

Oppose foodlands designation

Still bristling over the high costs of belonging to the region, members of South Esquering Landowners Association are asking that their lands remain under rural designation.

"We're here because we have a vested interest in maintaining the market value of our land," Rod Pinkney, spokesman for the group, told regional planning council last week. "But there are other vested interests working against us."

The association was presenting a brief to the committee in response to the draft official plan for Halton.

The brief identifies the vested interests working against the association as provincial and municipal civil servants "who are trying to promote unnecessary jobs," farmers "who would like to acquire more land from their neighbors at lower prices" and a few politicians who support land freeze because "they think it is still popular."

The group is strongly against foodland or agricultural zonings but also opposes any reference in the draft regional plan to the Green Paper on Planning for Agriculture and to mention of the Agricultural Code of Practice. They want the section of the plan restricting

rural settlements to be deleted and call references to a forest industry in Halton an "academic fantasy."

The association favors the official plan for Esquering Township developed several years ago and say they will support the plan to be submitted to the region by the council of Halton Hills.

Reading from the brief, Mr. Pinkney said Halton farms are too small to be viable. Only 21 Halton farmers make their living from farming exclusively, he said. Quoting statistics from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food publication Halton Farm News, Mr. Pinkney reported 496 of the 796 farms are less than 129 acres and the net farm income averages only \$641 per Halton farm.

"There is nothing produced in Halton that cannot be produced as cheap or cheaper elsewhere in Ontario."

Instead of the Agricultural Code of Practice the group suggests a by-law similar to a resolution they say will be introduced in the legislature by Agriculture Minister William Newman. According to Mr. Pinkney, the resolution will state that any person who purchases a lot created by land severance in an agricultural area shall be deemed to be aware of farming practices in the area and no

government body shall give in to any complaints against the farming operation.

If people want to live in a rural area with the benefits of country living, they'll have to live with some of the disadvantages, such as the smells, said another member of the delegation. The onus should not be on the farmer to conform but on the person who objects, the man continued. "If they don't like it, they can move back to the city where the smells are different — I won't say better."

Asked by Oakville Councillor Arch Donaghey how many people the delegation and brief represented Mr. Pinkney replied 72 farmers who owned over 10,000 acres of land joined the association in 1970.

Mr. Donaghey said farmers' delegations have not been consistent in their views, making it difficult for the committee to know whose case is right. But committee chairman Pat McLaughlin interjected that the message from all farmers is; "Go away and leave us alone."

While the South Esquering Landowners' Association favors rural zoning, the Halton Federation of Agriculture is asking for compensation in return for the development rights they would lose in a foodlands

designation.

Milton Mayor Don Gordon, who supported the stand of the Esquering group, said everyone gets the idea farmers will immediately sell out if the land is zoned rural. They won't, Mr. Gordon argued. "Just don't put a cloud over their land. Give

them the same freedom others have in urban areas."

Mr. Gordon says Milton has been opposed to a freeze of farmlands and he told the delegation Halton Hills representatives win more than they lose at regional council.

Halton Hills Councillor

Russ Miller expressed the hope the region would take a close look at what is presented by the towns of Milton and Halton Hills, the two rural areas of the region.

"We'll almost have to be divided on some policies we adopt."

But Mr. McLaughlin said

there were rural sections in Burlington and Oakville as well.

Referring to the group's request for rural designation Oakville Councillor Ron Planche said he was concerned about ensuring there would be sufficient land under cultivation in Halton to supply Halton.

Region pulls plug on day care support

Applications for subsidized day care in Milton and Burlington have been temporarily frozen until the budget is back in line. Norma Lepa, co-ordinating day care supervisor for the region, is optimistic applications for the program will again be considered in six to eight weeks, but on a very selected basis.

As a result of the freeze, seven or eight applicants in Milton have had to make other arrangements for day care, which they were able to do on the short-term basis, Mrs. Lepa said. The freeze is necessary to stay within the \$92,000 budgeted for the program for the year. Costs for the first quarter of 1978 are \$4,400 over the amount budgeted.

The 1977 budget for subsidized day care was overspent before the end of the year because of an unexpected upsurge of applications in the summer. But the program was bailed out by additional funds from the province and the region. Should the same thing happen this year, however, the region would have to pick up all of the additional cost because the province has placed a freeze on day care funds, Mrs. Lepa said.

Elimination of a Mount Nemo campground operated by the Bruce Trail Club has been recommended by the Education Advisory Board of the Halton Region Conservation Authority.

