

Caledon not rocks, horses, barns and dogs

I attended the Peel Regional council meeting June 23.

The contentious part of the agenda centred on the expansion of Regional council seats. Brampton councillors advocated for the addition of four more regional seats, given the huge population growth in this city over the last decade. Caledon councillors supported this position while Mississauga councillors could not justify the taxpayer expense of four more incremental Regional seats.

Mississauga's argument was Brampton should receive two more Regional seats at the expense of Caledon. There would be no increase in the number of seats and only a shift in representation. Caledon would decrease from five to three representatives while Brampton would increase from seven to nine representatives. In other words, Regional representation should be based on population numbers and not geography. This is a narrow viewpoint and does not take into consideration the need for effective rural representation as seen in federal and provincial ridings around the country.

I was also quite disappointed with the tone and conduct of the Mississauga councillors during this debate. At one point, Carolyn Parrish compared her ward in Mississauga to Caledon by indicating that our councillors represent rocks and horses and barns and dogs.

These negative and unproductive comments diminish the working relationship between the three municipalities while accentuating the divide between urban and rural communities. Perhaps Brampton Councillor John Sprovieri put it best when he said that our councillors would require ?helicopters? to provide effective rural representation in our community if we lost two regional seats. Although the motion to add four more regional seats to Brampton was approved at this meeting, Mississauga intends to veto this decision. I don't have much faith that Mississauga will work with Brampton or Caledon on a collaborative or team based approach in the near future. It reminds me of three kids playing in a sandbox who won't share any toys.

Only time will tell what will happen with Regional government in Peel!

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