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Divisions appear deeper as council size hotly debated

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Acrimonious divisions among municipal councillors surfaced Monday night as they sharply debated colleague Rick Malboeuf's bid to whittle down the number of Milton's elected representatives.

Eventually a frustrated Councillor Barry Lee caustically suggested council be reduced to three members. Following that lead, Mayor Gord Krantz countered by saying perhaps there should only be one member of council, him.

Mr. Lee topped that by airing the idea of scrapping Milton council to have the municipality merge with Halton Hills.

With regard to Mr. Malboeuf's motion to pare back council numbers, "I don't like how this was brought up," said Mr. Lee. "To bring it to us this way is just stupid. It's just an attempt to score political points."

There was plenty of emotion and anger during Monday's debate on process, however little was accomplished. Motions for a public meeting and for a committee and survey approach to the downsizing question were both defeated.

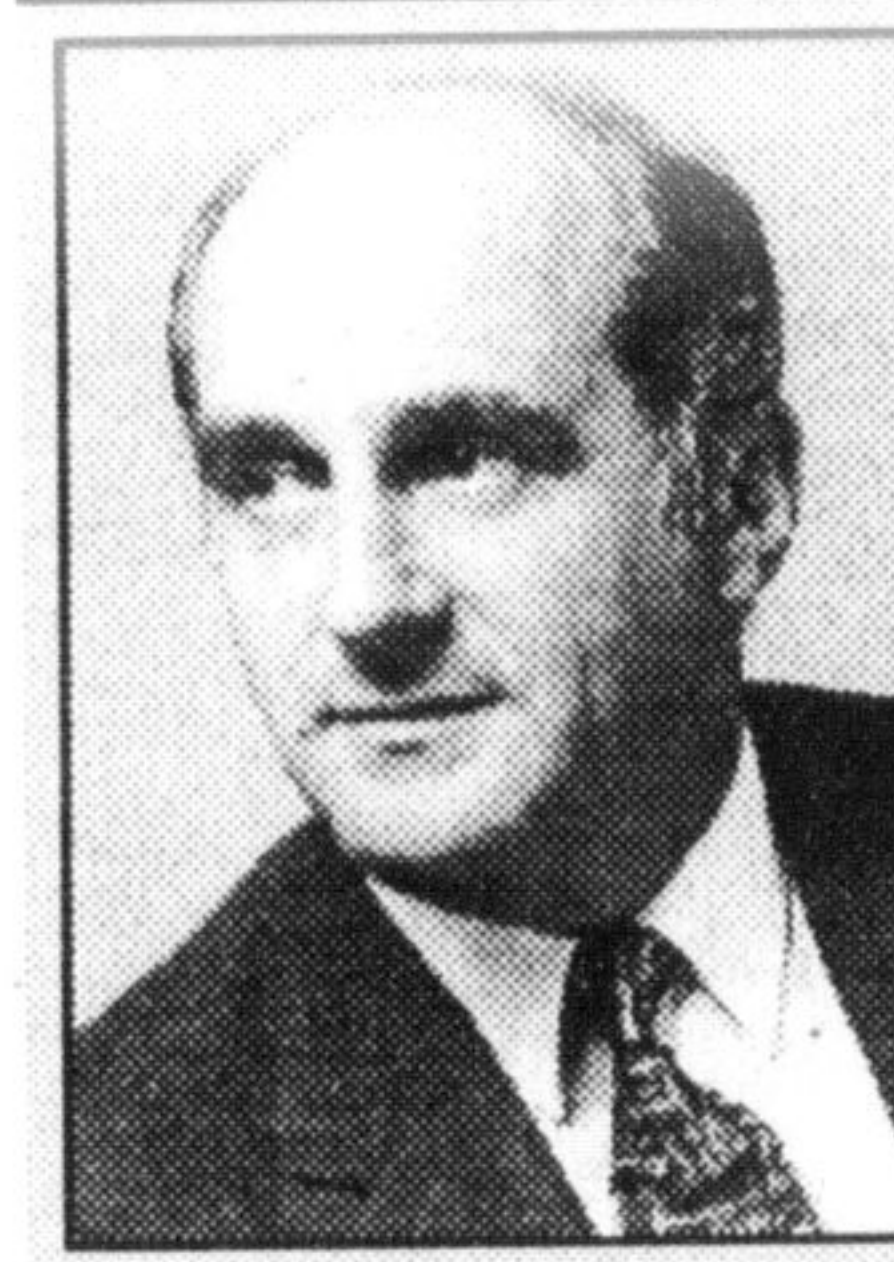
Those wanting a reduced council were accused of subverting democracy, while those looking to maintain the status quo were berated for hypocrisy.