Location of the campsite at the base of the escarpment makes it difficult for the authority to patrol. Rowdy behavior by weekend campers, damage to nearby private property, campers setting up camps on private lands and inconvenience to

neighbors were cited as reasons for calling for closure of the site.

Campers have blocked private driveways, camped in a farmer's field then became irate because cows were loose in the field and caused property damage when asked to leave.

Staff were directed to pursue the closing of the present camp and possible opening of an alternate site with members of the Bruce Trail Club.

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It's cheaper for region to buy private care

Purchasing day care from private centres cost the region less in 1977 than providing care in its own centres, a staff report shows.

The report, prepared for the community and social services committee by co-ordinating day care supervisor Norma Lepa, shows the actual per diem cost of providing care in the regional centres was \$13.29, whereas the costs at two private centres in Burlington were \$8.97 and \$9.60.

Community and social services committee asked for the report to help judge the feasibility of opening a regional day care centre in Burlington. The region operates three day care centres, two in Oakville and one in Georgetown. Day care in Milton is purchased from a private centre.

The higher per diem rate in the regional centres was attributed to higher staff salaries, compared to private centres, and to a drop in enrolment. In Halton staff salaries account for 74 per cent of costs of regional day care centres, compared to 78 per cent in Metro Toronto.

If full enrolment had been achieved, costs at regional day care centres would have been lower than purchased services. But Mrs. Lepa added while enrolment was dropping in some areas, it was rising in others, specifically Burlington and Milton.

In the absence of a day care study (which the region earlier turned down) and a proper forecasting mechanism it is impossible to determine day care needs, Mrs. Lepa told councillors.

Burlington Councillor Walter Mulkewich, who said the report raised more questions than it answered, pointed out the day care situation was one where a social planning report would be an asset. (In the past the

region decided against hiring a social planner.) But Oakville Councillors Ron Planche and Laurie Mannell argued it was inaccurate projections of school enrolment by planners that got the school board into difficulty. Nevertheless, Mr. Planche said he could support the need for a social planner provided there was an equivalent reduction in planning staff.

Halton Hills Councillor Russ Miller said if the region was objective, it would have municipally-operated day care centres in each of the four area municipalities. "Children are our biggest resource," he said. "We don't want to farm them out just anywhere."

Having regional centres which don't have to be concerned with profit margins ensures a consistent quality of care regardless of economic conditions, Mrs. Lepa

said. However, both Mrs. Lepa and social and family services administrator Rene Vivian agreed the quality of care now given at private centres was satisfactory.

The region buys services only from those agencies which have an unqualified license from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Mr. Vivian said. The Ministry sets standards and carries out regular inspection of centres.

The committee received and filed the report but Mrs. Lepa will do an internal study of day care needs, using figures compiled by the planning department in preparing the draft official plan.

The region provides or subsidizes day care for children of parents who cannot meet the costs themselves. The province pays 80 per cent of the costs and the region 20 per cent.

Quarries should maintain routes

Burlington Councillor Vern Connell says quarry operators should pay a tax based on the tonnage of materials hauled to offset costs of maintaining haulage routes.

Connell made that comment during a meeting of the Halton Regional Public Works Committee last week.

He noted costs for reconstruction of the Guelph Line from Highway 5 to Burnhamthorpe Rd. in North Burlington would exceed \$500,000 and much of the traffic on the road is from Nelson Crushed Stone.

Engineer Bruce Kitchen said traffic counts taken last year showed more than 27 per cent of the traffic were trucks going to and from quarries.

He said that was an exceptionally high ratio.

Kitchen said the work on the road was necessary because it is structurally deficient, has an inadequate shoulder width and the capacity of the road to carry traffic is too low for the demands on the road.

Region, area municipalities need social plan, brief says

In a brief responding to the region's draft official plan Burlington Social Planning Council supported the inclusion of a social policies section in the plan. (The section in the plan, the province opposes the inclusion.)

Moreover, the Social Planning Council asked the region to encourage local municipalities to set their own social goals and objectives and outline policies in order that spending be responsive to "a rational assessment of community needs."

The group, however, did not go along with the plan's proposal for an advisory body on health and social policy priorities, saying the Burlington and Oakville Social Planning Councils already performed these functions. "It would put one more layer of bureaucracy between the people and their elected representatives," said Karen Hill, executive director of Burlington Social Planning Council.

The establishment of municipal information offices to assist the public in understanding municipal policy

and its implications to direct citizens to appropriate city staff if more information was required is a proposal put forth in the group's brief.

