official plans for the region, policing, emergency measures organization, public works construction, solid waste disposal, flood control, conservation, regional museums, regional parks, industrial development, social and family services, forests and most areas of financing including debenturing, tax levying and unbudgeting,

computer services and licencing of trades and taxis.

Local chores

On the local level they felt the second-tier councils should be in charge of local planning, zoning and committee of adjustment matters; fire protection, building and plumbing departments, animal control, road maintenance, water and sewage plants, storm sewers, libraries, recreation and parks, cemeteries, public transit and general licencing of dogs, lotteries, etc.

On hydro services they were split. The northern communities' joint brief and Oakville's brief

North towns, townships go together in region

It has been a number of years since councillors in Halton's four northernmost municipalities sat down and agreed on anything. But they put their heads together at meetings during the past few weeks and came up with a collective agreement on their part in the future government of Halton, and their ideas were presented to Saturday's TECO Report session in one joint brief.

Acton, Georgetown, Nassagaweya and Esquesing councils recommended they join together to form a strong unit of lower-tier local government for the north Halton—with or without the town of Milton included. Oakville and Burlington delegates supported their stand although it found little support from Milton councillors, who proposed having the lower portions of Esquesing and Nassagaweya join with Milton in a separate central Halton unit that would also include part of north Oakville and Burlington.

Stress unanimity

Mayor Les Duby of Acton presented the councils' joint brief, stressing it was a joint submission by the four councils. A map attached to the brief indicated the councils involved wanted all the lands presently in the four municipalities to remain as a north Halton unit.

As for the northern end of Nassagaweya, the brief suggested "greater importance should be stressed on the community centre of interest from the standpoint of recreational programming, school affiliation, etc., rather than aspects of surface drainage." The TECO Report had recommended Nassagaweya lands north of 25 Sideroad be detached from Halton and join Wellington County.

As well as the whole of Esquesing, the north's brief

suggested the southernmost boundary of the northern unit should be Highway 401, which runs one lot south of Steeles Ave. through seven concessions of northern Oakville. In Nassagaweya, the southern boundary would remain as Steeles Ave.

Fair representation

The brief also suggested a means of government restructuring to give the new northern municipality a fair share of voting rights on the regional council. If Milton remained a separate unit there should be 11 regional councillors from Burlington, three from Milton, seven from Oakville and five from the northern unit, a total of 26, with a chairman appointed by

the province for the region's first term and appointed by the regional council thereafter, said the brief.

A local council for the northern unit would comprise three representatives from Acton, four from Esquesing, seven from Georgetown and two from Nassagaweya, for a total of 16, plus a mayor to be elected at large. The councillors recommended the mayor not serve on the regional council as his additional duties would be too onerous. Each of the present municipalities would constitute a ward in the local council. Georgetown would send two reps to the region. Acton and the two townships one each.

Some oppose region

Want referendum

The possibility of a public referendum on the subject of regional government was mentioned again Saturday when Halton councillors held their second meeting to review the TECO Committee's Report.

A referendum was suggested at the first meeting, last June, by Councillor Colin Smillie of Milton. Nassagaweya Reeve Mrs. Anna MacArthur suggested it again at Saturday's gathering. "Nassagaweya Council does not really subscribe to regional government, but we are prepared to go along if this is the wish of the majority," she admitted.

"No reason"

Burlington's northern ward councillor Mrs. Ella Foote was another opponent. "We should not go into regional government at all," she warned, because it means taking the government away from the people. She was

also opposed to Puslinch and West Flamboro joining Halton because they appear to be more oriented toward Guelph. Mrs. Foote said the present county system works well and "there is no reason to go into regional government."

Councillor Gordon Brown of Oakville felt it was "very important we forget our petty politics and set up a municipality we can live with." He wondered if Oakville and Burlington should seek city status and leave the rest to create a new northern municipality which could eventually be a large city. "We could end up with three very viable units," he felt.

Another opponent was Councillor John Lawrence of Oakville. "I am completely and entirely opposed to regional government," he said. He left the meeting shortly after that.

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