

Ontario PC Government to review Region of Peel

Written By JOSHUA SANTOS

Premier Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives have announced plans to review eight regional municipalities.

They include Halton, York, Durham, Waterloo, Niagara, Peel, Muskoka District, Oxford County and the County of Simcoe, and their lower-tier municipalities, according to a Government of Ontario news release.

"I don't think it came as a surprise because I know that it was discussed and spoken about that the premier was going to review the regional structure," said Ward 5 Regional Coun. Annette Groves. "As for what it would look like, I don't know. I don't have any information on exactly what it's going to look like."

Steve Clark, minister of municipal affairs and housing has appointed two special advisors, Ken Seiling and Michael Fenn, along with the help of an advisory board to review regional governments and Simcoe County to ensure these municipalities are working effectively and efficiently.

The review will reportedly look at governance, decision making and service delivery of the aforementioned jurisdictions. The Region of Peel is composed of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

"Our government committed to improving the way regional government works and we will be looking at ways to make better use of taxpayers' dollars and make it easier for residents and businesses to access important municipal services," said Clark in a news release.

Groves hopes that during reconstructing discussions, the government considers how things are going to be paid for and that the Region of Peel continues to provide the same level of service.

"We're in a good financial position," said Groves. "It's a well-run, well managed region. That would be my only concern, on how it's going to look and are we going to be more efficient?"

Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie said she was in favour of the review and voiced her desire to see her city leave Peel Region, according to the Brampton Guardian.

Groves said the possibility of Mississauga separating from the Region of Peel has been discussed with the authority no longer existing.

Groves said it's important to look at duplication of services.

"That will come out in the review, whether or not there are duplication and how we can streamline," said Groves. "Getting rid of duplication and finding efficiencies."

Ward 1 Regional Coun. Ian Sinclair said Caledon was and largely remains a countryside municipality while Mississauga and Brampton both embraced becoming urban centres.

"Caledon shares a community of interest with Dufferin municipalities where villages, agriculture and natural environment are the norm," said Sinclair. "Amalgamation of Caledon into a greater Dufferin as an addition to the existing seven lower tier municipalities would be a good fit."

"Almost all residents living in Caledon are there to live and prosper in small, green, clean, safe, friendly communities supportive of

agriculture and cultural and natural heritage. If they wanted to live in big urban, they would be there. No culture shock there.?

He said portions of Caledon now serviced by Peel water and sewer would continue under an intermunicipal servicing agreement.

?New urban growth in Caledon would have to pay its own way and not be subsidized by the economies of scale from Peel water and sewer rates,? said Sinclair. ?Caledon has a large O.P.P. contract, similar to parts of Dufferin while Mississauga and Brampton have Regional Peel Police.?

Any attempt to simplify Dufferin by reducing the number of municipalities would be a mistake as shown by the forced simplification of the City of Kawartha Lakes or Chatham-Kent where costs rose and there was a lack of communities of interest.?

Work of an advisory board began on Dec. 20 2018. Recommendations will be submitted to Clark in Summer 2019.