

Pomeroy, Mulkwich clash over GTA's influence on area matters

Halton regional councillors get annoyed when issues involving the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) are mentioned. When the subject is the very existence of that organization, the fireworks invariably begin.

And that's what happened Wednesday at regional council.

Burlington councillor Walter Mulkwich outlined concerns about GTA initiatives in light of the release of the Solid Waste Interim Steering Committee's report, which frames some of them.

Many councillors are anxious about GTA because they feel important regional responsibilities, such as transportation and garbage disposal, are given over to it, and regional council has thus far had little input.

Halton Chairman Peter Pomeroy, who sits on the GTA committee, said, "GTA will be in place until it is disbanded or defeated by various councils."

Presently membership in GTA consists of Halton, Peel, York, Durham and Metro Toronto. The loose coalition of regions has met to discuss mutual solutions to shared problems. Mr. Pomeroy suggested that public participation will be encouraged starting this fall.

Mr. Mulkwich said he was angry because regional council has not had the chance for input yet. His anger sharpened, he said, after reading an article in a Toronto paper which said all regions are in agreement.

He wondered aloud where that information could have come from. Mr. Pomeroy said, "I've been telling you the truth and I'll continue to do that. If you would rather believe the Toronto papers than me then we'll have to get you a subscription to your favourite newspaper, the Toronto Sun."

Burlington Mayor Roly Bird said, "I have said before that I only want to be involved in GTA to find out what they are doing. There's \$150,000 in regional money involved. I've lost

my enthusiasm at that price. I don't want us to go on a treadmill to oblivion."

"The GTA is the greatest plan or the greatest scam imposed upon the people of southern Ontario," said Milton councillor Bill Johnson.

Mr. Mulkwich rose again to question the lack of substance he found in Mr. Pomeroy's remarks. Mr. Pomeroy had said GTA work was detailed in the report released last week. "The concern is not what's on paper, it's what happens in the real world."

Mr. Pomeroy was obviously annoyed. "You're going to have to tell me what happens in the real world," he said to Mr. Mulkwich.



Peter Pomeroy

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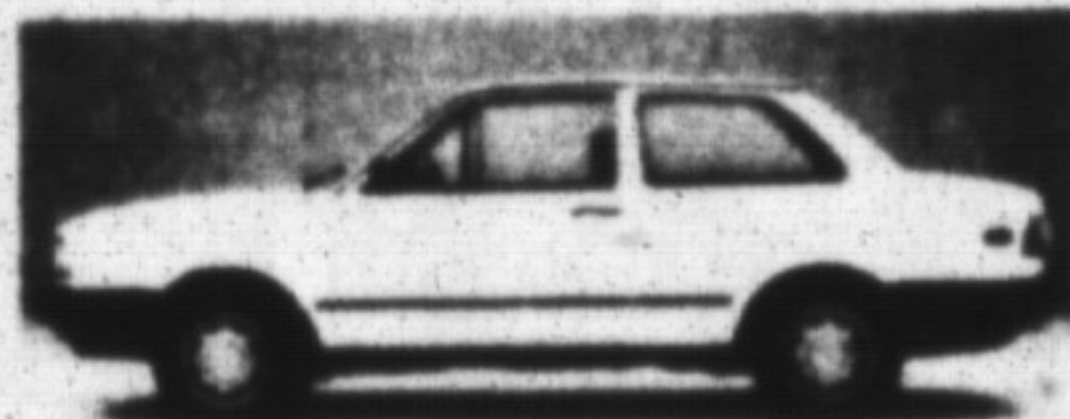
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