

Council defers housing pledge pending clarity from Provincial government]

Caledon is asked to have 13,000 new residential units by 2031

By Zachary Roman

Council would like more time for Town staff to look at Caledon's housing pledge to the Provincial Government.

At Council's February 28 meeting, local lawmakers voted to defer approval of Caledon's housing pledge to allow the Region of Peel time to put forward regional requests to the Province as well as give Town staff more time for fine tuning, according to a Council brief.

Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives have set a target of 13,000 new residential units to be completed in Caledon by 2031. Caledon's pledge outlines how it will meet this target and the support it will need from the Province to achieve it.

The pledge asks the province to work with the Town to understand the impacts and investments needed to grow in a sustainable and affordable way, reads the brief.

The types of investments needed are access to transit, community amenities, parkland, and infrastructure like roads and water.

At the February 28 meeting, Caledon's Director of Planning, Antoinetta Minichillo, said Caledon's housing pledge was most in line with the Region of Peel's growth plan when compared to Brampton and Mississauga. Still, she said there were some slight deviations that Town staff would like to have more time to work with the Region on.

Mayor Annette Groves addressed people watching the meeting and explained a bit more about the pledge, such as the 13,000 residential unit target and how the Province's Bill 23 has removed some of Caledon's (and the Region's) funding from development charges.

It's actually quite scary, said Groves of the debt the Region of Peel will need to take on to meet the Province's housing targets. Groves said it will be important to work closely with the Region moving forward as it provides essential infrastructure servicing for growth.

We can't fight with the Province if we say we aren't going to do it they'll come along and do whatever they want anyway, said Groves. We're trying to find out from the Province, what does 'make us whole' mean?

This refers to the Province's promise to ensure municipalities won't go into any debt if they lose funding from things like development charges.

Groves said she's hoping Ford is listening to municipalities, which she said are happy to do the housing pledge, so long as the appropriate investment help is provided.

The motion to defer Caledon's housing pledge was passed unanimously.

Council had originally endorsed the housing pledge at a planning and development meeting earlier in February.

It is important that we do our part to address the housing crisis while not compromising on the quality of communities we want to see developed in Caledon, said Minichillo at that time. Growth in Caledon will be in greenfield areas (rural/farm land) and it requires different considerations which we put forward in our Housing Pledge as action items for the Province to consider.

There's going to be a special Council meeting on March 21 where Town staff will present any changes made to the housing pledge

after Council voted to defer it on February 28. Municipalities are required by the Province to have their housing pledges complete by March 22.

With files from Brock Weir