

They're trading shots over meeting procedure

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Town council is abusing the system through too many in camera sessions, says Councillor Rick Malboeuf.

In turn, Mr. Malboeuf was accused of grandstanding for a second time by colleague Wally Hunter.

In camera sessions are council discussions that are closed to the public and the media.

Mr. Malboeuf accused council of "circling their wagons" to protect "their political butts."

"We're elected officials," said Mr. Malboeuf. "People have the right to know where we stand."

Mr. Malboeuf was upset over a recent in camera discussion regarding appointments to a municipal committee.

He tried to get the issue taken into open council at the Monday night meeting, but was unable to get anyone to second his motion.

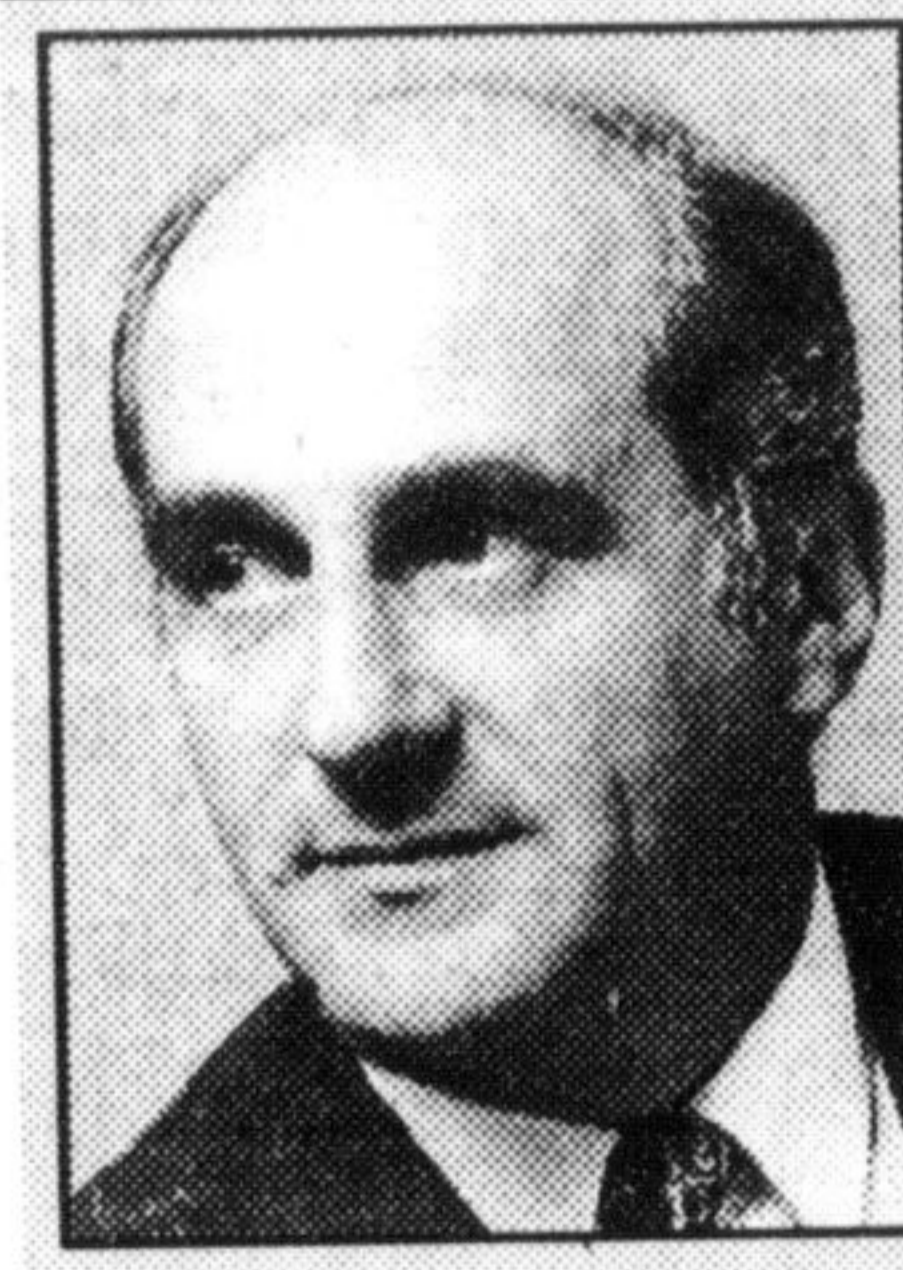
"That was a flagrant abuse of the system," he said later. "They don't want people to know where they stand on the issue. They can always deny they did it, and that's my biggest contention."

In camera items are governed by the Municipal Act. Following the act, council must go in camera for legal and property matters, as well as personnel issues dealing with an identifiable individual, according to the Town clerk's office. Issues related to property purchase are also destined for in camera coverage.

Unlike the situation at Halton Region, Town council is notorious for going in camera on issues outside of those parameters, said Mr. Malboeuf, who is a member of both councils.

"They've done it so long and gotten away with it," he said. "That's when I realized there was something wrong with what we're doing."

The debate about too many in camera sessions has



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— RICK MALBOEUF

been going on about as long as council itself, said Mayor Gord Krantz. "That's an old horse that's been beaten to death, usually by a councillor who doesn't have much to contribute," he said. "I don't buy into that for a moment."

Mr. Krantz dismissed the idea that in camera sessions are being used by councillors to avoid public scrutiny, pointing out that it is the acting Town clerk, Helen Lisi, who decides which items are to go in camera.

"It's certainly not me or any councillor directing the clerk," he said. "The clerk is the one who puts it on yellow paper, not me."

The fact that no one on council supported Mr. Malboeuf's latest attempt to bring an in camera issue to open council should speak for itself, said Mr. Krantz.

"There are maybe 10 of us who are wrong and one who is right," he said. "Or could it be the other way around, that 10 of us are right and one of us is wrong?"

Mr. Malboeuf should stick to issues that really impact the taxpayer, said Councillor Hunter.

"I find it ironic that we have a \$100 million pipeline

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