

# Region orders financial study in Martin House plans

## New twist for Allendale

By **BRAD REAUME**  
The Champion

Halton council approved a loophole in the plans for the Martin House wing of the Allendale long-term-care facility.

Despite a council-approved plan to refurbish and expand Martin House, a study of financial implications was approved with little fanfare at council Wednesday afternoon.

The real battle was waged at the health and social services committee the week before.

Council is expecting a detailed staff report this fall outlining the costs associated with upgrading the facility.

Burlington Mayor Walter Mulkeiwich told committee members that a report on the financial implications of options for Martin House is required prior to any action.

Burlington councillor Jack Dennison, who shepherded the existing plan through council, stopped just short of calling Mayor Mulkeiwich's proposal contrary to the existing council direction. He did, however, voice concerns that his colleagues were hatching a plan to overturn the council decision.

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**WALTER MULKEWICH**

The mayors of Burlington and Oakville voted against the approved plan when it passed council. The plan killed a proposed move of 100 long-term-care beds in the south of Halton in favour of potential efficiencies generated by expanding the Allendale site.

"Your comments speak to a lack of trust and suspicion," Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale told Mr. Dennison at committee.

In the end the move to consider financial options passed at committee but not without substantial jockeying by Mr. Dennison over the wording.

In February, council agreed that 100 beds currently at Martin

House would remain, that efforts to find a private operator in the south be suspended, and that an additional 50 beds be sought. In addition Allendale land was to be sold for the construction of seniors' apartments to help finance the retrofit of Martin House.

"We have to know where this money is coming from," said Mayor Mulkeiwich in support of the financial study. "We are near our debt capacity. It's clear the sale of land isn't going to pay all the costs."

The issue arose when staff asked the committee for clarification of the motion that passed council. Mr. Dennison said the council direction was black and white, while Mayor Mulkeiwich added enough shades of gray to cloud the minds of committee members.

Bonnie Ewart, commissioner of social services, told committee she needed to know the level of standard Martin House should be renovated to and whether the private sector was still involved in

any way.

Mayor Mulvale said if the study suggests that a completely new building would be cheaper than retrofitting the current structure then she wanted consideration given to moving the facility south.

Burlington councillor Bob Wood said he did not feel there was sufficient information for council to take the position it has.

"Many people commented there was substantial misinformation during the debate," he said.

Halton Hills councillor John Day called for a master plan for the Allendale campus with an eye on potential economies of scale.

Mayor Mulkeiwich said committee members were making far more of his position than was necessary. He said a financial plan made sense and added that he might change his own position

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