

Brampton mayor calling for electing Peel Region's Chair in future

By Bill Rea

With a new Chair of Peel Region in place, there are more calls to change the method of choosing them.

Frank Dale of Mississauga got the job last Thursday, being elected by a majority of the 24 Regional councillors. But Brampton Mayor Linda Jeffrey brought the issues up in her remarks, suggesting it's time that be revisited, calling the current process 'flawed.' 'It is time for the more than 1.4 million residents of the Region of Peel to elect their Chair, just as they elect their other municipal officials,' Jeffrey stated. 'In the interest of democracy, the position of regional chair needs to be decided directly by voters.' 'I look to all of my council colleagues to consider a more transparent and accountable method of choosing the Chair for the 2018 term,' she added.

That position is drawing some support from Caledon, but not a lot.

Councillor Annette Groves indicated she thought it might be time to have the Chair elected at large.

'That's a decision I think all the regions are going to be having,' she said.

'I think the Chair should be elected at large,' she added. 'It's democratic and people should have a say on who their chair is.'

But Mayor Allan Thompson wasn't as enthused.

'That's politics,' he replied when asked about the matter after last Thursday's meeting.

'It will be a City of Peel,' he added. 'Give the Region a chance.'

'In reality, you're thinking of creating a super mayor,' Councillor Johanna Downey observed. 'That's unfair to the mayors of the three municipalities.'

'It creates a super mayor, which is not something I would support,' Councillor Jennifer Innis remarked, adding to could make things difficult when it comes to making the Region function, as she pointed out an elected chair could wind up being at odds with the three elected mayors.

'I think the role of the Regional Chair is to find cohesiveness,' she said.

Councillor Barb Shaughnessy questioned whether last week's meeting was the forum for Jeffrey to have raised the issue, and she also expressed her doubts over the idea.

'I believe that this becomes a popularity contest and name recognition,' she said.