In the end the debate was deferred to April 6.

Several councillors suggested the only reason for a reduction would be the potential savings.

"If it's money that's behind this, you can have it all if you need it all," said an angry Councillor John Challinor. "I'm not here for the money; nobody is. If it is about democracy and representation, there is no issue."

Mr. Challinor said when the public is made aware of



"We have more councillors than full-time firefighters in this town. We should ask the public which they prefer."
RICK MALBOEUF

the duties of councillors they become "empathetic and sympathetic." He said he will not support a reduction in council size but he will support a reduction in councillor pay, though he added any reduction should be a personal choice.

Councillors currently make \$11,685 and the mayor makes \$34,775. Regional councillors take in an extra \$18,705. One third of all council stipends are tax free.

Councillor Wally Hunter put forward a motion to reduce the pay of councillors. It will be dealt with April 6, when council is scheduled to debate its size. Any reduction in council size will dovetail with the next municipal elections slated for the fall of 2001.

Mr. Malboeuf defended his motion for downsizing, saying several current councillors campaigned for a reduction in council size.

"If the previous council had voted for it last year we would already be seeing the savings," said Mr. Malboeuf. "We have more councillors than full-time firefighters in this town. We should ask the public which they prefer."

Mr. Malboeuf said Mr. Challinor's appeal for democracy was suspect, claiming that Mr. Challinor

• see DEBATE on page 18

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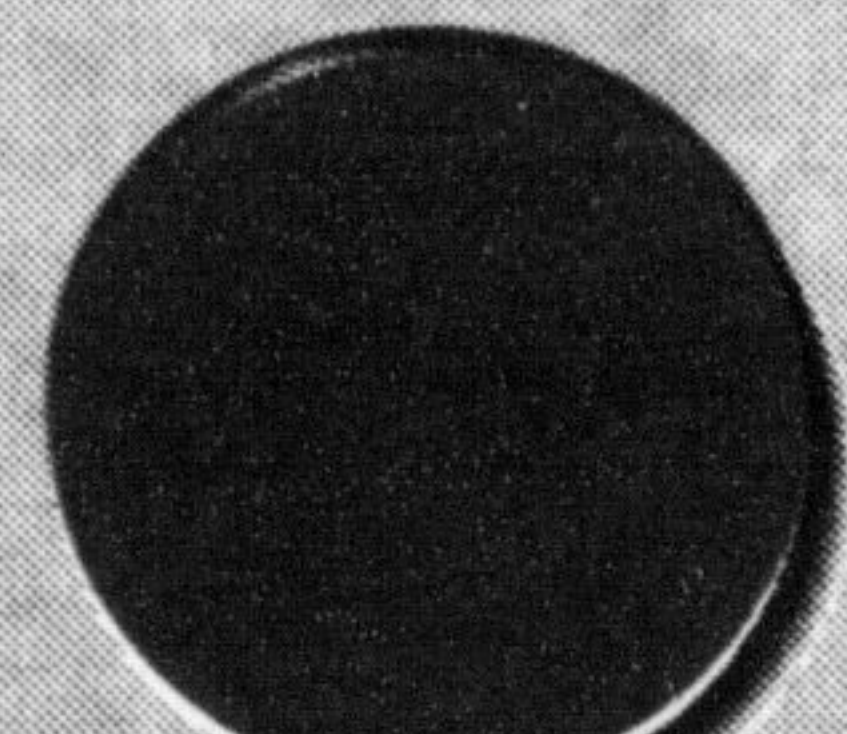
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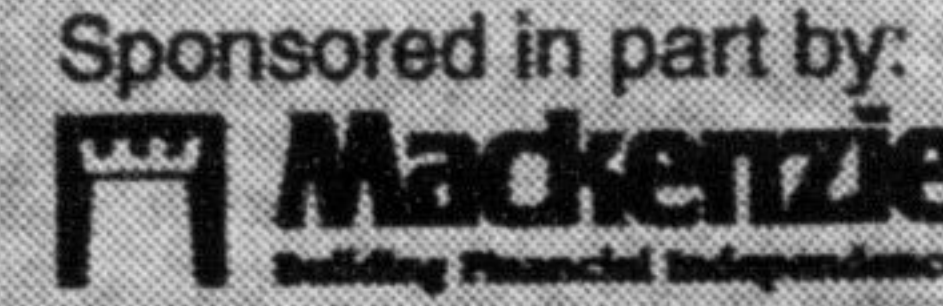


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 43 Brown Street
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 Fax: 905-878-6995

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