

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? New faces on municipal councils to start the New Year

We are almost a month into 2015 and with this New Year comes many new faces on municipal councils in Dufferin-Caledon. For instance, Dufferin County has 16 new councillors across its eight towns and townships. In Caledon, almost all of the of the town's representatives on Peel Regional Council are new, as is the Town's Mayor.

We have three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal; and each level of government has its own distinct powers. For example, the municipal government deals with issues such as public transportation, public parks, libraries, local police service, local firefighting service and the removal of garbage, to name a few. Whereas the federal government deals with issues such as immigration and national defense; the provincial government deals with issues like education, health care and provincial highways. When it comes to municipal laws, they are decided by the municipal councils during regularly scheduled council meetings. Unlike provincial and federal politics, there are no political parties in municipal politics. Councillors must have a collaborative relationship with one another because they must rely on one another to get substantive initiatives passed at municipal council meetings.

The other important aspect of all levels of government is public input. At the municipal level, however, public input is particularly crucial due to the local nature of municipal decision making. Individuals can provide their input on certain issues at municipal committees and during public consultations for the municipal budget. You can also find out what was discussed during committee or at council on your Town or Township's website. This is important because it allows residents to stay informed on issues that affect our community.

Whether you're a young individual looking to get involved in politics for the first time or someone who has a particular issue they care about, this is a great opportunity to get involved in the local decision making process and make a difference in our community. Get to know your new councillors and those re-elected too. Make sure your local representatives know about the issues that matter most to you and your community.

It is important to remember that councillors are elected to represent the people of their communities. That is why it is important to get to know them and let them know what issues matter to you so they can do their part in helping make our community a better place to live, work and raise a family