The social planning council wants the plan to "beef up" regional identification by calling for the abolition of long distance telephone charges within the region and improvement in interregional transportation to allow people to work in Halton.


Concerning housing, the group asks for more affordable housing to be made available, and specifically mentions rental accommodation. It also suggests policies stress the need for a heterogeneous housing mix in neighborhoods to ensure housing for all levels of income would be distributed throughout area municipalities and the region as a whole.

The social planning council supports the plan's call for social impact assessments on projects outlined in the Environmental Assessment Act. It also wants more thorough data collection carried out before policy guidelines are formulated. The group is concerned that

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daughter and two sons.

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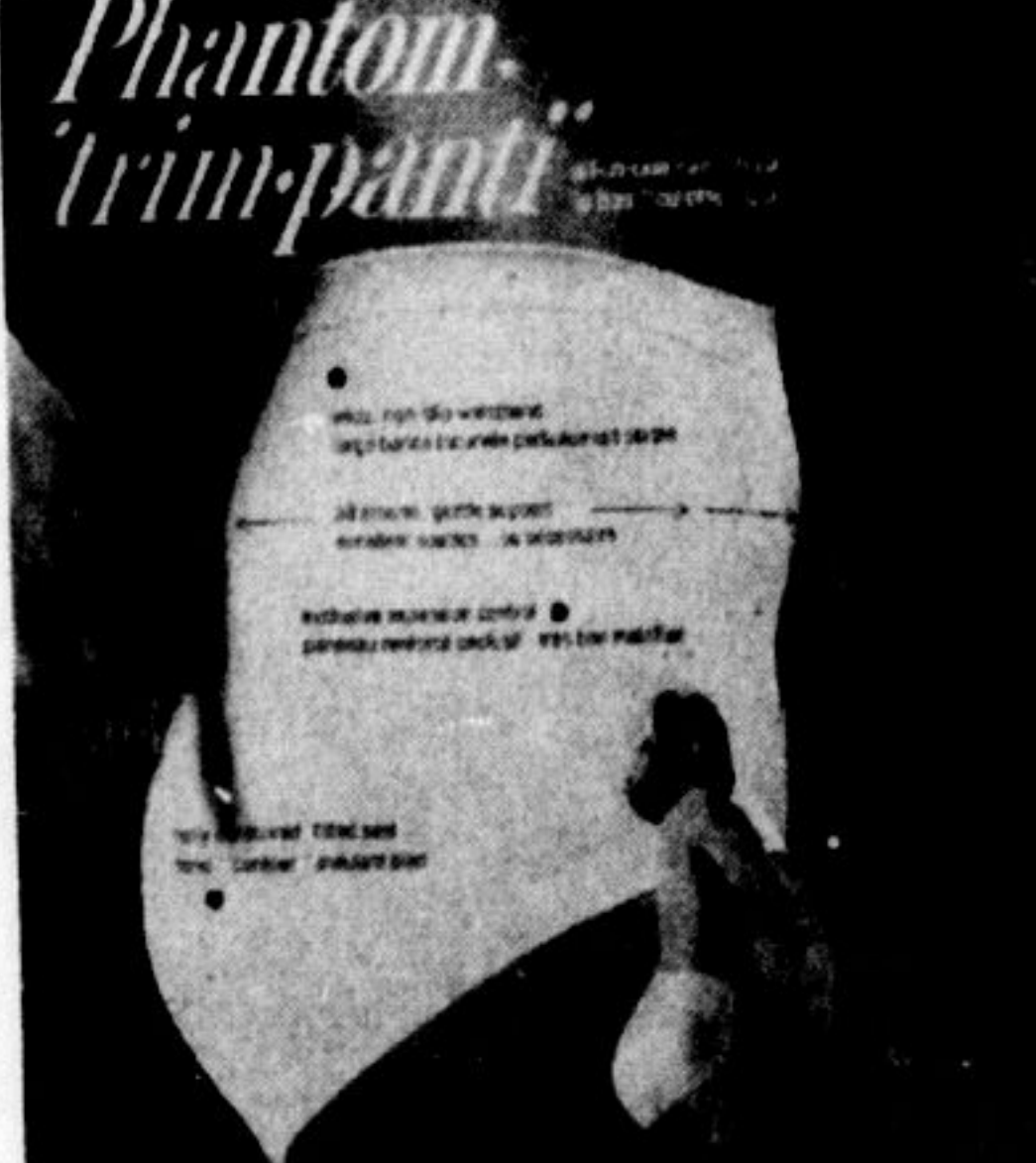
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