

Mayor Marolyn Morrison ? GTCMA?gets briefed on two important Provincial policy reviews

I recently chaired the regular meeting of the Greater Toronto Countryside Mayors Alliance (GTCMA) in Aurora.

This group of 14 dedicated Mayors and CAOs has been meeting four times a year since 2004 to address key issues that impact the long-term economic sustainability of the communities that ring the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). These communities have a significant rural area and our economic base and ability to provide municipal services is affected by a typically smaller urban area and limitations imposed by various provincial policies, plans and legislation.

The Greater Toronto Countryside Mayors Alliance is made up of local municipalities within the four regional municipalities of the GTA; Peel, Halton, York and Durham. The Alliance provides a forum for exploring common interests and informing provincial decision-makers of issues or policies that affect our member municipalities. Over the past nine years, the GTCMA has developed a positive, two-way relationship with all three provincial political parties and we have garnered a reputation for being proactive and positive; always searching for ?win-win? solutions to difficult challenges.

At the GTCMA meeting, we heard two very important presentations. The first, on the status of the Provincial Greenbelt Plan, has a significant impact on our community as nearly 30 per cent of our town is subject to its regulations. Presented by Dr. Wayne Caldwell of the Friends of the Greenbelt, we learned about their upcoming report to the Province which will introduce some much-needed, progressive recommendations for adjustments to the Plan. I am pleased that staff from the Town of Caledon's Economic Development Team provided meaningful input into the work that produced the Friends of the Greenbelt Report and in particular improvements to the Plan that could benefit Caledon's agricultural industry.

The second presentation also had implications for Caledon as we learned about the status of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) review. The GTCMA has had two previous meetings with the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. This talk, delivered by Fred Johnson, presented members of the GTCMA with a comprehensive overview of the ORMCP's work and we heard more than a dozen recommendations which will make this important provincial plan more ?user friendly,? effective and environmentally relevant. While the future of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation itself is in doubt, the review of the Plan will set the stage for the future direction of provincial policy on this very important environmental landmark.

The very fact the GTCMA received advanced briefings about these two important provincial policy reviews is testament to the credibility and collaborative reputation the Alliance has worked so hard to cultivate. The information we received helps inform our decision-making and therefore make better choices about the future of our community

