

Editorial ? When did the Region become unworkable?

There was a lot going on at last Thursday's meeting of Peel Regional council, with the most dramatic moment coming when the five Caledon representatives walked out of the Council Chambers.

They did it to break quorum as their colleagues were about to vote on a motion basically aimed at forcing Caledon to take part in provincial facilitation over the Bolton employment land expansion.

Mayor Allan Thompson remarked at one point in the session, which frequently got heated, that the debate could end the way the Region is governed.

An initial gut reaction could be such a statement was hyperbolic. But things continued on that line.

Mississauga Councillor Nando Iannicca spoke of 'divorce.' His fellow councillor from Mississauga George Carlson referred to a surveyor's mistake that was made years ago that put Caledon in with Peel Region.

And we are left wondering just when did the status quo become such a problem. There was very little complaining with the way Peel function during the days when it was a county. And when Regional government was formed, with a variety of villages and townships being amalgamated into three municipalities that would form the Region, the politicians were able to adjust.

And it's gone on now for more than 40 years.

A lot has happened over that time. Mississauga grew, but was able to call a lot of the shots on how that growth was handled.

Brampton was given a certain amount of say in the way it grew and developed. Caledon is insisting that it receive the same treatment,

So what exactly is the problem, and when did it get to be a problem?

There's always been some friction; a municipal equivalent to sibling rivalry. Now, for some reason, we're hearing calls for 'divorce.' Peel has benefitted from politicians over the years who have been able to set aside parochial differences and make the system work, while resisting any temptations to gang up on one of the member municipalities. But we don't see that leadership now.

Former Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion was known to grumble about the Region, but she was one of those who worked to make it all come together.

'In my opinion, Peel Region is the best region.' Those were McCallion's very words, delivered in November at the retirement party for former Regional chair Emil Kolb.

Kolb, incidentally is from Caledon, and was in the chair for 23 years. There didn't seem to be much problem with Caledon in those years.

For 40 years, politicians from all three municipalities were able to make it work. Are the current representatives from Brampton and Mississauga willing to admit those who came before could do something they can't?

Maybe that's a question Caledon councillors should be asking their Regional colleagues. And maybe caledon residents should be asking the same questions of the folks at Brampton and Mississauga.

Incidentally, the next council meeting is scheduled for next Thursday (June 15).