

# Budget cuts could have been deeper: Challinor

By **ROB KELLY**  
The Champion

Ward 2 municipal councillor John Challinor thinks the 2.5 per cent tax increase for 1992 passed by town council Monday night could have been pared back to 2 per cent without undue hardship.

The increase, the lowest in years, means the average urban homeowner will pay an extra \$11.18 in property taxes, while rural residents add an average \$14.23 to their tax tab.

Milton's operating budget, the fund to run day-to-day local government, is roughly \$15.3 million a year. The budget approved tax levies of approximately \$8.5 million. The rest comes

mostly from municipal fees for various services.

"I think council could have shown a little more leadership," Mr. Challinor said. "I was personally looking for a 2 per cent increase." He rated Milton's budget at "A minus compared to others in Halton" but at only "B minus in terms of the real world."

The reasoning behind the latter grade is that "our businesses, our citizens, are not competing against others in Halton."

"We're competing against other regions, other countries." And the tax increase means "we have not allowed them to be as competitive as they could be. We could have made more cuts."

Mr. Challinor, who initially supported a tax freeze for 1992 and still feels "we should get as close to a freeze as possible" said "council was split on some of the money questions." Without citing individuals, he said some of "those guys who made economic policy promises in their (election) campaigns should re-read their press clippings, then take another look at their voting records."

In the private sector, "many employees' salaries were frozen in 1992." For most Milton firms, "profits were down and we added more (tax) overhead for them to cover."

As far as what trimming another half percentage point from the tax rolls would have

meant, "I don't think (municipal) service would have been compromised at 2 per cent." As well, "nobody's being laid off and for the sake of another half a per cent nobody would have been laid off."

In particular, "I felt we could have held the line with the library board and on public works programs. That would have gotten us closer to 2 per cent." Initially, the library was cut back by \$20,000, but that was later eased to only a \$10,000 rollback. Various reductions amounting to almost \$60,000 were made in the preliminary public works budget, but the councillor felt more could have been done.

Municipal staff trimmed more than \$284,000 from their early departmental budget forecasts and councillors cut out another \$35,000 in deliberations last week.

The councillor said politicians "have to do everything we can do to encourage (businesses) to stay in Milton. The best way to do that is by controlling our spending."



John Challinor

## In Campbellville

### Water supply safe, says Lee

A Halton regional study indicates that "drinking water quality in Campbellville is generally good" despite the recent worries of area residents.

There was "a lot of concern" but research indicates that "basically, we don't have a problem," Milton regional councillor Barry Lee said Monday.

Mr. Lee briefed his Milton municipal council colleagues on the study outcome Monday night, and spoke to the matter again following the regional planning and public works committee meeting Wednesday.

Noting that the report identifies "a few deficient septic tanks" but no apparent

serious problems beyond that, Mr. Lee said he didn't see any cause for worry among Campbellville residents.

"I don't believe so."

Regional researchers sampled 59 village wells during the summer of 1991 and found only four had high bacteria levels. The problem in each of those cases was "poor well construction", according to the report, not contamination of the underground water supply feeding the wells.



