

Letters

'It's time for rural residents to explore Municipal Act'

Council moves to implement uniform tax rate in 2017, *Champion*, December 17 issue

Dear Editor,

Milton's rural residents received some good and bad news recently. The bad news is we will see an increase in our property taxes to eliminate the tiered system. The

good news? We should expect to receive the same level of services as ratepayers in urban Milton — a new sports centre and library, public transportation servicing the communities of Moffat, Campbellville and Brookville, increased traffic law enforcement. We should also expect a staff reduction at Town Hall, as the decision should result in savings of

staff work hours and costs related to administering a two-tier tax system. Rick Malboeuf's narrow-minded vision of this town has precipitated a motion which was carried. It is wrong. Rural residents have disproportionately carried the tax burden and this is salt in the wound. Where was the mayor when this motion was presented? As the lead-

er of our town, I expect a more inclusive attitude, especially since rural councillors are, and always have been, outnumbered on council. I believe it is time for rural residents to explore the Municipal Act. Seceding from the Town of Milton and joining the Townships of Puslinch or Guelph-Eramosa is a practical option. They have rural based popula-

tions and understand its concerns and culture. The extra revenue from the slots at Mohawk Racetrack would be icing on the cake. Milton is a town in name only. It has outgrown the need for a rural constituency that is now a yoke around its neck.

Philip VanAlstyne, Campbellville

Uniform tax rate unfair

RE: Council moves to implement uniform tax rate in 2017, *Champion*, December 17 issue

Dear Editor,

I live in rural southeast Milton, where water, sewage disposal, public transportation, sidewalks, street lights and yard waste pickup are services not available to me or other rural residents, as we are not part of the town infrastructure.

It is unfair that our taxes should subsidize those of urban residents for town services provided to them. Lets be fair.

Provide rural residents with the same services as town residents, and I will gladly pay my fair share.

Fred Featherstone, Milton

Agree? Disagree?

Local residents have their say on Milton Town Council's December 2015 decision to move to a uniform tax rate, which would be rolled out in 2017. For more letters on this topic — and many others — be sure to visit the *Champion's* website at www.insidehalton.com and click on the Opinion tab.

Unpopular decision 'right and fair thing to do'

RE: Reconsider uniform tax rate decision, Readers' Corner, *Champion*, January 7 issue

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to Peter Lambrick's recent letter asking council to reconsider its decision to move to a single uniform tax rate for Milton.

The reasoning for bringing this motion forward was not only to make our tax collection system more efficient and cost effective but to bring fairness to the property tax process. Those opposed to our decision argue that rural tax payers should not have to pay for urban services. Well, that works both ways.

It costs \$ 1.6 million a year to maintain and snow clear rural roads.

In rural taxes, we collect just over \$500,000 a year for roads, leaving a shortfall of \$1.1 million, which is paid for from urban taxpayers.

If the argument is that rural taxpayers should not have to pay for urban services, then urban taxpayers should not have to pay to maintain rural roads that they may never use. The impact of moving to a single tax rate will have an impact of \$125 a year on the average rural property. Should we allocate the \$1.1 million snow-clearing shortfall to rural tax roll, the rate for that same property would increase by more than \$250.

As for the suggestion that we revisit the issue in order to allow delegates to address council, I wonder,

what purpose would this serve?

We know the delegates will say, "We do not want you to raise our taxes." They will use the same arguments that Councillors Cindy Lunau and Colin Best used prior to council voting on the issue.

Revisiting this issue would only result in more work for staff, incurring unnecessary costs and delaying the 2016 budget process.

The end result would be the same. Mr. Lambrick's final comment was that we "should recognize that the rural area sends the Town about \$7 million from Mohawk slots." The amount is closer to \$5 million, but what's a couple of million among friends? The truth is, that money does not come from rural ratepay-

ers but from Woodbine Entertainment Group patrons, who hail from urban Milton and surrounding communities. The quarterly payments are made to the Town by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) for hosting a gaming facility at Mohawk Racetrack.

