

Mulkewich defends against cuts

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

Burlington Mayor Walter Mulkewich blasted proposed social service and business development spending rollbacks at Halton regional council Wednesday, saying other areas should instead be targeted for the cuts.

He found both an ally and an opponent among his fellow Burlington representatives. In supporting Mr. Mulkewich, Bob Wood warned of a "hidden agenda" to dismantle social programs. But Doug Greenaway characterized funding some social services as contributing taxpayers' money to charity without their consent.

Regional council isn't scheduled to approve the 1993 budget until mid-February, and only preliminary

meetings regarding difficult financing choices have taken place. But at one of the earliest sessions last week, the health and social services committee recommended slashing \$150,400 in regional grants to eight community service agencies, the rationale being that they are large enough to weather the funding loss.

In a follow-up meeting Tuesday, the committee revised its stance, instead halving the proposed cutback to \$75,200 and spreading it out among 11 of the 43 outside agencies Halton supports to some degree.

However, Mr. Mulkewich doesn't want money siphoned away from the grant program. Halton's budget review committee, which will evaluate the health and social services committee recommendations, must "go back to (regional) staff and say, 'where are you going to find the

money to put the whole \$152,400 back in,'" he insisted.

"We're going to have to get our priorities straight," Mr. Mulkewich said. "To take what amounts to a broad-axed approach is not really helpful to anyone."

"The worst two budgets to cut are business development and social services," Mr. Mulkewich warned. The regional business development office is attempting to nurse an economic renewal by luring new employers to Halton, yet is faced with a proposed 14 per cent decrease from its 1992 approved budget of \$673,400, he pointed out.

"The real hidden agenda is, 'let's go at the social services budgets until we get rid of them,'" Mr. Wood said.

"I have some serious concerns about some of these cuts," said Oakville councillor Stephen Sparling. He suggested instead that councillors look at taking the money out of the roads and utilities budget.

"One of the decisions I have made is that perhaps the spending of tax dollars for charity, and this is what we are talking about, is a fundamental disagreement with my philosophy," councillor Greenaway said.

The regional funding "was originally intended as seed money, to get things started," so the groups could fundraise later on their own, he said.

"To suggest this was intended as seed money is not the understanding the community has or past (regional) councils have," Mr. Mulkewich replied. "We get a big bang for our buck. It's an investment. It's not a giveaway to charity."

Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale said the discussion amounted to "pre-empting the budget process" since there is still much work to be done. "Some of these options may be ones we choose not to execute."

Environmental news and local events featured in new tabloid

Twice a year the Halton Region Conservation Authority is spreading the news about the local environment through a new tabloid newspaper.

The first issue of *Focus on Conservation* is inserted in today's *Champion*. In addition to providing information about Halton's natural environment, the publication will serve as a guide to programs, services and facilities of the local conservation areas.

Focus on Conservation includes a six-month calendar of events that lists dozens of family activities available at HRCA properties from January to the end of June.

The publication also has more than a dozen vouchers with free passes to the parks and discounts on certain services. There's even a special section for children called "Leaf, the Kid's Environment Page".

Brian Penmar, chairman of the conservation authority and an editorial contributor to the new publication says, "Halton has a rich natural heritage of significant resources including wetlands, forests and Ontario's great wall, the Niagara Escarpment. The authority wants more people to know about the local natural resources and how they are being conserved."

The scope of the tabloid goes

beyond Halton's watershed with a section on Ontario conservation areas and the Niagara Escarpment. There are 380 conservation areas in the province that attract 4.5 million visitors every year for recreational and educational experiences.

In addition to the copies circulated in today's newspaper, *Focus on Conservation* can be picked up at any Halton conservation area, local library, municipal town halls and several commercial outlets. Any business, schools or retail outlets wishing to distribute the tabloid can do so by calling the authority at 336-1158.



CULINARY BREAKTHROUGH IN MILTON!

Quietly, almost unnoticed the first Oriental restaurant whose food rates 'excellent' has appeared in Town. Its cuisine rates with the best of Toronto. Vegetables are fresh and crisp, meats and seafood are generous and the sauces are simply in a class above anything Milton has tasted before.

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Mr. Kwok simply won't drop his standards (he's the quiet, unassuming Chef/Owner in the background). Oh, and no MSG. Ever. Having grown up in Canton China, Mr. Kwok's skill with this subtle cuisine is unmatched. However, he'll also stimulate your palate with excellent spicy Szechuan food — As mild or as hot as you want.

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- Feb 17-20 1993 CAR SHOW
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