

Editorial ? No shame asking for money, in light of storm

Mayor Marolyn Morrison is slated to join her counterparts from other Greater Toronto Area (GTA) municipalities tomorrow (Friday) in making a pitch for financial assistance in light of last month's massive ice storm.

It should be safe to say that we all would rather such an approach were not required, but the reality is it is needed and the area municipalities are well within their rights to seek such assistance.

It is not a case that the Town, or any of the other municipalities, have done a bad job of managing their finances. The reality is there are some things that just cannot be anticipated, and the other levels of government have to be on hand to lend a hand.

It's been estimated, according to the information that came out of Tuesday's Town council meeting, that Caledon's bill to deal with damaged municipal property and infrastructure is going to run in the area of \$2.9 million. Councillor Richard Whitehead has tried to put that into understandable terms by stressing covering a sum like that in one year would add between four and five per cent to the Town's tax bill, and that's a large figure to try and sell.

It is reasonable to expect a municipal council, or anyone involved in budgeting (and that includes a household) to set a certain amount aside for the unexpected. The words 'rainy day' represent the colloquialism normally applied to such a sum. But \$2.9 million for a municipality like Caledon is asking a bit much.

That's why it's up to the more senior levels of government to come up with something in the way of aid.

As well, there has to be consideration to helping private property owners with the mess many of them have been left with. True, there are advantages to owning your own property, but there are some extra burdens and responsibilities too. On the other hand, widespread devastation from a natural disaster requires a widespread response.

Speaking at last Thursday's meeting of Peel Regional council, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion pointed out the federal government was quick to promise aid to Calgary last summer when the area was hit by severe flooding.

Surely the GTA is entitled to something.