

# Malboeuf can't find support for smaller council

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"I'm not trying to score political points. If that's the case I would have waited until the end of the mandate. I'm simply doing what I said I would do during the campaign," he stressed.

Pat Kelly, representing the Milton Ratepayers Association, told council that elected representatives are not required for all of the 20-plus committees on which they currently serve. He said the committees must report to council anyway, because they are only set up to handle an advisory role.

In addition, Mr. Kelly said he found it amusing that several councillors have tried for higher, fulltime, political office when they have expressed fear of becoming fulltime local politicians.

"If democracy is really your goal, we have found no one in our discussions that doesn't agree that council should be downsized," said Mr. Kelly. "People are in the mood for less government."

Mr. Kelly acknowledged that part of the idea of downsizing is to save on councillor salaries. He also felt that with fewer councillors the machinery of government would bog down less.

"I'm interested to know where council needs to 'clean up its act'," said regional Councillor Barry Lee, quoting Mr. Kelly. "If there's a problem I wonder why Halton and Milton are so highly rated compared to other municipalities?"

Mr. Kelly said local councils need to address problems of high taxes and lower levels of service.

In answer to a complaint of inaccessibility, Councillor John Challinor said he had offered to make a presentation to a meeting of the Milton Ratepayers Association more than 18 months ago, but had never heard any response.

"We have a committee that prioritizes our topics, and, frankly, you weren't a priority," said Mr. Kelly.

In response to the position outlined by Mr. Malboeuf and Mr. Kelly in support of whittling down council, Mr. Challinor said he could list municipalities which have made no effort to cut council numbers.

He said that the costs after cutbacks will actually be higher than current expenses in places like Burlington, due in large part to the need for more staff support.

In addition, eliminating councillors will be less democratic because access to elected people would be more difficult, he explained.

Councillor Ron Furik said he was on record as being in support of downsizing but felt the timing of the proposal was wrong.

"There would be no impact for several years," he said. "I'm of the opinion there is no hurry and for that reason I'll not support this at this time."

Mr. Hunter said the large size of council confuses people as to who their representatives are. In addition the large number of councillors stifles decision making and debate by adding too many voices, he said.

Immediately following the downsizing debate Mr. Hunter

called for a reduction in council pay saying, "every tax dollar is sacred."

He said if big reductions are being asked of staff then council should set an example and take a 30 per cent pay cut.

The motion to reduce council pay was defeated 9-2 with only Mr. Hunter and Mr. Challinor in support.

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