Barry Lee

see WATER on page 7

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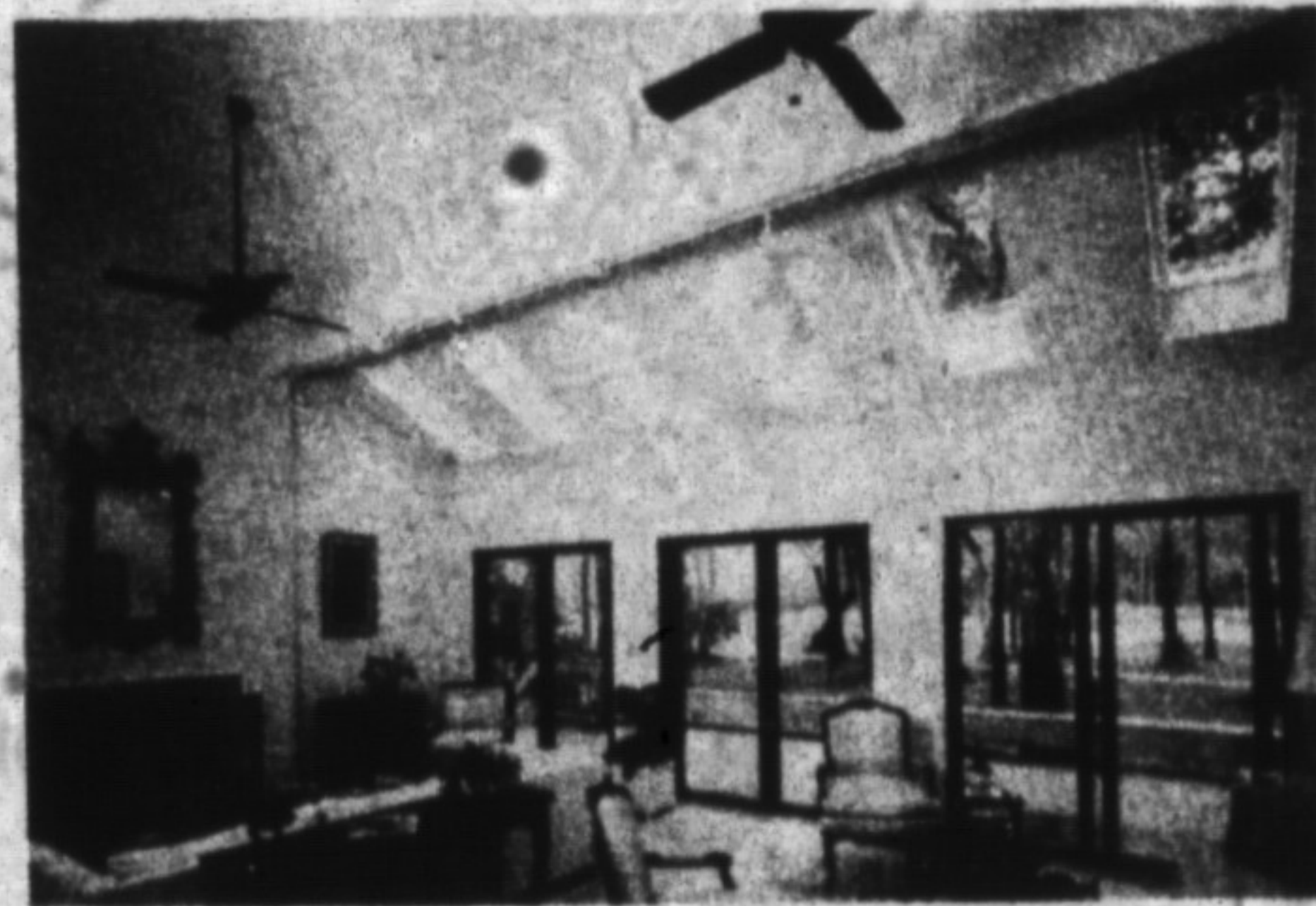
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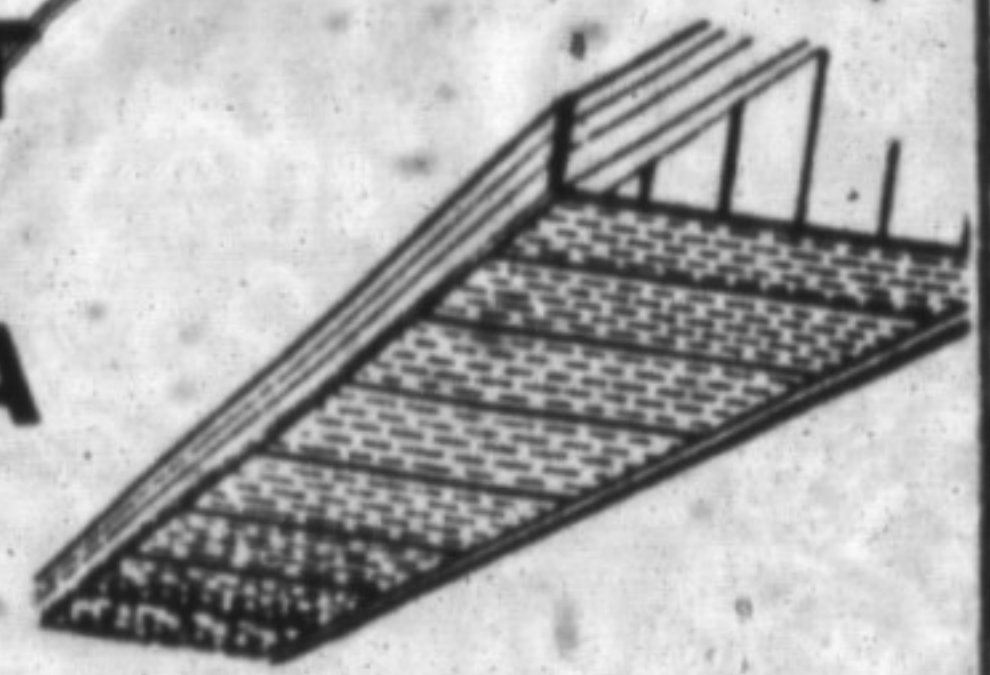
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