

Milton still welcome to join ongoing talks; mayor

By BRAD REAUME

The Champion

Milton is still playing hard to get.

While it appears the marriage between Burlington and Flamborough is headed for the altar, Milton officials have been quiet over the summer regarding any interest in joining the proposal.

"I'd be delighted if Milton joined us at the table," said Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac. "Our doors are open to anyone interested in talking."

Milton officials have in the past said they see no community of interest between the two municipalities. When asked recently, Milton Mayor Gord Krantz referred to Flamborough as being in a weak financial position.

Mr. MacIsaac said while a Milton and Burlington marriage might seem a bit of a stretch to some, it will appear less so if Burlington joins with Flamborough. He downplayed a suggestion that Flamborough might simply join Halton Region as a fifth municipality.

The initial report on the financial implications of a marriage between Burlington and Flamborough have been positive, according to the Burlington mayor. Consultants suggested Burlington taxpayers would have a tax increase so slight as to be unnoticeable while Flamborough residents would enjoy a sizable decrease.

"The consultants said they had to make so many assumptions to arrive at a final number that an exact accounting is impossible, however, they did say the outlook is encouraging," said the Burlington mayor.

Burlington and Flamborough officials will approach Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs Al Leach to see if their marriage will be sanctioned by the province. Mr. MacIsaac said that he fully expects a positive reaction by the province to the proposal.

If Mr. Leach sanctions the plan, then further, more detailed work will commence, he said.

Mr. MacIsaac said Burlington's strategy is to trans-



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form into a single tier municipality (opt out of Halton Region), feeling that the best hope for the survival of local decision making lies in that approach.

Gaining territory by amalgamating with Flamborough and/or Milton is a step in that process, he said. He added that Burlington welcomes any interested municipality to become involved in the process. He explained it is understandable that those people who live in areas far from the population axis might be interested in linking with other municipalities. Those opportunities will exist, if the proposal moves ahead, he said.

Borders are definitely a question mark, he admitted. Asked the name of the potential new municipality, Mr. MacIsaac only laughed, saying finding a name will be a nice problem to have to worry about in the event the marriage takes place.

In addition to exploratory talks with Flamborough, the City of Burlington has also begun the process of studying the proposal of having Halton Region change as a level of government into a utility board. The Region would then be contracted to provide various services and have its taxing authority removed.

"People have talked about Halton as a utility board for years but nobody ever did anything more to see how it might work," Mr. MacIsaac said. "We've begun the process of putting some meat on those bones."

Allendale needs help

Allendale long-term-care facility urgently needs volunteers to visit residents and help them take part in recreational activities and outings.

"Approximately two hours per week will bring someone a ray of sunshine and a chance to do something different," said volunteer co-ordinator Anthea Hoare.

She said volunteering at the facility provides an opportunity for people to gain experience in nursing, recreation, therapy and office work.

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