

Caledon gets coal for Christmas

by SHERALYN ROMAN

I'm sure we can all agree on one thing and it's that the end of 2020 can't come soon enough. My fear is that 2021 will be no better and recent actions taken at the Regional Council table, reducing Caledon's representation by 40%, appear to support this fear. If Caledon was looking for any kind of an early Christmas gift, it woke up disappointed on December 18. It appears all of the letters and delegations to 'Santa' Nando Iannicca (and there were well over 60 of them) fell on deaf ears and were misdirected to the address of the Grinch. Caledon, it doesn't matter if you were 'good' this year, you're getting a lump of coal in your stocking.

What follows, edited for clarity, is my delegation to the Regional Council table. There were many excellent delegations made by esteemed members of our community; like Angela Panacci, Sara Clarkson and Derek Clark, each of whom spoke eloquently to the issue of why Caledon's voice cannot and should not be taken away, particularly at a time of exponential growth. I am grateful to them for stepping forward with their informed comments and for their willingness to go on record with their concerns. I am happy to go on public record again, with mine:

'The history of the formation of the Region of Peel is lengthy. Formed in 1974, it was to bring efficiencies of scale to matters of public interest for ALL citizens of the region - not just Brampton and Mississauga but Caledon too. Having a shared common approach to the environment, waste removal, water services, snow removal and more just made good fiscal sense. That's what the Region of Peel is supposed to be about. It was NEVER about representation by population but rather, about the efficiencies to be gained by working together and to protect the development of the land on which we all live, work and play. In other words, it was in our best interests to work together and it still is.

'That Mayor Brown initiated this move now is also of concern (and that's putting it mildly.) It's a global pandemic, we cannot meet or delegate in person, and in fact - perhaps you were hoping folks would be too distracted by the concerns of family, job loss, food insecurity, loneliness and the threat of dying from COVID, to pay too much attention to this sneaky move. That's what makes it all the more troubling. As well, that you want to reduce our seats at the table at a time when Caledon is poised for exponential growth over the next thirty years just doesn't make sense. We already account for more than 50% of the Region's combined landmass and our population is set to double by 2031. I would politely suggest to you, now is not the time to remove seats from Caledon, rather maintaining the status quo is the bare minimum you should consider.

'In the past you have asked us to support your growth and infrastructure development? it seems now that you have breached the outermost reaches of your own borders, you either seek to control ours or to abandon your fiscal accountability to us?

'Mayor Brown? I ask you respectfully, what faith can we have in due process over any issue concerning Caledon in the future when you were willing to bring a walk on motion to the table? What faith can our citizens have in the ability to obtain social, health, mental wellness and infrastructure supports from services across the Region and during what is potentially their greatest time of need, when even at the Regional level there is no evidence of a willingness to work together towards the common good?

'Caledon is at a crossroads as a community and I, along with the great majority of our community, implore you to do the right thing. That is - unequivocally - to maintain every, single, one of the Caledon seats at the regional table. Failure to do otherwise is literally, a failure of the democratic process? A move to cut our representation by 40% is unacceptable. It's that simple. I'm asking you to reconsider your position? because we believe in due process, doing the right thing and in the right way. Do you??

We all know the outcome. It didn't matter what was said, who said it or the many relevant facts that were quoted in defence of our position. It didn't matter that, as Derek Clark 'reminded' those seated at the table, 'You took an oath to serve the people' [and that] you not only represent Mississauga and Brampton but you also represent Caledon at the Regional level.

You need to stand by your words and your oath, and now more than ever you need to stand up for the people of Caledon.?

Sadly, there was no ?Christmas Miracle,? and no sign of Santa. Only The Grinch and his cohorts, cleverly disguised as Councillors from Mississauga, Brampton and yes, one from Caledon too. To say it was disappointing to learn that representation, democracy, and the spirit of working together for the common good was all missing from the table is an understatement.

At a time when Caledon really is at a crossroads, our stockings were hung by the chimney with care?but all we received was a worthless lump of coal.