

Milton councillors see value of Halton, Krantz takes wait and see stance

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

The City of Burlington may have partially opened a can of worms, but Milton Mayor Gord Krantz isn't rushing to hide the can opener.

Municipal staff rocked the status quo recently by unveiling a contentious 'White Paper on Governance' at a recent Burlington city council meeting.

The paper laid out a number of alternatives, with the majority aimed at one goal — dismantling Halton Region.

"I'm not critical of them doing what they're doing, which is looking at new ways to do business," said Mr. Krantz.

Contending that the Region isn't as accountable as the four municipal councils, the paper ultimately suggested that a Halton services board replace regional government.

The municipalities could then go to the board to shop for services.

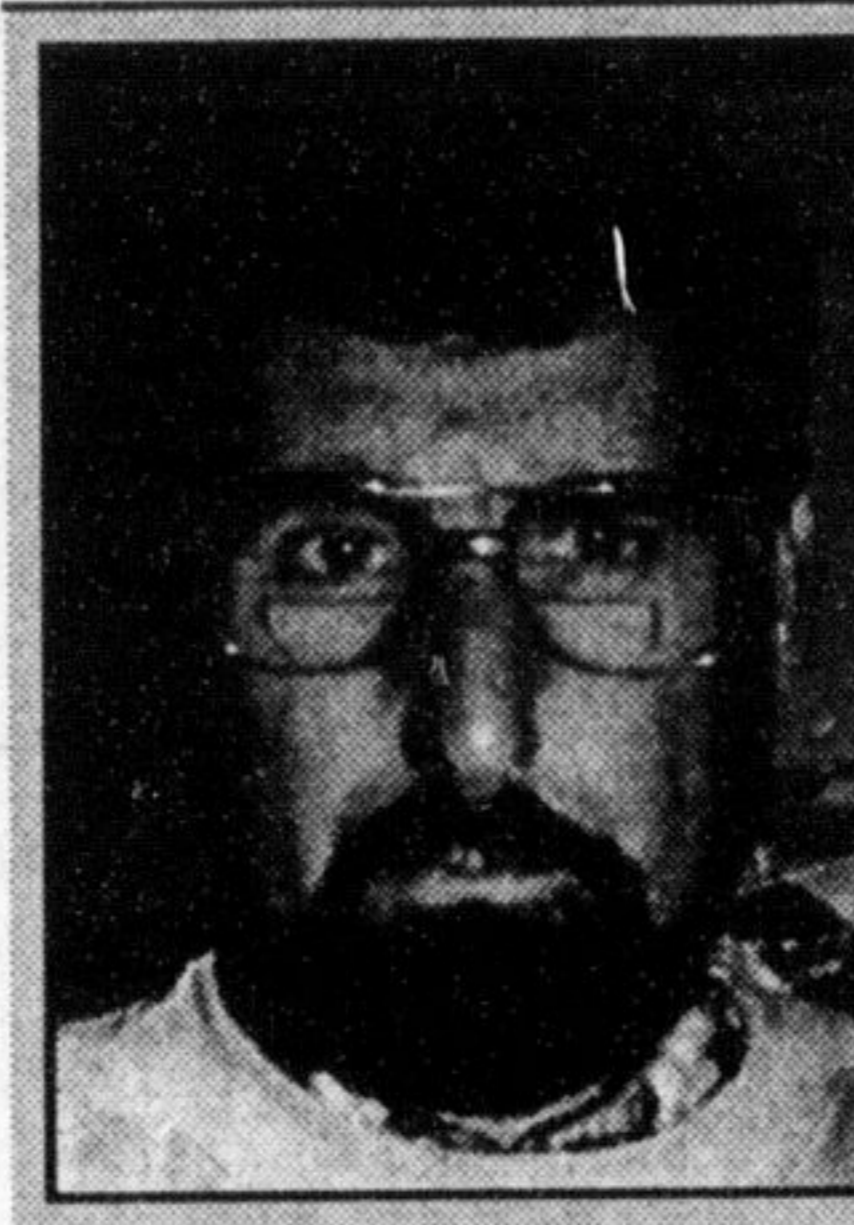
It's not Burlington's first attempt at change. Prior to the release of the white paper, Burlington had considered opting out of Halton to hook up with both Milton and Flamborough.

Mr. Krantz said that any discussion aimed at streamlining government is one worth having.

"I've said all along I have no problems in talking about how to better run Halton," he said.

The paper could be a reaction to the recently created Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB).

Some believe the GTSB will eventually become another level of government, effectively squeezing out either local or regional council.



"They (Burlington) want an opportunity to gain independence and more development land plus keep the goodies from the Region."
— BARRY LEE

"I'm under no illusions that (the provincial government won't) come back and say one level of government must disappear," said Mr. Krantz. "You have to immediately think of how to reconfigure."

That isn't to say he doesn't have a few questions on the Burlington proposal, which at this stage is being circulated for information and discussion purposes only.

"Will it work effectively and economically? Is it possible and practical?" wondered Mr. Krantz. "Will it be a better deal for the poor, beleaguered taxpayer?"

He also questioned Burlington's motives for wanting to yank the foundations out from under Halton Region.

"Would it be in the best interests of all of Halton? That's questionable," said Mr. Krantz. "They're certainly acting in the best interests of the people of Burlington."

In their enthusiasm to dig up new options, Burlington forgot to consider the effectiveness of the current system, said regional and Milton Councillor
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