

Editorial ? Be careful what you wish

Peel Regional councillors recently debated a motion to call on the provincial government to step up and rule on the composition of council.

The motion failed, mainly because all 12 of the reps from Mississauga voted against it.

What precisely the councillors from Mississauga have against the Province dealing with the matter is far from clear.

The point was made couple of times in the discussions that those officials seated around the council table have been unable to come up with solutions to this issue. The issue has been debated at length.

Councillors came up with a position last year, and Mississauga reps made it clear they were prepared to use their overwhelming numbers (in terms of population) to veto the proposal. It called for another four representatives for Mississauga in the next term of council and another four for Brampton too. The people from Mississauga balked at such a substantial increase in the size of council, and we can understand how they might have feared trying to sell that to their electorate.

The problem is there are many people who look at elected political representation and think only of the expense involved. There needs to be message sent out there that representative democracy in our society was meant to be many things, and cheap is not one of them.

On the other hand, there has been lot of parochialism being shown of late around the council table. That's not necessarily a bad thing. Councillors from Caledon are elected and paid to look out for the interests of their community, as are the councillors from Brampton and Mississauga. But there's also an obligation to think of the greater collective good

But it's also becoming clear, according to recent published reports, that Mississauga has dreams of going it alone as a stand-alone municipality.

Now that might come into effect one of these days, but people might also want to reflect on what could come next.

A huge city like Toronto would be right next to a much smaller one called Mississauga. Could some future government at Queen's Park decide to merge the two into one? It happened before 20 years ago, thanks to the government of Mike Harris.

?It could never happen,? we hear officials in Mississauga mutter. The thing is officials in the former Cities of Etobicoke, York and Scarborough were probably saying the same thing 20 years ago.