

Regional councillors divided on deer hunt issue

A number of regional councillors disagreed with the spirit of the deer hunt in Halton.

Information about the annual hunt was reviewed at the committee level Wednesday. The hunt begins October 15 and runs until the end of the year for archers, with a four day break November 6-9 when shotguns are allowed.

Milton councillor Bill Johnson disagreed with a report which said the deer population is stable.

"The population has been decreased," he said. "Subdivisions are pushing them into smaller areas of land. I have not seen a deer all year. It's the latest in the year I've gone without seeing one."

A Bambi bash

Oakville councillor Janet Mitchell agreed with Mr. Johnson. "I don't think the region should allow hunting on its property," she said. "The Conservation Authority put a stop to it and so should we."

What Ms. Mitchell termed a slaughter, planning and public works committee chairman Pat McLaughlin called "a Bambi bash." According to Rash Mohammed, commissioner for planning and public works, the council can put a stop to the hunt on its lands.

Ms. Mitchell said the committee was considering relevant data about the hunt but was "slipping under the carpet" the real question of allowing the hunt at all. Oakville councillor Fred Oliver took exception to the

Hunting may be banned on Region's property

comment. "I don't like the term 'slipping under the carpet.' We don't let anything slip under the carpet at this committee. We have a report and we are considering it," Mr. Oliver said. Ms. Mitchell recently moved from the

finance committee to planning. Burlington councillor Barry Quinn said, "without a managed hunt we will increase the numbers of people who don't follow the rules. We have a good system." Ms. Mitchell was indignant. She wondered aloud if com-

mittee was doing something because a small group of hunters demanded it, rather than following the will of the majority in the region.

Farmers want protection for their crops, according to councillor Rob Forbes of Burlington. "Human

beings don't occupy this world alone," countered Mr. Johnson. "How can farmers substantiate damage as being from deer?"

The issue was put to a vote but the committee decided to allow the continuation of the deer hunt on regional lands. The matter will likely be raised again at a full council meeting Wednesday.

Archers start the season

Annual deer hunt to begin October 15

The annual deer hunt in Ontario begins October 15.

The first stage of the hunt is for archers from October 15 through November 5 and again from November 10 to the end of the year. The four days from November 6 through 9 are reserved for hunters and their shotguns.

The Ministry of Natural Resources sanctions the deer hunt in an effort to keep the herd at a manageable number. According to a report authored by Rash Mohammed, Halton regional commissioner for planning and development, the Ministry keeps careful watch on hunting and related concerns.

From 1986 to 1988 the numbers of deer killed in the hunt have remained stable. Last year 154 deer were killed in Halton.

The number of hunters has risen dramatically, from 420 hunters in

1986 to 585 last year. In the same period hunting-related complaints have dropped from 20 to five.

The Ministry estimates that 50 deer each year are taken in the archery portion of the hunt with the remaining deer killed in the four day shotgun hunt.

The Ministry believes increased patrols and public awareness initiatives have worked to lessen incidents and complaints.

Statistics of deer struck on area roads have remained stable, leading the Ministry to believe that the herd

has also stabilized. A total of 65 deer were killed on roads in 1988, compared to 69 in 1986. The majority of accidents occur in Milton, which contains most of the agreement forest area in the region.

Farmers in Halton insist upon a controlled deer herd because of the damage which the animals do to fields. Just under \$50,000 in crop damage by deer was reported by Halton farmers to the Ministry last year, with a further \$26,000 in nursery and orchard damage reported.

The regional agreement forests will

be posted with the hunting dates and participant hunters will draw to receive special controlled shotgun deer hunt identification tags. Hunters are also required to wear blaze orange vests to increase visibility and safety.

The Halton Region Conservation Authority has not allowed deer hunting on HRCA property in either 1987 or 1988.

It is unlikely, according to Mr. Mohammed, that they will allow hunting this year. The HRCA will make a decision shortly.

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from LEANNE on page 1

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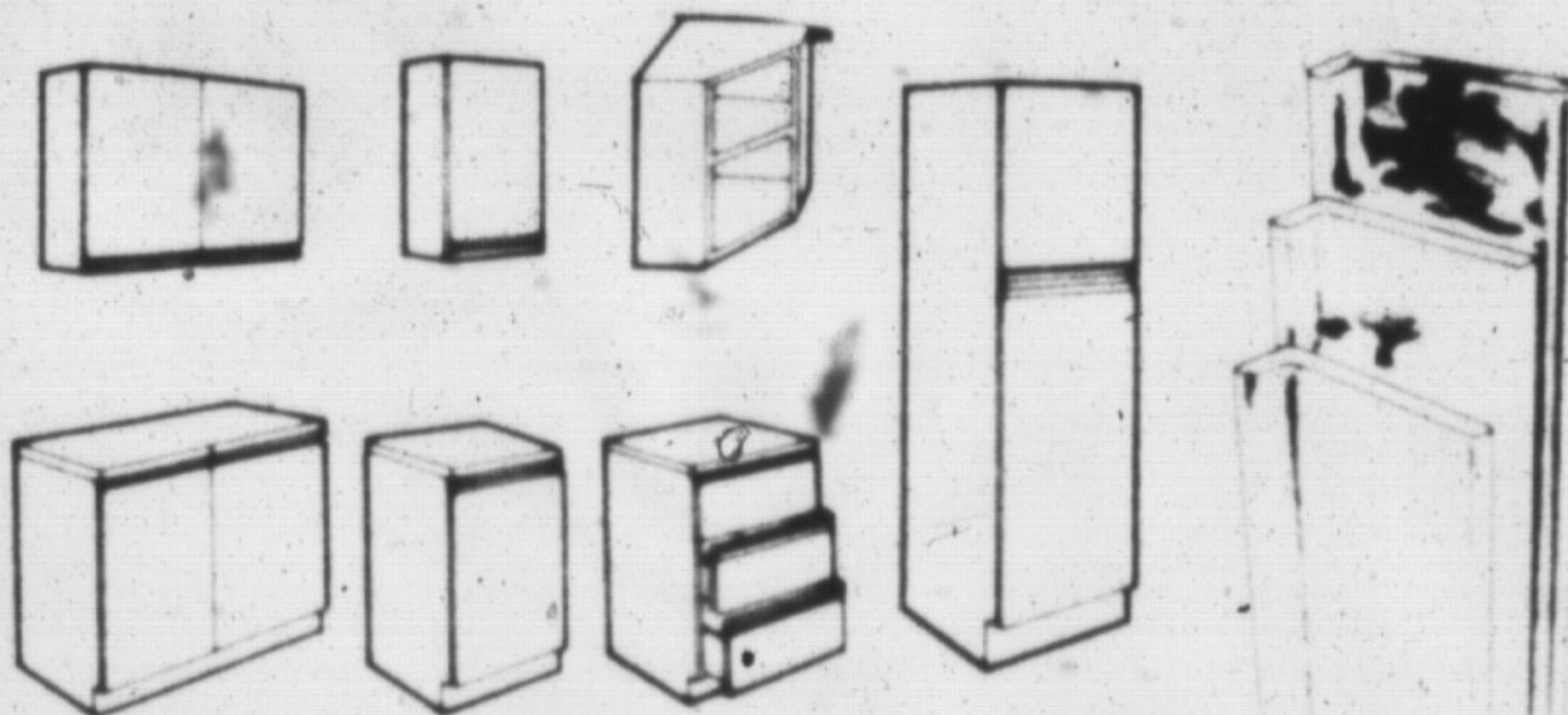
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