

Plan could revamp regional council

By **NORMAN NELSON**
Halton Region has its own Meech Lake deadline — next June.

That's when a new committee formed specifically to look into fine tuning the structure of regional government wants a proposal to be completed.

At the committee's inaugural meeting last Monday, Burlington councillor Rob Forbes said such a schedule would enable the matter to become an issue in next November's elections. The new council, he added, could then make the final decision.

Any changes — such as an increase in the size of council or a redistribution of seats — would not come into effect until the 1994 elections, the committee decided.

Halton chief administrative officer John Fleming advised committee members that it would be extremely difficult to implement changes in time for next year's municipal elections.

Set for 1994

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz, who was elected vice chairman of the committee (Burlington councillor Joyce Savoline was elected chairman), agreed. "To do it justice we have to do it for 1994."

Councillor Forbes added that to try and put something in place for 1991 would either be "a reflection of what already exists or something not thought out."

The committee was struck earlier this year after Halton was unable to convince the province to undertake a review similar to those it conducted

in Haldimand-Norfolk, Ottawa-Carleton and Niagara.

The key areas being looked at are:

- Election of the regional chairman (presently appointed by regional councillors).
- Direct election of regional councillors (presently they also serve on their respective municipal councils as well).
- Size and distribution of council
- A new division of municipal and regional responsibilities.

The committee decided on a three step approach.

The first step, to take place this summer and fall, is to gather all the relevant information.

For instance, the committee wants to hear from other chairmen whose regions have recently undergone fine tuning and from some of the authors of other regional reviews. It is also patiently waiting for a provincial government report due out soon that takes the findings of the individual regional reviews and comes up with common implications.

More Milton seats?

The second step, to be completed by the end of December, is to establish a framework for future change.

This applies particularly to the process of determining the size of council (presently 24), and the distribution of seats among the individual municipalities (presently it's Burlington nine, Oakville seven, Halton Hills five and Milton three).

The third step is to come up with the specific proposals to be implemented for the 1994 elections.



Old times

Photo by JOHN WARREN

An antique wine maker attracted the attention of Beatrice Ziegler who was one of hundreds of seniors who took part in Seniors Days at the Ontario Agricultural Museum. While the "days" took seniors back to old times and old prices with a 65 cent admission, other activities across the region marked the annual Seniors Awareness Week that ran from June 10-16.

Grieve says get tough with elderly drivers

Burlington regional councillor James Grieve doesn't think laws dealing with elderly drivers are tough enough.

He was commenting Monday on a report presented at Halton Region's health and social services committee meeting. He had previously requested the elderly driver study.

In the report Dr. Graham Pollett, Halton Region's medical officer of health, explained that an annual driver's test isn't required until 80 years of age.

"Some provinces, Quebec for example, require a medical report at age 70, every two years to age 80 and annually thereafter in order to drive a car."

He said Ontario's Highway Traffic Act requires doctors to report people unfit to drive, and that "hundreds of reports are received by the Ministry of Transport each week."

In Ontario, the decision is all or nothing. "Other jurisdictions do allow partially restricted licenses which include restrictions related to speed, daylight driving, local area only, or no freeway driving," stated Dr. Pollett in his report. "Ontario is currently considering the introduction of partially restricted licences."

Mr. Grieve suggested doctors may not always be responsible in reporting patients who shouldn't be driving.

He said he understands the difficulty in "taking away an elderly person's sense of independence. Your heart has to break. But your heart also has to break for the victims on the highway."

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