

Citizens advise protecting tax-free status

By BRAD REAUME

The Champion

Halton politicians will receive raises in the event the provincial government eliminates their current tax-free allowance.

Traditionally in Ontario elected officials have received one-third of their pay tax-free. The rationale was that they used this money for their expenses in carrying out the job.

The current provincial government has suggested they will do away with this provision due to the large differences among the pay rates of elected officials across the province. Legislation has yet to be introduced.

Contending it is difficult to approve their own pay, Halton set up a citizens' committee to determine a fair method for council compensation.

The committee recommended that if the tax-free status is eliminated, council pay should rise to maintain the current level. Ontario MPPs lost their tax-free allowance last year.

In addition the committee confirmed the current method for calculating increases and suggested it be applied to councillor expense allowances.

Regional council approved the committee report Wednesday.

Currently councillors have access to \$1,548 over their three-year term for

expenses such as conference attendance, meetings and office equipment.

The prevailing policy to determine the rate of any increase is to take an average of the annual change in the national and

provincial Consumer Price Index, and the average increase across 12 regional job classifications to arrive at a raise for councillors.

• see COMMITTEE on page 17

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"Yes."

"And does this Fuller have a last name?"

"Yes"

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