

Let's have a referendum

THE ONE BIG UNKNOWN in the debate over whether Ontario Provincial Police should take over policing in Orangeville is the impact, if any, of a change of government at Queen's Park.

One thing we do know is that the main reason the OPP can provide municipal policing services for less cost to taxpayers than they face with town police forces is provincial subsidization of such municipal policing costs.

Another thing we know is that if the Progressive Conservatives come to power in the June election they will do so on a platform that calls for tax cuts and balanced budgets ? something that will become possible only if there's reduced government spending.

And we all know how the Mike Harris Tories accomplished such a feat in the 1990s ? in part by dumping thousands of kilometres of provincial highways on to the municipalities whose only source of revenue is the property tax.

In the circumstances, we think any decision on the policing question should be put off until after the provincial election, and that Orangeville Council should seek guidance from ratepayers by holding a referendum in conjunction with the October 2018 municipal election.

Voters should be asked to choose between the OPP and maintaining the Orangeville Police Service while studying the option of a county police force.