

Region

Several scenarios debated for regional city

(From page 1)

provincial representative from the Who Does What Secretariat, if the province could provide any direction on which way the committee should go in trying to flush out legitimate solutions in reducing government in York Region.

Barnes, somewhat vaguely, explained that as a result of the still-to-be-announced legislative changes contained in

Bill 26, municipalities will have a greater opportunity to be the authors of their own destiny.

"The changes...will allow more local decision making in trying to determine the future governance model," Barnes said.

"We are building processes that allow you to exercise more power over the decision. But there is no map, no template."

He made it clear that the government will be up to its ears in legislative change over the next three months. It seems the province would rather the threatened regions come up with their own restructuring solution - however, as Cox pointed out, that's difficult without knowing exactly what the changes will be. And Barnes was definitely not specific.

Regional CAO Alan Wells warned the committee they can count on municipalities' expenditures increasing four and five-fold over the next few years and told them to expect "radical, drastic," changes from the province.

Many, including Wells, believe those changes will include municipalities' financial structure - changes in general taxation, including what property taxes should or should not pay for; changes in the services municipalities will provide; which services will be taken over by the proposed GTA Services Board; and how those bills will be paid.

Regional councillor Gord Landon brought up the very real possibility that drastic legislative changes in the financial picture will force amalgamation as smaller towns will no longer be able to survive independently.

Vaughan Mayor Lorna Jackson told the committee she was up until 3 a.m. working on her plan - three cities, based on the federal riding boundaries, that would then elect councillors and a mayor.

She said if council did not submit their own solution, the province would likely follow the same format it did with Toronto, using federal riding boundaries to create one huge city.

But even after two years of

discussion, plus the undeniable fact that push has finally come to shove, the smaller towns are not going down without a fight.

King Township's Mayor Margaret Black refuses to consider amalgamating with the larger "urban" municipalities like Markham and Vaughan.

She suggested, with the support of Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson, that the region submit a plan to keep all nine municipalities and their regional government because "it works."

Richmond Hill Mayor Bill Bell, a member of the Who Does What panel, said he supports the idea of TROY, one big city, because that will allow communities to keep their identity.

To that, East Gwillimbury Mayor Jim Mortson said one of every three people he talks to begs him not to turn their town into part of a megacity.

"They want to keep our rural atmosphere and East Gwillimbury will fight this very hard," he said.

After more than three hours, councillors approved a motion to have staff re-examine boundaries and the impact of boundary changes; to try and submit to commissioner Milt Farrow suggestions on what responsibilities a GTA Services Board should have and to meet again to discuss the issue.

Mayor hates regional city idea, says Stouffville will go it alone

By JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

Whitchurch-Stouffville has both the will and the way to go it alone, Mayor Wayne Emmerson told *The Tribune* Friday.

With a regional committee made up of York Region's municipalities, the mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville made it clear: He wants no part of a nine municipality scheme to have York Region amalgamate into a city.

Whitchurch-Stouffville is "very financially viable and can stand on its own," Emmerson said.

Blending York's municipalities into a city would only benefit large communities, Emmerson said. "Under this, only the rural



