

# Heated debate rages over municipal changes

## Brooks suggests altering council to seven members

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

At times heated, debate Monday night at town council led to a decision not to proceed with municipal reform in Milton, until provincial guidelines are announced.

Mayor Gord Krantz turned up the heat by prodding councillors into debate, and Councillor Gerry Brooks stoked the fire when he suggested changing Milton's ward boundaries to produce a council of seven elected representatives, rather than the current 11. He added further fuel when he indicated he would approach neighbouring municipalities regarding amalgamation, or border changes.

"This discussion is entirely inappropriate until the province announces its plans," said Councillor John Challinor, who accused Mr. Brooks of grandstanding. "I would be very disappointed if there are individual councillors skulking around discussing boundary changes with other municipalities."

Mr. Challinor stood firmly against any action, including a second suggestion by Mr. Brooks to create a committee of council which would discuss changes and include public input.

Most councillors were unprepared to vote on any changes to local council, but several were open to the idea of exploring the matter and asking for public input.

"I have no problem discussing the issue," said Councillor Wally Hunter. "People want reform in Ward 2 (Mr. Hunter's constituency)."

Councillor Colin Best agreed, saying there is a need for discussion on reform because changes in municipal organization "will happen, we just don't know the date."

Councillor Ron Furik questioned the wisdom of not allowing the public input part of the process to move forward. Mr. Furik also said he felt Mr. Brooks' suggestions were necessary to stimulate discussion and was "offended" by Mr. Challinor terming that "grandstanding."

"I still feel we should have an open house and invite public comment and I will be presenting that motion next week," Mr. Furik said after the meeting. "We should have had this discussion months ago. I'm worried about self-serving councillors protecting their little fiefdoms."

Mr. Furik added some Ward 2 councillors have had informal discussions on boundaries. He said he favoured individual councillors representing clearly defined wards, rather than the 'at large' system now used, where several councillors are elected to represent the same areas.

Councillor Brian Penman said the timing of the debate was "horrible" but called the discussion "healthy" and suggested the

entire procedure be put off for another term of council, until Milton's growth pattern is more definite and provincial ideas are better understood.

"All I'm hearing are broad generalizations and very little fact," said Mr. Challinor, who pointed to increased work loads in a smaller council and fewer people to sit on various committees. "There are several councillors who don't have sufficient history in this community to know the impacts of what has been suggested."

Despite warning his colleagues to move slowly, Councillor Rick Day was perhaps the most forthcoming when he suggested Nassagaweya, Kilbride and Ninth Line boundary issues should all be on the table. He cautioned against introducing party

politics into municipal government, calling it "a great evil."

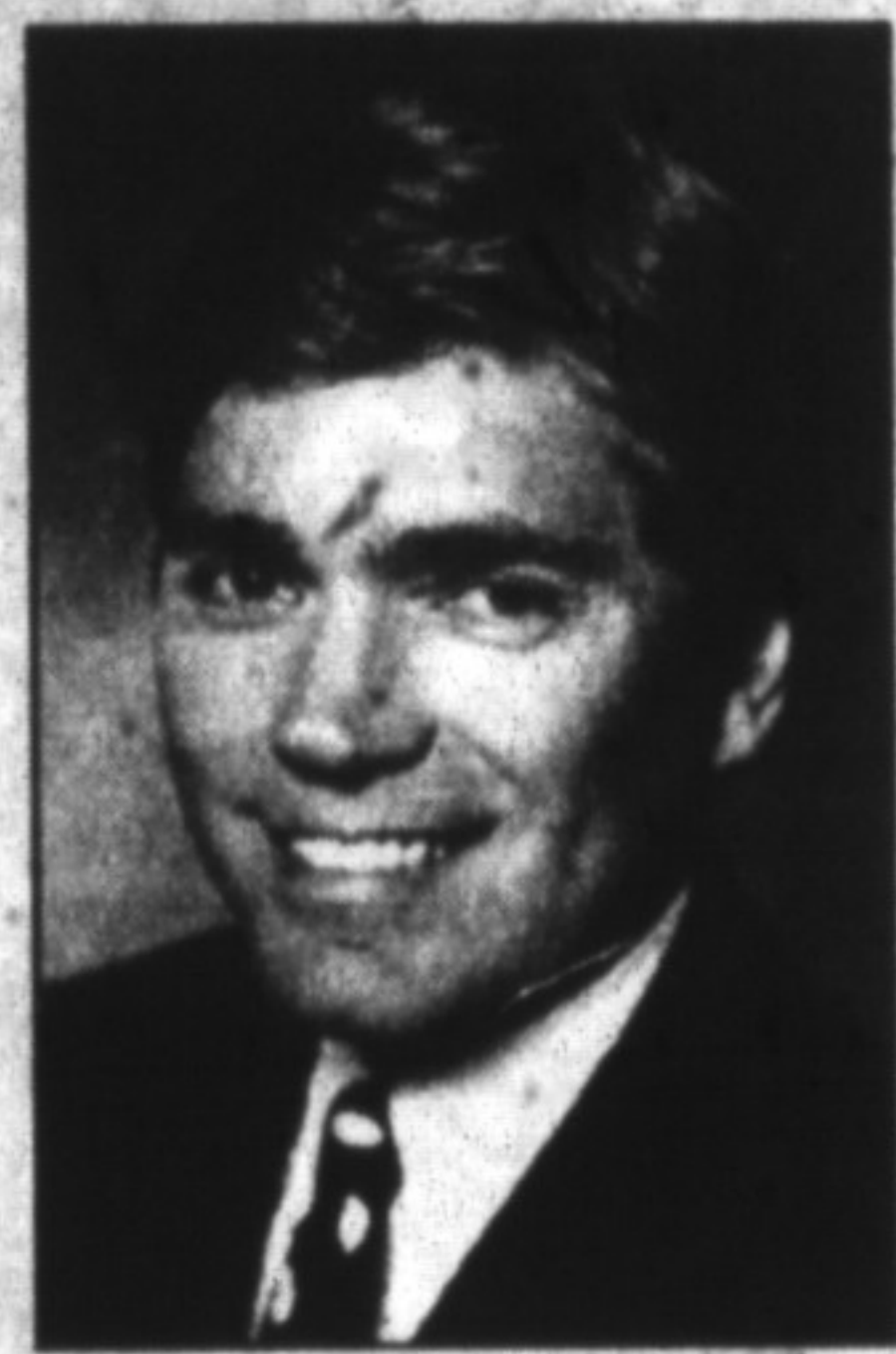
According to Mr. Krantz the Queen's Park grapevine indicates major changes to the Municipal Act are only days from being made public. Milton's chief administrative officer, David Hipgrave, said scheduling suggests proposed changes must be in place by July 15.

"Show me what is broken in our system," said Mr. Challinor. "To say we have only two or three weeks is fiction. No letter exists telling us this must be done. Until there is, this is pointless."

The vote on forming a committee and organizing a public input process was defeated 6-5, with general committee Chair Barry Lee breaking a tie.

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- John Challinor



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## Asthmatic kids can go to camp

The Lung Association of Halton is staging a Safari Day camp in attempt to educate kids with asthma and have a little fun.

Asthmatic children aged 5-13 and their non-asthmatic siblings are invited to take part in the camp, which runs from Tuesday July 2 to Friday July 12. Holy Cross School and Dick Licata Pool in Georgetown will be the day camp sites. Cost is \$50 per week per child.

For more information or to register, call The Lung Association at (905) 847-1033.