

Editorial ? You don't know how good you have it

As you probably have heard by now, Caledon councillors passed a budget last week that calls for a two per cent overall tax increase. The Town is raising its share of taxes by 4.82 per cent, but when that's combined with the rate increase previously approved by Peel Regional council, it works out to an overall hike of two per cent.

And it was a split vote at the council table last week. Four councillors voted against the budget, charging the tax increase was too high.

We can sympathize with that. Indeed, we can understand there might be some who say an increase of two percentage points is two too many.

Perhaps people like that should take a look at what councillors in Toronto did earlier this week.

Councillors there approved a 3.2 per cent overall increase.

Now it is true the demands on tax dollars in the megacity are radically different than what Caledon residents have to pay for. For example, a chunk of the increase in the big city is going toward putting a subway in Scarborough, and no such development is planned for up here. But even without that, the increase would still be more than two per cent.

We bring that up because it's easy to recall the early days of the budget deliberations in Caledon, when the talk was the increase to the Town's share was going to be more than four per cent, while the officials in Toronto were trying to stay in the two per cent range.

There were some Caledon residents who complained that the local councillors weren't doing as good a job as their Toronto counterparts. For one thing, these people had neglected to take into account the difference between a single-tier municipality like Toronto, and the two tiers represented by the Town and Peel.

But more important, they didn't consider it was still early days in the process.

When the final numbers were crunched, we taxpayers in Caledon got off kind of easy.

Oh yes, Toronto's tax hike passed by a vote of 36 to eight.

Granted, several of the councillors, former mayor Rob Ford among them, wanted the tax increase substantially reduced, but at least one councillor lobbied to have them increased even more.

We think things are better here than a lot of people realize.

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