

Halton wants to give Leach an earful over housing idea

By BRAD REAUME

The Champion

Halton councillors are adamant that they want nothing to do with subsidized housing.

The whole of council agreed with their administration and finance committee and will inform Minister of Municipal Affairs Al Leach they are strongly opposed and want housing programs funded by the province.

Putting subsidized housing on the municipal doorstep is part of the provincial cost-swapping plan, which municipalities say will hobble them with huge new financing challenges.

"The government has a big mouth and no ears. They aren't going to listen," said Oakville Councillor Kevin Flynn at committee. "We should say that we don't agree social housing should be on the property tax and that's it."

Councillors also used the opportunity to reinforce its opposition to pooling of social service costs. They also took pains to explain how the province should operate the program.

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz told committee that Halton does not want to be any more involved than is already the case.

He suggested someone else write the letter to the ministry because his version would use language that might be unsuitably explicit.

"I fundamentally disagree that this (subsidized housing) is an appropriate service to be funded through the property tax base," said Joe Rinaldo, Halton's com-



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missioner of corporate services.

Burlington Councillor Ralph Scholtens said he wanted to take a more practical view and spell out the approach that should be used in order for the shift to cost Halton taxpayers the least amount of money.

"We should give no inkling that we support what they are doing to us," said Halton Hills Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson at committee, who claimed Mr. Scholtens was not part of the fight.

"People are really getting angry. What's happening is not fair or equitable."

Oakville Councillor Keith Bird told the committee that at the recent Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference both Mr. Leach and Premier Mike Harris acknowledged that many of these shifts were bad decisions.

"I'm reminded that a bad decision can be defined by the length of time it takes to rectify it," he said, calling for the province to halt its plans.

Best says pace new growth

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He said he supports a major change to the committee structure at Milton council which would get interested councillors involved in issues they are most concerned about.

Such a committee structure would make for shorter meetings, which would stop important decisions from being made in the wee hours.

"People in Milton should have a choice," Mr. Best said. "If they want the status quo, fine. If they like what I have to offer then give me a chance."

He pointed to a lack of social and recreational opportunities for youth as a cause of some crime problems.

Mr. Best said he has a strong urban and rural background, having lived both in town and in the country. He says he constantly gets calls from rural as well as urban residents who say they approach him because he can get things done.

Mr. Best said it is in Milton's best interest to try to preserve local councils. He said it is unlikely that Halton Region will disappear, so flexibility in local councils is important.

Down the road Mr. Best said he would like to inves-

tigate the continued role of hydro commissions and their potential amalgamation.

Currently hydro commissioners are elected but Mr. Best said either existing or future legislation might change that.

He said he was running a traditional campaign and was making a major effort to canvass neighbourhoods and "get out and listen to people."

Mr. Best said there is still much to be decided on the water servicing plan. He wants to make sure that existing residents are served first, and that the environment is respected.

He said some growth is necessary to protect current services such as Milton District Hospital. Upgrading schools also depends on pressure from new students.

"This is the time to make a choice," he said. Calling for a high voter turnout because of two referenda, chlorine in the water and property taxation policy, on the ballot.

Mr. Best said that if elected he will shelve his real estate licence.

In addition he is refusing to accept any campaign donations from developers or anyone who might benefit from growth in the community.

Beware telephone scam artists says victimized trust company

Consumers receiving phone calls advising them that they've won a significant prize from Canada Trust should be careful if the offer suggests they must pay money to receive it, the bank warns.

Canada Trust and police across Canada have received inquiries from people who have been solicited as part of a telephone fraud scheme, stated a press release from the bank.

"In most cases, victims were contacted by telephone, told they had won a large prize, and that they had to send in money to pay taxes and/or shipping and

handling expenses," said Canada Trust spokesperson Mark Towhey.

In some cases, the scam artist claimed to represent Canada Trust, he said.

Canada Trust warns that the calls are not legitimate and the callers are not associated with the bank in any way.

Anyone who may have been a victim of this type of call is advised to contact Project Phonebusters, a joint OPP-RCMP task force fighting telephone fraud, at 1-888-495-8501.

Carve a scary face at Mountsberg

Carving masters of all ages are invited to Mountsberg next Sunday (Oct. 26) for their annual Pumpkin Carving Contest.

Jack-o-lanterns are included with gate admissions, so all you need are a few carving tools and lots of imagination.

Horse drawn wagon rides and children's crafts will also be part of the event, which runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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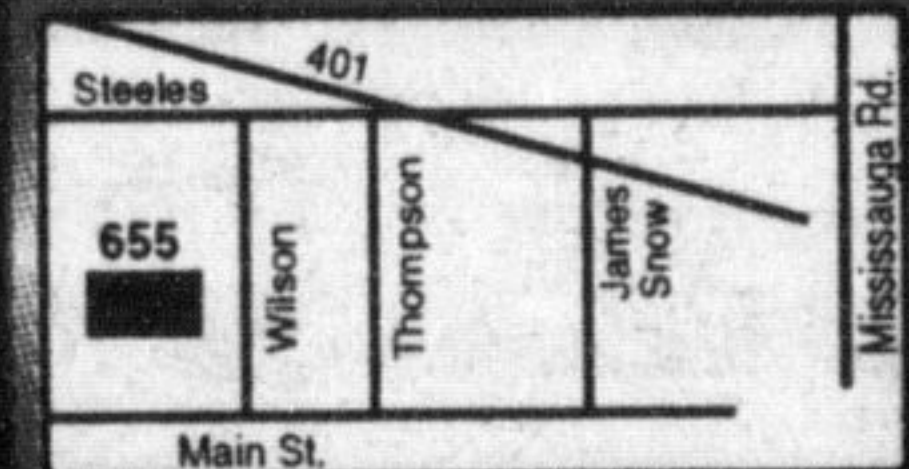


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