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Tax referendums bad idea, say Town, Region

By JASON MISNER

The Champion

Halton Region and the Town of Milton are among the hundreds of municipalities that have fired off letters denouncing the Tory government's election proposal to hold referendums on municipal tax hikes.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) said 284 of Ontario's 446 municipalities have so far passed motions opposing an election proposal made by Premier Ernie Eves' Progressive Conservative party in late spring that municipalities would be required to hold a referendum if it was considering a tax increase.

The government must hold an election

by next June.

Municipalities rely heavily on property taxes to pay for services, and politicians and bureaucrats stress tax referendums would impose financial challenges and constraints on budgets that are already tight.

"I guess from the government's point of view it's an easy position to gain favour with the electorate, but that's over-simplistic," said Regional Chair Joyce Savoline. "There needs to be understanding at the provincial level of how municipalities do business."

The Region released a report last week stating that while it's uncommon for a municipality to comment on election plat-

forms, it felt the need to respond as to why it's a bad idea.

"For a number of reasons, this proposal is unworkable in the municipal context," stated the report prepared by the Region's finance staff. "With access to only a single tax base from property assessment, Ontario municipalities lack the diversity to fund services without experiencing tax increases. Diversity, including income, sales, commodity, capital and payroll taxes assists U.S. municipalities to meet this requirement under similar referendum requirements."

"It should be noted that unlike many U.S. jurisdictions, Ontario municipalities are expressly prohibited from running

operating deficits or financing current operations from borrowing."

The Town of Milton passed a motion at its meeting last week decrying the tax referendum issue. Part of the motion states that the budget process is open to all and residents have an opportunity to express their opinion on it.

Mayor Gord Krantz said to hold such a referendum would cost about \$80,000, regardless of how small a tax increase is being proposed.

"If you're looking at it from the point of economics, it absolutely makes no sense," he said.

Hamilton's director of budgets, taxation and policy Robert Rossini said older municipalities like Hamilton are having a difficult time keeping budget's in line.

The city has massive aging water and sewer infrastructure needs, and slow growth generally has made it difficult for the City to deal with those kinds of problems.

"Banning tax increases is a band-aid solution," he said "We need to look at the questions, why are taxes rising and why are budgets under pressure. We need a new deal (with the Province)."

AMO's executive director Pat Vanini said infrastructure is a primary issue with a lot of municipalities.

"Some say we need more capital infusion but the only way is through the property taxes," she said.

Ms Vanini said part of the problem is that upward of 70 per cent of local budgets are saddled with what used to be provincial responsibilities, like social housing and child care.

For every one tax dollar, she said, five cents ends up in the hands of municipalities to run services.

Jason Misner can be reached at jmisner@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF MILTON

TTY: 905-878-1657

905-878-7252

MILTON ON-LINE

<http://www.town.milton.on.ca>

Resident feedback is welcome on parks changes

David Thompson Park
Fay Court Park
Melanie Park

The Community Services Department invites residents who use or live near David Thompson, Fay Court and Melanie Parks to provide comments on the conceptual plans which highlight the recommended changes for these parks.

The conceptual plans are based on community feedback received at an Open House and through surveys conducted in April of this year. These plans can be viewed on the Town website or by visiting one of the following locations.

Public display of concept plans: Monday, July 14 – Friday, July 25

Town Hall, 43 Brown Street
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday

Leisure Centre Foyer, 1700 Main Street East
6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday to Friday
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday

Please feel free to drop by at any time during the above-noted hours to view the plans and complete a comment sheet. If you cannot attend or do not have access to our website, please contact:

Lisa VanderVliet, Parks Technologist

Phone: 905-878-7252, ext. 2168

Email: lisa.vandervliet@town.milton.on.ca



NOTICE OF TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE AND BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

6th Line Nassagaweya between No. 5 SR and No. 15 SR

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 300 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter M.45, as amended, that the Council of the Town of Milton, at its meeting to be held in Town Hall, 43 Brown Street, on July 28, 2003 beginning at 7:30 pm will consider the passing of by-laws for the temporary closing and replacement of bridges #59 and #69 located on the Sixth Line Nassagaweya between No 5 SR and No. 15 SR:

Plans detailing these projects are available for viewing during normal business hours at Town Hall, 43 Brown Street, Community Services Department.

