

Region plan left gutless planning member charges



HOLLY HURREN, Halton's Dairy Princess for the past two years, crowned new Princess Marie Murray Saturday morning at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food offices on Main St. in Milton. Miss Murray is a grade 13 student at Acton High School.

By Bob Burt
Halton Regional Council approved its first regional official plan Wednesday, but last minute changes left Planning Director Ed Cumming and some members of the planning committee upset.

Some members were appalled when council removed tables from the plan that indicated the type of housing mix that the region intended to plan for in the coming years. Oakville Councillor Gord Reade raised the issue and objected to the plan, or mix proposed in the plan because it leaned too much towards high and medium density developments. "If we go with this we'll have townhouses and apartments coming out of our ears. We can't just go blindly ahead turning the whole world upside down, because of a set of tables. This shouldn't be part of the housing policy. If this is passed it would be traumatic," Reade said. He claimed there are already 250 to 300 vacant townhouses in Oakville and condominium highrises were going bankrupt. "Take the tables out of the policy section and put it at the

back of the book where no one will read it." Planning committee chairman Pat McLaughlin said he felt the mix being proposed was a good one. Milton Mayor Don Gordon, a member of the planning committee, noted that in all of the public meetings no one objected to the mix. Oakville Councillor Archie Donaghey noted the province had paid \$80,000 for a housing study in Halton. The mix proposed is based on the findings of the study. Donaghey noted projections show the average housing unit will be claimed by 2.8 people and he claimed it just doesn't make any sense to build four bedroom homes that people can't afford and don't need. Following the meeting Donaghey charged that council had taken the guts out of the housing policy and left it with a broad philosophical statement. Donaghey said it was imperative that people have a choice of lifestyles and places to live. "I've never said we should have all kinds of apartments and townhouses, but people have to have a choice." He said the plan now puts

heavy emphasis on single family developments. Planners and some councillors have charged that without a definite statement in the plan, the type of housing will be left to developers. "The way it is now, the community will be planned by developers and they are only interested in what will sell today, not what is good for the community in the long run," Donaghey said. He told this newspaper of cases in the United States where ratepayers groups were suing municipalities for failing to provide a reasonable variety in housing types. Donaghey deploring council's action but suggested the province would probably never approve a plan unless it has tables indicating a housing mix. He said the public and councillors had supported the idea of having people living and working in Halton but when it comes down to voting, they went against that very principle. Studies have shown that the type of jobs apt to be generated in Halton will require accommodation for low and medium income earners as well as the high income earners.

The availability of a wide choice of housing types will always be a major factor in attracting new industry, Donaghey claims. Planning Director Ed Cumming told council the tables should stay in the plan and the gradual move towards a higher density of housing is entirely defensible. "If the tables are out of the plan we won't be able to do the job as well as I'd like to see it done. It allows a degree of flexibility that renders the plan ineffectual on that score."

"Local planners say a matter, could it be just a matter of planning philosophy?" Reade asked. "Yes, it could, we could both be wrong," Cumming replied. Because Oakville has more land than other areas in the region without zoning applied, the impact of the housing mix policies would affect that area the most. Donaghey opposed approval of the plan on the basis that the housing policies were removed. Jim Watson of Milton opposed the plan as well. He was upset with a policy that would allow estate type development adjacent to villages and hamlets. The plan discourages estate type development adjacent to urban areas. Watson felt the same rules should apply to hamlet and village settlements. Halton Hills Councillor Russ Miller opposed the plan because he wasn't satisfied with the policies on agricultural land. He felt the plan carried too many restrictions on the land. Oakville Councillor Laurie Mannell opposed the resolution approving the plan without specifying the area of the plan he opposed. The plan now goes to Queen's Park where it is to be considered by a variety of ministries and agencies. Regional officials anticipate it taking a year before the plan is finally approved.

Farm politics threaten to free enterprise

Milton area farmer and retired civil servant Peter Branch will carry his opposition to the region's official plan to the Ontario Municipal Board. Branch is one of several people who have continually opposed agricultural policies in the plan. He and Red Pinkney told councillors that the policies were too restrictive and would work

against the farmer, instead of for him. Branch estimated the cost of implementing the agricultural policies at more than \$1.2 million in the first year alone. "The policies are a hidden threat to free enterprise, they offer nothing that isn't already there. The province will not stand for these kinds of restrictions on democracy

and free enterprise." Branch told the council. Pinkney told council he was amazed to think the council would pass the plan without any idea of how much it would cost taxpayers to implement it. "Do you think people can afford this freezing of land? I know farmers can't."

Photo or no photo?

Milton Councillors can't make up their minds if they like a group photo of the council, taken recently by Brennan's Photography, Milton. Proofs were supplied but the photographer pointed out Councillor Rick Day was "slightly out of focus" and the picture could be re-shot. Day — the clown of council — took the out-of-focus jibes of fellow councillors in good stride, noting "I am quite often out of focus."

Some councillors obviously hadn't made their minds up yet. The motion was lost, on a 3-2 vote, yet there were nine councillors and meeting chairman Brad Clements present. Another motion, accepting the photos, was also lost on a 3-2 vote. Wiping his hands of the whole affair, Chairman Clements called for the next order of business, and the photo caper was left high, dry, and slightly out of focus.

