

Majority of women lead Caledon Town Council

Written By JOSHUA SANTOS

Five out of nine municipal politicians on Caledon Council are women.

Ward 2 regional coun. Johanna Downey, Ward 3 and 4 regional coun. Jennifer Innis and Ward 5 regional coun. Annette Groves retained their seats while Ward. 1 area coun. Lynn Kiernan and Ward 2 area coun. Christina Early gained position in the fall election.

?If you look at the history of Caledon Town Council, women have been well represented at the table, said coun. Early. I'm proud to see this legacy continue and to represent my constituents on a council that has committed to working together to move Caledon's priorities forward.?

Councils of the past have featured a number of women including Marolyn Morrison, Patti Foley and Barb Shaughnessy.

?I am proud to serve on councils at both town and the region that have great gender balance for its representation. However, this isn't new. Even the last term saw a strong representation of women on Council at both levels,? said coun. Innis.

It's important to have a diversity on council as everyone brings a different perspective but that's not limited to a person's gender. Caledon has recently had two very strong women as head of council. Both of whom led by example and encouraged those who truly care about their community, to serve. ?

With five women, Caledon council better reflects the community's population. The town had a population of 66,502 with 33,235 men and 33,265 women, according to the latest data from Statistics Canada.

?Interestingly there has been a big push to close the gender gap in local government, said? Early. FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) is running an ongoing campaign encouraging young women who are interested in entering politics.?

While it is early days with this council, it appears that we have a very strong group with diverse skill sets who are working collaboratively together to ensure that all residents are well represented, said Early.

In that campaign, dubbed Toward Parity, FCM state they will work with provincial and territorial municipal associations, Equal Voice, the Canadian Women Foundation as well as other organizations at the national, regional and local levels according to their website.

They state consultations and pilot projects throughout the country will help create a national approach addressing barriers to women's participation in the political life of their community.

?The goal of Toward Parity is simple?to work toward equal representation of women in local office, said Vicki-May Hamm, president of FCM. It is a continuation of the more than decade-long partnership between FCM and Status of Women Canada. That partnership has focused on increasing the representation of women serving and engaged in politics, providing leadership in areas of inclusion and gender equality, and developing tools and resources for municipalities.

?Though incredible progress has been made to live in a Canada where more women are being elected and gender parity in public office is a growing movement, more work remains, said Hamm. Whether it is a lack of local information for women on how to get involved, discrimination against persons of colour or other racial biases, or simply a blindness to systemic barriers women face because of their daily realities?there are still challenges to overcome.