Council will hear, in person, or by their counsel, any person who claims that their lands will be prejudicially affected by the said by-laws, and who applies to be heard. Persons wishing to be heard should notify the Clerk's Department in writing, no later than Wednesday July 23, 2003.

Any inquiries should be directed to the following:

Rick Tipping, CET
Projects Coordinator
Community Services Department
Town of Milton
43 Brown Street
Milton, ON L9T 5H2
Tel: 905-878-7252 (ext. 2164)
Fax: 905-878-6995
email: rick.tipping@milton.ca

NOTICE OF DECLARATION OF SURPLUS LANDS

Notice is hereby given that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Milton intends to declare land as surplus for the purpose of a watermain easement on a parcel of land being known as Block 154 on Plan 20M-842 (Hutchinson Avenue and March Crossing), Town of Milton, Regional Municipality of Halton. It is intended that Council will consider the transfer of this easement to the Region of Halton at the meeting of July 28, 2003.

This required notice is provided pursuant to Section 268(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001, c. 25, as amended, and in accordance with the Town of Milton Property Disposal By-law No. 34-95.

Further information with respect to the aforementioned Notice of Declaration of Surplus Lands, may be obtained from K. Bennett, Law Clerk, Town of Milton, 43 Brown Street, Milton ON (905) 878-7252 x 2109

Dated at the Town of Milton this 18th day of July, 2003.

Troy McHarg, Town Clerk

REQUEST FOR BID

Heating Fuel - 03-006-T
Fire Hose - 03-216-T
HVAC Services - 03-103

All the Bids listed below have drawings:

Esquising Lawson Road Intersection Improvements - 03-183
Industrial/Hannant/Harrop Reconstruction - 03-242
6th Line Bridge Replacements, #59 and #69 - 03-179

Bids on forms supplied by the Town of Milton will be received by the Corporate Services Department, Purchasing until 11:00 a.m. local time on:

03-006-T and 03-216-T will close on Wednesday August 6, 2003

03-183, 03-242, 03-179 and 03-103 will close on Wednesday August 13, 2003

Bid documents may be obtained at the Town Hall, Corporate Services Department, Purchasing, 43 Brown Street, 2nd Floor, Milton, Ontario during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is a bid document fee of: \$28.00 (incl. GST) or \$55.00 (incl. GST) for bids with drawings. Payment can be made with cash, cheque, Interac or Visa/Mastercard.

Any inquiries regarding this bid may be directed to Purchasing at (905) 875-5404. If you would prefer the bid document sent by courier, please complete the Request for Bid Document form on the Town's web site: www.town.milton.on.ca. Plan takers and current and upcoming bids are also posted on the web site.

OPEN HOUSES THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, Sunday & Wednesday

1- 4:30pm

CHURCHILL ESTATES

Brookville Guelph Line

85% sold out

(5 min. north of Hwy 401)

\$464,000 all 1.5 acre lots

GARY THOMAS in attendance

Re/Max Blue Springs Realty

905-878-7777

Sunday July 20

2-4 pm

77 Bell St.

PHIL PRESTIDGE in attendance

Royal LePage Real Estate Services 905-878-8101

Sunday, July 20

2-4 pm

67 - 318 Laurier Ave.

PAT RIDEOUT in attendance

Royal LePage Real Estate Services 905-878-8101

Sunday, July 20

2-4 pm

7774 Guelph Line, Campbellville

SUSAN RECOSKIE in attendance

Royal LePage Real Estate Services 905-878-8101

Sunday, July 20

2-4 pm

27 Court St. N, Milton

SANDI KINSALE in attendance

Royal LePage Real Estate Services 905-878-8101