

Caledon's Mayor to have strong mayor powers as of July 1

By Zachary Roman

The Provincial Government is significantly expanding strong mayor powers across Ontario.

On June 16, the Province announced it was giving strong mayor powers to the mayors of 26 different municipalities and Caledon is among them. The powers will come into effect on July 1.

Strong mayor powers allow mayors to do things like appoint a Chief Administrative Officer; hire department heads; establish and reorganize municipal departments; create Council committees and appoint their leaders; propose municipal budgets (subject to Council amendments and a veto/Council override process); veto bylaws if they believe they interfere with a provincial priority; and bring forward matters that advance Provincial priorities.

Councillors can override a mayor's veto of bylaws and budget amendments with a two-thirds majority vote.

According to the Province, strong mayor powers offer tools to help heads of Council cut red tape and speed up the delivery of key shared municipal-provincial priorities such as housing, transit and infrastructure.

In a statement sent to The Citizen, Mayor Annette Groves said the Province's decision to expand strong mayor powers to Caledon speaks to the fact that Caledon is growing and a mature municipality.

It is not lost on me the importance of these powers and the significance of being the Mayor at this moment in Caledon's history, said Groves.

Referencing Caledon's pledge to the Province to build 13,000 housing units, Groves said Caledon needs houses for people choosing to call Caledon home and people who have always lived in Caledon.

[We need] homes to keep families close, homes to keep our seniors close to their families and friends, homes for the single parent struggling to keep a roof over their child(ren)'s heads, homes for people who have struggled with mental health and addiction, said Groves.

Groves said nothing happens in a vacuum and that strong mayor powers come with a legislated requirement to be open and transparent any time they are used. Any time they are used it must be recorded in writing and disclosed to the public.

While these new authorities are granted to me as the head of Council, I have always believed that the best way for Town business to be done is through consensus, said Groves. I remain committed to working with my council to find the best policies and plans for the Town and its residents' future. I look forward to continued collaboration with my Council to deliver positive results to all of Caledon.

The mayors of Toronto and Ottawa already have strong mayor powers which took effect last fall. The 26 municipalities whose mayors will be getting strong mayor powers on July 1 are all single or lower-tier municipalities with a population over 100,000 (or growing to 100,000 by 2031) that have submitted a housing pledge to the Province.