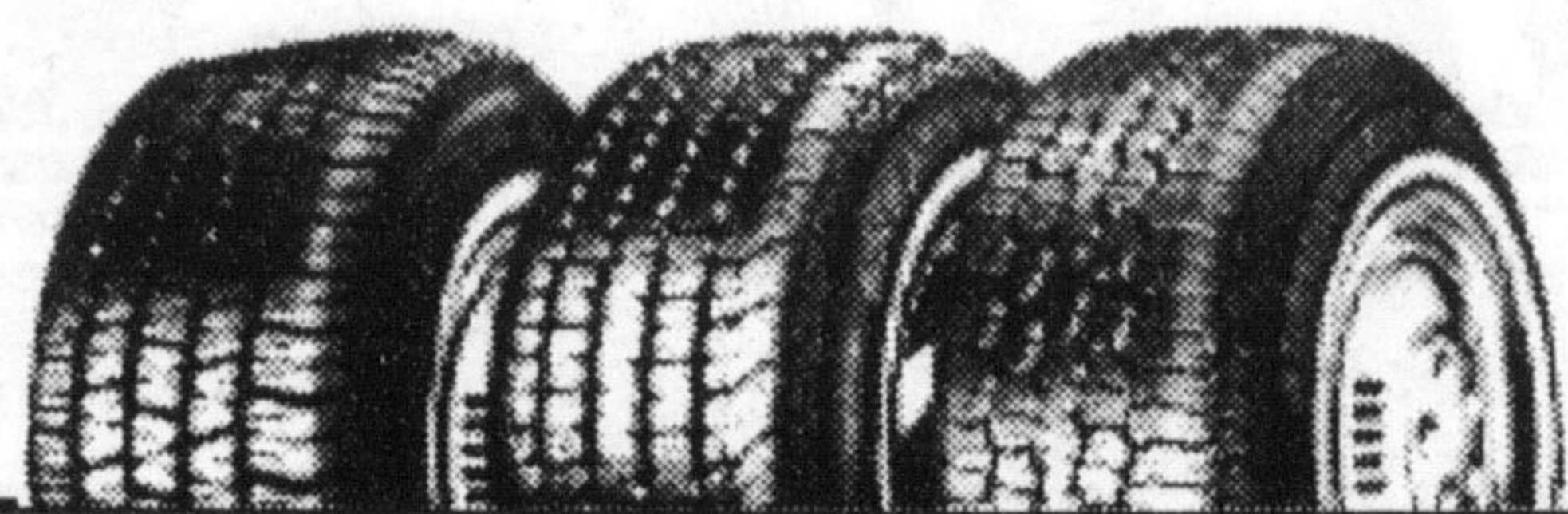


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# Milton council is on board with the review of services

By **BRAD REAUME**  
The Champion

The Halton Area Services Review (HASR) jumped a hurdle when its preliminary recommendations received approval from Milton council recently.

Mayor Gord Krantz supported the process, which is taking a close look at the operations of municipal government and school boards in an effort to find efficiencies and savings for local taxpayers.

"For the most part it (work on the HASR) has gone very well but the differences are there," said Mr. Krantz. "If we all buy into it, then it could go. It's not a majority rule.

The review will continue with an eye on getting a completed report by the end of July. Some recommendations of the committee will have immediate application while others will be of a longer term nature, council heard. Mr. Krantz said changes to HASR proposals are possible but require the approval of all organizations at the negotiating table.

The process has sub-committees looking at emergency services, property assessment and taxation, transit, roads, planning and the administration of the provincial offences act.

David Hipgrave, Milton's chief administrative officer, reminded councillors that the process is locally driven and not being done at the behest of any provincial agency. He said the final report on the project will include any proposed employment shifts and resulting savings.

Milton Fire Chief Harold Penson, a member of the emergency services team, said the committee was looking at a regional fire department which will also house ambulances.

"If ever there was an opportunity to take on some of the vested interests and throw out a lot of history and parochial thinking," said Councillor Brian Penman. "We can redo the service in the best way. I hope we don't cling to a lot of old notions."

Mr. Krantz warned that a regional fire department



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**BRIAN PENMAN**

would lead to more full time firefighters and likely much higher costs.

Regarding changes to assessment, Jim McQueen, Milton's director of corporate services, said timing of the change could lead to problems with the delivery of tax bills. Mr. McQueen said his team is considering a unified computer system for tax and utility bills for all four Halton municipalities.

The transit team is looking at every option from a unified municipal transit system for all of Halton to the purchase of service from private companies, according to team member Helen Lisi, Milton's acting town clerk.

The roads review team, chaired by Milton's director of leisure services Jennifer Reynolds, provided a fresh look at Halton's significant road networks. Streamlining the regional road network could lead to lower maintenance costs, council heard.

In the area of planning, Mel Iovio, Milton's director of planning, said the team did not concern itself with planning principles but rather the financial fallout of changes to administration.

Councillor John Challinor was concerned that the planning process might get too centralized. He said the major difference between municipalities is forged through local planning, and suggested complete decentralization of the process be considered.

"This should be much more of a local issue," agreed Councillor Wally Hunter. "Planning is one service you have to bring down to the local level."

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