

Local man concerned growth happening too fast

• from TREE-CUTTING on page 1

The tree-cutting bylaw — a contentious issue when first proposed last year — is still undergoing review and a draft will be released for public comment in the fall, Jane Clohecy, Halton's acting commissioner of planning and public works, said after the public meeting.

The expectation is to have it in place by the end of the year, she added.

"The concern was it was too restrictive, that it would hamper the rural residents in the farming community from fully using their property," she said.

The original draft bylaw would apply to a forested area .5 ha. (1.2 acres) or greater in size and permits would be required for trees to be cleared.

"So what we're doing now is looking at more

exemptions where you have a farm management plan," she said, stressing the intent of the tree-cutting bylaw is to restrict illegal cutting.

A staff recommended OPA 25 will go before the planning and public works committee the night of June 16 and then to regional council for ratification June 23.

For more information, visit www.region.halton.on.ca.

A dozen speakers approached the planning and public works committee Wednesday night, most of them expressing concern with various parts of OPA 25.

They included a farming property being reclassified as a certain land designation that wouldn't permit the construction of a desired horse farm; how an area is defined as "significant woodland"; and that population figures for north

Oakville are too high and were made without knowing all of the environmental features of the massive area.

Bob Beyette of Milton told the committee he fears growth is happening too fast and demanded the Region tell taxpayers what the true cost of growth will be.

"I have a gut feeling that taxes are going to rise dramatically," he said.

Overall, through OPA 25, under the urban system, it would include enhanced policies to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Under the rural system, it would include allowing a broad range of uses on the farm — like permitting a farmer to operate a welding shop — to help a farmer support a standard agricultural business.

Under the greenlands system, it would include

updated mapping of trees and a revised tree-cutting bylaw.

Under healthy communities, it would include new policy initiatives to improve air quality.

Ms Clohecy said OPA 25 shows good planning.

"It better enables us to manage population employment to make sure there's a balance to promote the work-live relationship, and it gives us much better environmental protection," she said.

"We don't need to change the urban boundaries so we can accommodate that population within the boundaries we have."

Halton's population, now more than 400,000, is expected to exceed 583,000 by 2021.

Board will have to review its priorities

• from CATHOLIC on page 2

priorities to arrive at a final balanced budget."

Last June the board approved 2003-04 budget estimates totaling \$200,194,163 for submission to the Ministry of Education.

In passing that budget, trustees voted for operating expenditure estimates of \$163.9 million — broken down as \$106.7 million for classroom expenditures and \$57.2 million for non-classroom expenditures. These were matched with operating revenue projections to produce a balanced board operating budget for 2003-04. Similarly, the total capital budget was balanced with both revenue and expenditures estimated at \$36.2 million.

The budget approved by trustees provided for an increase in classroom spending of 14 per cent as well as a 30 per cent increase in the area of Special Education.



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