

# Bylaw for legal bills undecided

By ANGELA BLACKBURN  
The Champion

Halton regional councillors won't revisit the bylaw approving payment of regional chair Peter Pomeroy's legal bills in defence of criminal charges until late this month.

After public outcry on the issue, councillors agreed in late September to take a second look at the policy — and seek outside legal advice on their options.

The report was supposed to be at regional council Wednesday but regional chief administrative officer John Burke sent a memo to councillors late last week saying it wasn't ready.

It's expected for discussion at

council's October 26 meeting, he advised.

A unanimous council decision to review the policy, its potential far-reaching implications and liability arising from its initial passage, was made after a flurry of motions from councillors surprised Mr. Pomeroy at a September council meeting.

It led the regional chair to stand before council and announce he won't seek re-election in November. He also offered to resign immediately if council requested. Councillors stopped short of asking for that.

Mr. Pomeroy is awaiting trial on criminal charges which include breach of trust and accepting a bribe.

When he spoke to council, he said he couldn't afford legal fees that

could approach the \$200,000 mark without losing his family home, and offered to assign his house to the Region as a guarantee.

He said he shouldn't have to sell his home to prove his innocence and added that his reputation and career had already been demolished.

Council wants to know if the Region could face a legal challenge by changing the new bylaw, if it can seek reimbursement of \$28,800 in fees already paid out on Mr. Pomeroy's behalf, and if staff correctly interpreted the bylaw when that fee payment was authorized. Councillors also want to look at the larger issue of protection from legal costs while holding public office.

Councillors indicated they hadn't interpreted the bylaw, when they originally approved it without much fanfare or debate last June, to allow payment of legal fees stemming out of criminal charges.

Nor did they twig to the potential costs involved with the new bylaw's retroactivity to January 1974.

## Hunsinger vying for Ward 3

• from HUNSINGER on page 10

environment, Mr. Hunsinger said "development has to be managed and controlled. There can't be chaos but you can't stay stagnant either. One of the key things with development is that it has to come with a sustainable benefit to the residents who are currently there."

"Development has to enhance a community rather than just taking place," he said, recognizing that the town's viability rests with all aspects of development, business, residential, agricultural and retail. "You can't let anyone get too far out."

Yet above all, Mr. Hunsinger recognizes Milton's blessings. "I love living in Nassagaweya and in Milton. I love the natural, friendly nature of the small town atmosphere and want to maintain that. It's a great place to live and it's nice to come home to."

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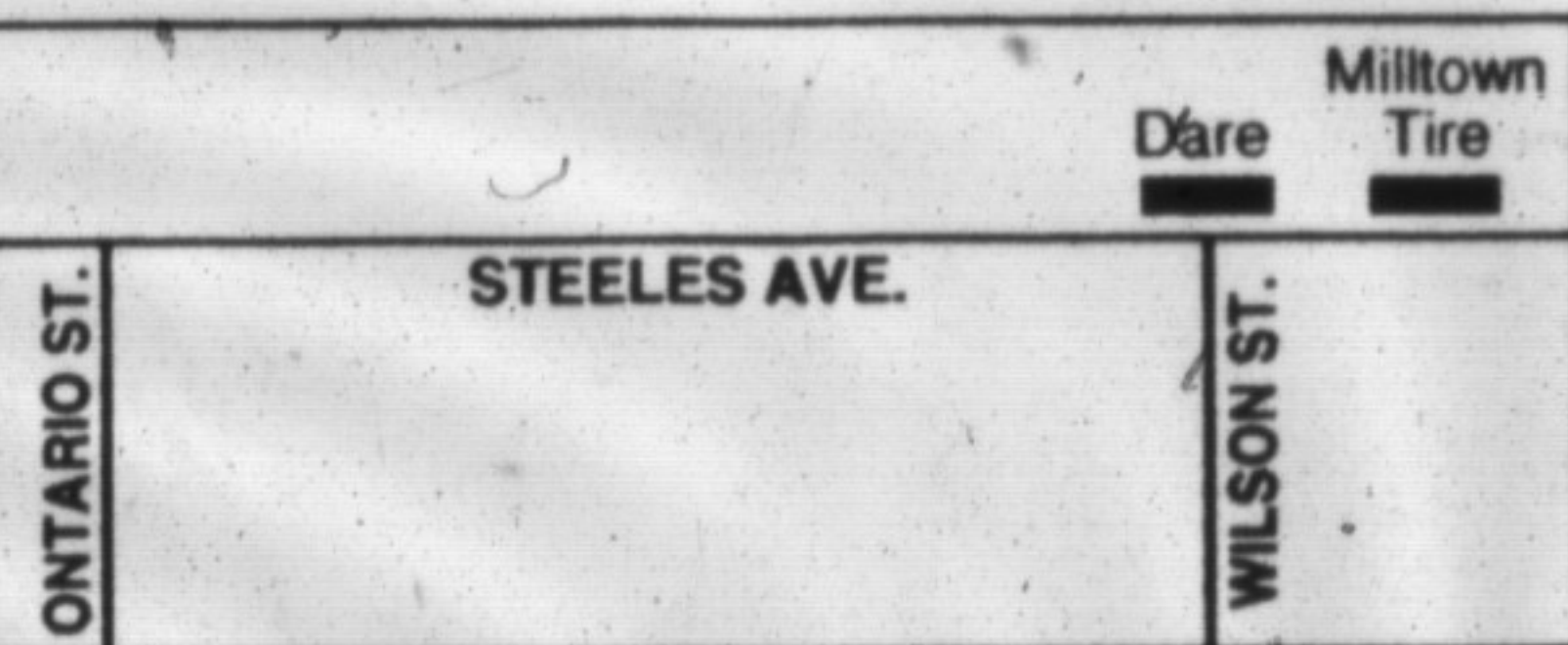
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