The planning committee and planning staff had convened a number of meetings with farmers and one special session that lasted half a day in an effort to come up with a plan that would meet planning principles and the wishes of the farmers too. The committee backed off a number of rigid policies drafted to protect prime agricultural land from development. Committee chairman Pat McLaughlin said members of the Halton Federation of Agriculture seemed satisfied with the plan. "I know that Mr. Pinkney and Mr. Branch aren't satisfied, but we have tried and we've done everything we possibly can do. We will never have a plan that will suit everyone."

Buy or rent . . .

(Continued from page 1)
Council was also told the health unit building on King St. and the police station on Hugh St. are, according to regional staffers, to be put on the open market for sale. The final motion came from Councillor Powadiuk, who said the town should offer \$1 to purchase or \$1 a year to rent each property, and obtain first right of refusal on each parcel. The majority concurred and staff was asked to continue negotiations.

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MacArthur for Mayor?
(Continued from page 1)
resignation. The 1978 election scene has been fairly quiet until now, with only Gus Goutouski and William A. Johnson announcing their plans to run for council seats to date. But in the past few weeks Mrs. MacArthur's name has been mentioned as a mayoralty candidate on several occasions.

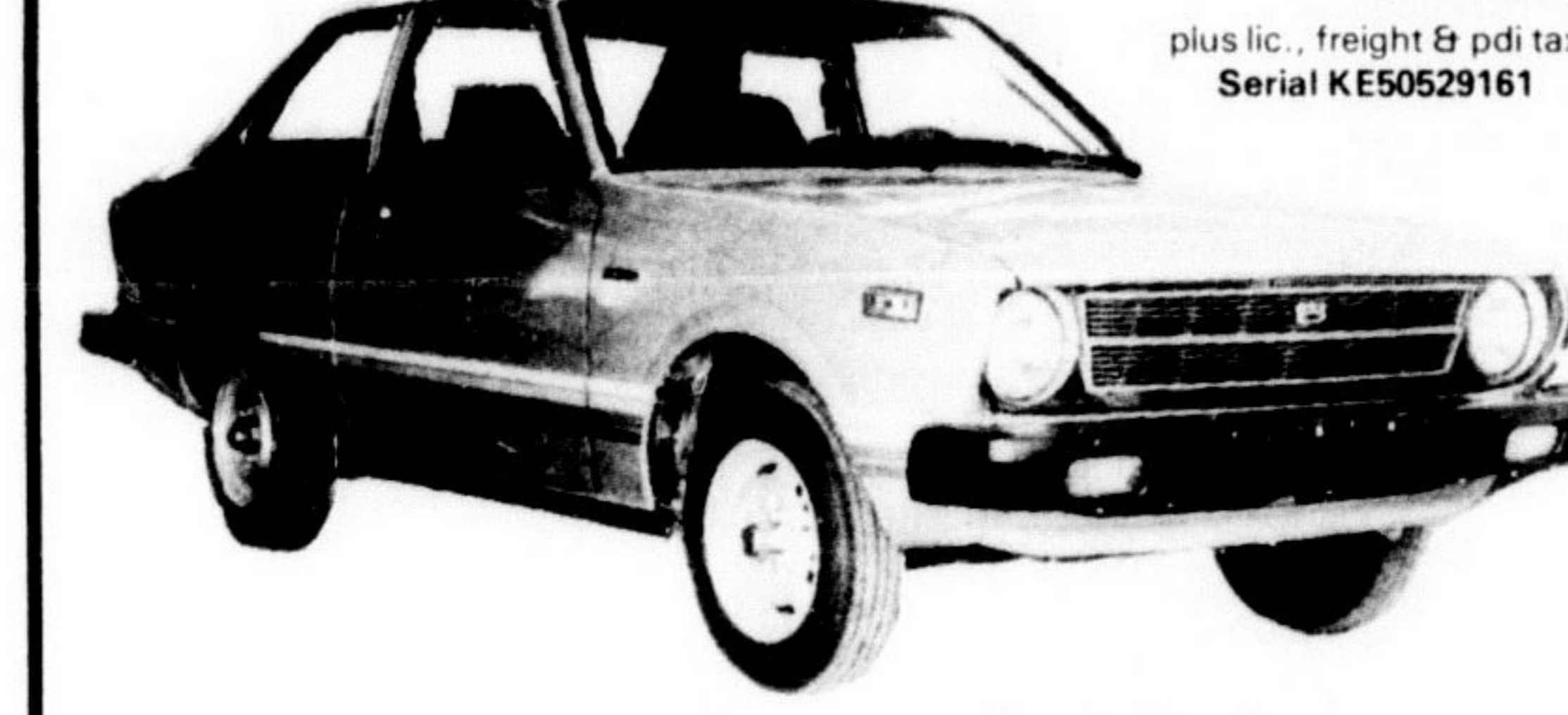
People have been asking her if she was running for the top seat again, Mrs. MacArthur smiled, and she said she tells them "yes, I will consider it." But she wouldn't commit herself, for publication at least, until "next week".

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