

Governance of Peel Region to be reviewed

By Bill Rea

The way Peel Region is governed is soon going to come under review.

And that's going to include whether there should be changes to the composition of Regional council.

Councillors last week approved a staff recommendation to set up a task force to come up with terms of reference for the review, looking at the governance of the Region, options for electing the Regional Chair and how Regional council should be composed. The task force is to include Regional Chair Frank Dale, the Mayors of Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga and the CAOs (or their designates) of the Region and the three municipalities.

The staff report stated these issues came up in the last term of council, focusing mainly on the selection of the Chair and Brampton's representation on Regional council, which currently sits at seven representatives (counting the mayor).

A task force was formed and it reported to Regional council in September 2013. The recommendation was that the Chair continue to be elected by Regional councillors, although by open vote rather than secret ballot, as had been the case in 2010. As well, the task force recommended maintaining the current composition of Regional council, with staff starting a review process early in 2015.

Composition of council is set out in the Regional Municipality of Peel Act, which since 2005, has stated there are 12 representatives from Mississauga, seven from Brampton and five from Caledon.

The Act can be amended through either a private member's bill in the legislature, or Regional council can pass a resolution calling on the Minister responsible for Municipal Affairs to approve the passage of the necessary bylaw. That bylaw would involve a public process, including public meetings, and it would have to pass council by a triple majority, meaning a majority of the Regional councillors have to approve, along with a majority of the lower-tier councils and enough representative of a majority of the residents. Brampton Councillor Grant Gibson observed last week that discussions on the composition of Regional council started with a report in 2004 by Justice John Adams, at the request of the then Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Adams had suggested at the time that Mississauga's representation be increased from 10 to 12, Bramptons from six to 11 and Caledon's remain at five.

?Justice Adams got it right,? Gibson declared, adding Brampton's population has increased significantly since the Adams report.