EMMERSON

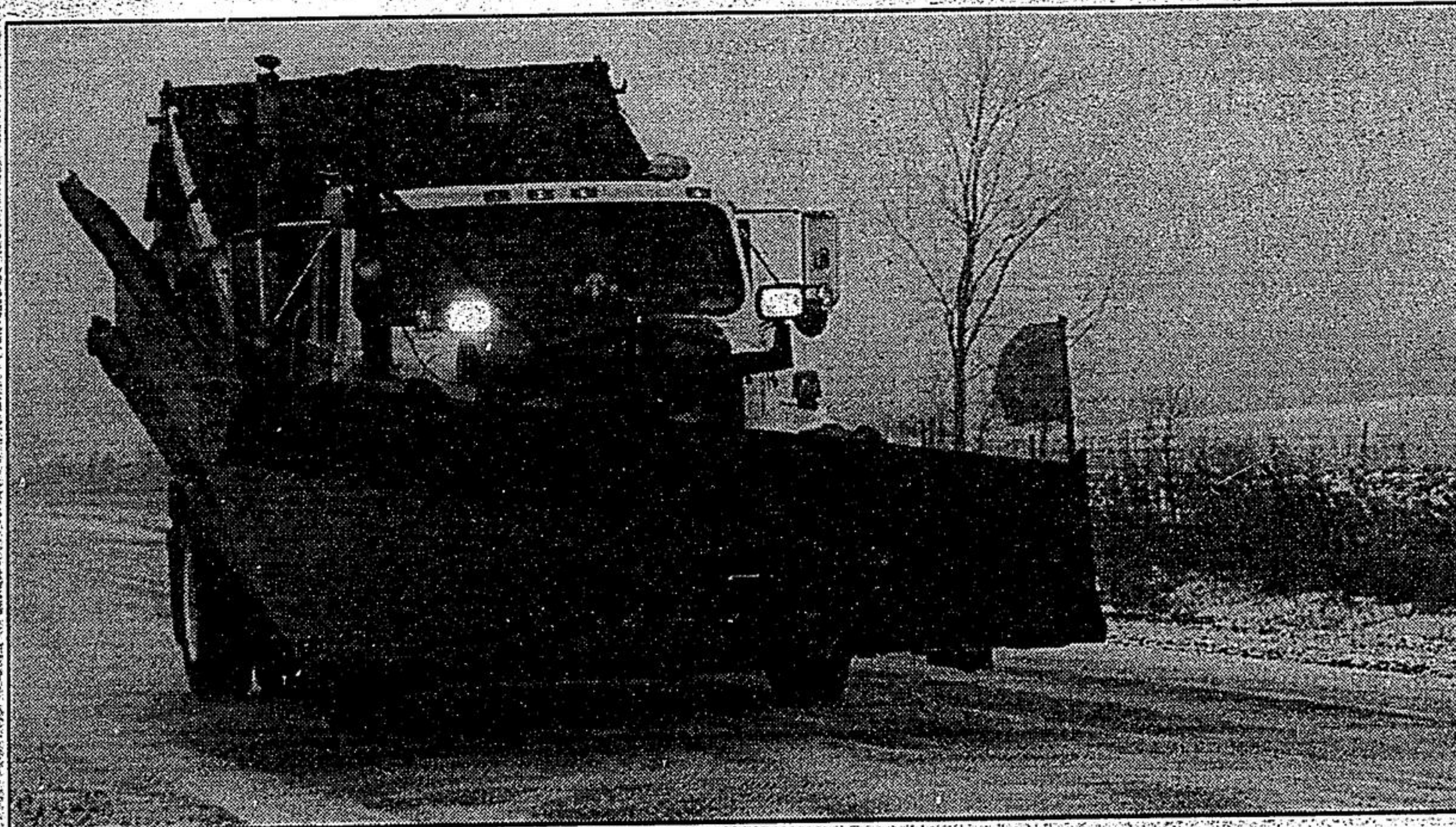
Mike Harris decides that the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville will continue to be and that an election is in order, Emmerson said his name will be on the ballot for the mayor's job.

municipalities have something to lose. Markham and Vaughan wouldn't lose," he said.

While Emmerson is predicting that municipal elections will be held in Whitchurch-Stouffville in November, he admits. The final decision lies with the provincial government. If Premier

Public Works

Snow costs have dropped in Whitchurch-Stouffville



On duty

This new Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville snowplow sands 10th Line just south of Main Street on Thursday Jan. 9 just before the first snowstorm of the year hit.

Photo/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

By JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

While Stouffville along with the rest of southern Ontario got walloped with the first major storm of the year Thursday night, local taxpayers got a break: The cost of Old Man Winter has dropped.

While the heavy equipment operators from Whitchurch-Stouffville works department were out in full force in the early part of the evening, and a skeleton crew worked until 3:30 a.m., at least they knew money was not a concern.

The town could afford the storm.

Last year, Whitchurch-Stouffville council earmarked \$244,800 for snow plowing and snow removal. But, the winter of '96 ended up costing \$217,000.

"We came in under budget," stressed Paul Whitehouse, local public works director.

Meteorologist are now con-

firmed that weather is, indeed, changing in some parts of the world, including here in Canada. When it comes to winter, today's culprit is black ice.

"We had reports of black ice as early as the late fall," said Whitehouse. "When dealing with black ice, we jump on it early. We have to jump on it - black ice is very dangerous," he said.

While snow, snow and more snow seems to occupy most people's minds, the white stuff is not the high ticket item on the winter budget.

The cost of salting and sanding makes up "between 65 and 75 per cent" of the entire (winter) budget, stressed Whitehouse.

Here in Stouffville, reports of black ice come from the York Region works department, from the York Regional Police and from motorists.

"It keep us on our toes," said Whitehouse.

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