

# Regional representation question is re-opened

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

Oakville regional councillor Kevin Flynn has characterized as "bizarre" the disinterest shown by local municipalities in redistributing Halton's political representation.

Mr. Flynn made the comments Wednesday morning at a meeting of the regional review committee, which is geared toward streamlining and re-evaluating municipal government operation.



Kevin Flynn

"I applaud what's happening with streamlining but I think people expect these initiatives as a matter of course," said Mr. Flynn.

"The thing I find bizarre is that all four municipalities have ignored a (regional) request for comments on the first 12 recommendations (which refer to the size and composition of regional government)."

Currently Burlington has nine regional representatives, Oakville has seven, Halton Hills five and Milton three.

Mr. Flynn said he couldn't understand how all four municipalities could "ignore the issue and pretend it doesn't exist."

Regional chief administration officer John Burke said the committee avoided those issues "because it asks people to preside over their own demise."

"I used to be a regional booster," said Mr. Flynn. "I'm feeling less and less confident standing up for the region now. People in Oakville feel they're under-represented."

Mr. Flynn said he was "disappointed" with the review committee's report while calling some of the recommendations "dated."

Mr. Burke said he would have liked to push the issue of repre-

way to draw the players into restructuring the regional system.

"We have to look at planning," said regional chair Peter Pomeroy. "There isn't a place for two tiers of planning."

"Why do we have four Hydro Commissions when natural gas and water are handled by one authority? Let's get on with it."

"We're all so damn busy protecting our own turf that streamlining never happens," Mr. Pomeroy said.

Burlington councillor Don Carter was anxious to re-open the debate on regional representation, saying he has "a strong argument for a 5-5-3-3 system."

"There is concern about how wide

to cast the net," Mr. Burke said. "The view is to keep it narrow. We don't want to drag everyone in kicking and screaming. If the process works, people will want to be involved."

Mr. Burke identified seven ongoing streamlining projects, each shepherded by one of the co-operative partners; the four municipalities, the region and the two school boards. The projects cover planning, purchasing, training and automation.

Several councillors expressed concerns about the growing power of the provincial Office for Greater

Toronto Area (GTA), but Mr. Burke quelled their fears, saying strong indications from Queen's Park preclude the introduction of another level of government.

"I have a sense that GTA is a discussion forum only," he said.

Most area municipality mayors attend regular GTA forums.

The committee accepted the regional review progress report, but added transportation and hydro streamlining to their concerns. In addition the committee voted to prompt responses from the four area municipalities regarding changes in regional representation.

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