

Local lawmakers split on recent staff changes, reorganization at Town Hall

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There's been a lot of change at the Town of Caledon lately.

Since July, Mayor Annette Groves has used Strong Mayor powers to replace Caledon's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and split the Town's Director of Building Services and Municipal Law Enforcement position in two.

Since Caledon's former CAO, Carey Herd was replaced with current CAO Nathan Hyde on August 2, Caledon's Town Clerk, Chief planner, Director of Corporate Strategy and Innovation, and Solicitor have left or been terminated.

A September 19 press release from the Town announced streamlining of the municipality from 11 departments to six. The Town said the move would save \$1 million annually and prepare Caledon to be an efficient single-tier municipality when the Region of Peel is dissolved in 2025.

Ward 6 Councillor Cosimo Napoli said the recent change is a natural part of Caledon's growth and evolution. He cited coming population growth as a reason change is necessary. Napoli said the staff changes are about becoming more efficient and effective in delivering municipal services.

Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen, however, is vehemently opposed to the recent changes.

He said he was shocked and disappointed to see Strong Mayor powers used to replace Herd, who he said is "highly competent" and was doing an "excellent job."

Sheen said with the Region of Peel's dissolution coming, Herd's experience would have been extremely valuable.

"The outgoing CAO had roughly 15 years of experience at the Town. She knew her way around the Town and Region. She had strong and professional working relationships inside and outside the Town to get things done," said Sheen. "These strong working relationships could only have served the Town well as we head into transition talks."

Sheen said he also does not agree with the removal of Caledon's Town Clerk and Chief Planner, for similar reasons. He said the outgoing Chief Planner was very good at her job and that it was amazing how much work she and her team were producing while under intense pressure.

Sheen also said the dismissal of Caledon's Solicitor concerns him, especially as Caledon is in the middle of addressing illegal land uses like illegal trucking yards.

Ward 5 Councillor Tony Rosa supports the recent staff changes at Town Hall.

"As we prepare for growth across Caledon, I am confident that the recent streamlining of departments will ensure we are ready to serve our current and future residents," said Rosa.

Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell said change seems to be the fundamental state of local government. He said with a new administration being sworn in last November, change was bound to happen.

"I do lament the loss of some of the people who were let go because they were hard-working, dedicated professionals," said Maskell.

?But I'm not going to judge the new CAO until we see proof? of what his track record is.?

Maskell said as the new CAO's plan unfolds, Council can make judgements on it. Until then, he said Council needs to unite and be focused on the many issues Caledon is facing.

He said, in general, he's not supportive of Strong Mayor powers being used.

?It can be a slippery slope,? said Maskell. ?But I also think that we have to look at it on an issue-by-issue basis.?

Regional Councillor Christina Early declined to comment on the recent streamlining, but has previously told the Citizen she did not support the use of Strong Mayor powers.

Ward 1 Councillor Lynn Kiernan was unable to respond by press time, and has also previously told the Citizen she did not support the use of strong mayor powers.

Mayor Groves and the remainder of Caledon Council did not reply to a request for comment by press time.