



LIESA KORTMANN / METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

Spectators watch the meeting on big screens in the auditorium of the Halton Regional Centre.

Developers have 30 days

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 own development charges bylaws, upping the charge to homebuilders to \$2,600 per unit — the highest in Ontario. Recognizing that it might not be fair for a small 400-square-foot seniors apartment unit to be charged the same rate as a four-bedroom home that could house multiple children, the development industry had been asked if they would prefer to be charged based on estimated pupils per household. They couldn't reach consensus so the standard per-unit price was kept in place, said Cynthia Clarke of consultant C.N. Watson, which prepared the devel-

opment charges background studies for the school boards.

Milton developer York Gruehl, whose company is eager to start building some high density development in the town, said following the council vote he isn't as concerned about the \$8,000 charge as he is the timing of when the Region wants some of that money to be paid. The council-approved financial plan demands developers pay up front an interest free loan of \$1,061 for every sewer connection they request, something Gruehl said is difficult for condominium developers to finance. Banks don't generally lend money to apartment developers until they have received approval for the developments and have sold at least 75 per cent of the units.

Gruehl said he's hopeful Regional staff will be more open over the next 30 days to exploring the possibility of debt financing on behalf of the condo developers, with the money to be paid back with interest after they get their bank financing.

However, council's decision Wednesday didn't provide an allowance for staff to go above the Regional standard debt ratio of 14 per cent. And Halton Treasurer Jane MacCaskill told council that waiving the loan request for high rise builders would double the loan required from the single-family homebuilders, something she didn't believe would be accepted by those developers.

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