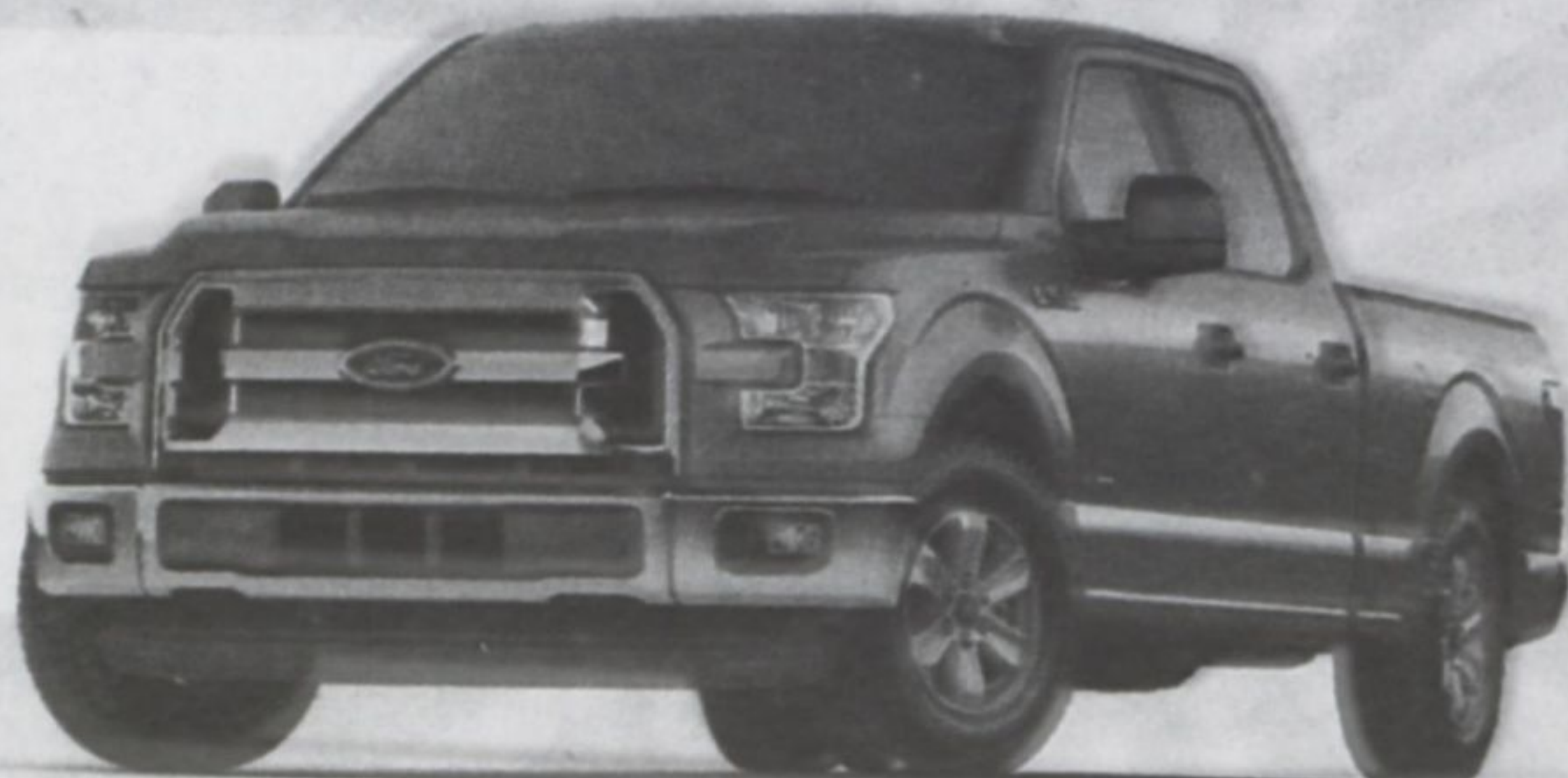
The tiered tax system has been a local issue for 20 years. It was never dealt with because previous councils did not have the courage to address it. This council did.

We knew it would not be popular with the rural residents, but eight of 11 members of council supported the motion, because it was the right and fair thing to do.

Rick Malboeuf, Ward 4 Councillor

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