

## Mayors of ?small, urban? GTHA communities join calls on Bill 229

Written By BROCK WEIR

Members of the Small Urban GTHA Mayors group, including Mayor Allan Thompson, have joined calls to the Province to remove Section 6 from Bill 229.

On Tuesday, the Urban GTHA Mayors met to discuss a variety of issues affecting communities under their umbrella, including COVID-19, pandemic recovery, and the environment.

Communities represented within this group include the Mayors of Caledon, Aurora, Bradford West Gwillimbury, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Halton Hills, King Township, Newmarket, Orangeville, Scugog, Uxbridge and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

?If passed, the Province will have the ability to issue any permits directly to applicants that could threaten environmentally sensitive protected lands and wetlands,? said the Mayors in a joint statement on December 8. ?Conservation Authorities are in place to assess development applications on a case-by-case basis using scientific measures that will positively impact and protect our naturally sensitive areas.

?We are calling on the Province to immediately remove Section 6 of Bill 229 and instead begin a dialogue and consultation with Heads of Council and Conservation Authorities on issues and concerns impacting our communities across the Province. Open consultation and dialogue between our levels of government have proved to be a valuable exercise to reach our mutually common goals in the past and we believe the contents of Section 6 are significant and require more consultation.

?Moving forward, the Small Urban GTHA Mayors will be meeting on a regular basis to discuss and respond to issues affecting our communities as a collective, including Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19, broadband and the Greenbelt. It is imperative that our voices are heard by all levels of government in order to best serve our residents and protect our communities.?