

Mayor ready to work with Peel transition board following appointments

Team handling dissolution of Peel was appointed on July 5

By Zachary Roman

Caledon's Mayor is ready for the Town to become a single-tier municipality.

On July 5, the Provincial government announced it had appointed the members of the five-person transition board that will be overseeing the dissolution of the Region of Peel. Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga will be independent municipalities as of January 1, 2025.

In a statement sent to the Citizen on July 11, Mayor Annette Groves said she's looking forward to working with the board.

"The Town of Caledon is committed to working productively with the transition board and the Region of Peel to ensure an outcome that is fair for all residents, supports quality services and helps prepare our Town for the growth it will see in the next 30 years," said Groves. "The members appointed to the board have extensive experience in their fields. We look forward to a collaborative review process that ensures success for Caledon as a single-tier municipality."

Regional Councillor Mario Russo said he sees it as a positive that none of the transition board members have any direct ties to Peel municipalities. He said this will ensure the board is fair and unbiased.

Prior to the transition board's appointment, Russo had made a motion asking that the board be put together as soon as possible. He wanted residents and Region of Peel employees to have some certainty as to what the future holds. Russo said all things considered the board was established quickly, but that it's the type of thing that can never happen quick enough.

Russo echoed Groves' desire to work with the board to ensure Caledon is treated fairly in the dissolution of Peel. He also wants to make sure there are no disruptions in service quality for residents.

One of Russo's main concerns is making sure that Caledon is made whole, and he said the Town can do this by always calculating and keeping track of what funding is needed to meet growth targets.

In other transition board-related news, CUPE Ontario, a union that represents around 4,000 workers that deliver public services in Peel, said the lack of union representation on the transition board is a mistake.

According to a media release from CUPE Ontario Communications Representative Shannon Carranco, CUPE Ontario fears the dissolution of Peel will lead to a "drastic reduction in the quality and number of services" to Peel residents.

Fred Hahn, CUPE Ontario president, said the fact that none of the transition board members are from Peel is a downside. He said it means the Province is out of touch with the people of Peel.

"Regardless of this very troubling challenge, CUPE Ontario will work with others to stand with our members who work and live in the Peel Region," said Hahn in the release.

Salil Arya, President of CUPE 966, a union that represents 2,000 Region of Peel employees, said the government has not been transparent enough about how Peel's dissolution will go down.

"We cannot let them steamroll through the vital services people depend on every day, nor union rights and the rights of workers," said Arya.

In the July 5 government media release announcing the appointment of the transition board, Minister of Municipal Affairs Steve Clark said the Ford government is making sure municipalities have the tools they need to prepare for coming growth.

?The five members that have agreed to serve on the transition board bring an impressive range of experience that will help ensure the dissolution process is carried out with minimal disruption for residents and employees,? said Clark.