

Mayor says best to 'avoid speculation' about possibility of amalgamation]

By Zachary Roman

While the possibility of Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga becoming the 'City of Peel' does exist, Caledon's Mayor says it's not time to speculate about that happening.

Back in November 2022, Premier Doug Ford's government announced it would be appointing facilitators to assess the Regions of Peel, Durham, Niagara, Halton, Waterloo, and York. The Ford government said at the time the facilitators would be working with the governments to assess the best mix of responsibilities between upper and lower-tier municipalities.

The Region of Peel is an upper-tier municipality made up of the three lower-tier municipalities of Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga.

After making an announcement in Brampton on February 15, Ford was asked whether he would rule out a 'City of Peel' option.

'This is a conversation that we're going to have with the mayors and the Region, along with our Minister of Municipal Affairs Steve Clark' we'll all sit down collectively and make that decision,' said Ford.

Ford said while Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga have all seen 'tremendous' growth, he's always believed they should remain independent.

The Citizen asked Caledon Mayor Annette Groves what she thought about the possibility of Peel amalgamating into a single-tier municipality like Toronto.

'At this point the Province has only committed to appointing facilitators. That process has not started and there is a great deal that needs to be considered before speculating the outcomes,' said Groves in a written statement. 'My focus will be on gathering information and doing what is best for Caledon.'

The spokesperson for Ontario's Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Melissa Diakoumeas, said in an email to the Citizen that the Ford government is considering how to best extend 'Strong Mayor' tools to Ontario's fastest growing cities.

'We need to ensure that municipalities are properly equipped to deliver on the government's plan to build 1.5 million homes by 2031. That starts with reducing municipal duplication and red tape,' said Diakoumeas. 'To start this work, the government will be appointing provincial facilitators who will work with local governments to identify how we can better support local decision making in high-growth regions across the province.'

In 2019, Caledon's previous Council supported maintaining the Region of Peel and opposed amalgamation. A report completed that year by firm Ernst & Young concluded amalgamation could result in cost increases of up to \$500 million.

Former Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson expressed Council's view at the time as 'why fix what isn't broken.'

In a 2019 Town news release, Thompson said 'my priority has been to represent the interest of Caledon taxpayers, ensure their voice is heard and continue to ensure we deliver the services they need efficiently and effectively.'