

Premier indicates separation of Peel Region is coming

By **Zachary Roman**

The Region of Peel might soon be dissolved.

At a May 15 press conference, Ontario Premier Doug Ford said he's "always been for an independent Mississauga."

This came after a reporter asked the Premier if he'd made up his mind about separating Peel Region and having an independent Mississauga.

Ford said Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie has been a great partner in building Mississauga, and that even before he was elected, he'd had conversations with former Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion about an independent Mississauga.

Ford said you can't have a city the size of Mississauga, which has a population of close to 800,000, continue to grow while being tied into other jurisdictions.

Ford said his government would continue to support Mississauga and make sure its citizens get the best government services possible.

Crombie said she was delighted to hear Ford publicly say he's on the way to separating Peel. She said he's fulfilling a promise to McCallion and her, and that it makes sense for Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon to go their separate ways.

Crombie said separating Peel is more cost effective for all parties, and that it would allow her taxpayers to invest money back into their city rather than support growth of other municipalities.

Caledon Mayor Annette Groves responded to this news by saying losing Regional support would have impacts in Caledon.

"Regional government was developed to service municipalities as they grew, and in Peel that work is not yet finished," said Groves. "Caledon is currently experiencing the growth that (the municipalities of) Mississauga and much of Brampton have already experienced and benefited from."

Groves said Caledon is a special and unique municipality, noting its recent ranking as the happiest place in Canada from a study of 30 happiness-related metrics. She said residents often tell her their preference is for Caledon to remain as Caledon and that there's no appetite among residents to lose Caledon's special identity.

Further, Groves said a new governance structure would mean taking on debt and transitional costs.

"Growth in Caledon is in greenfield areas (rural/farmland). We don't have existing infrastructure to build on to, or intensify. We are building new communities from scratch," said Groves. "Support is needed for all growth-related infrastructure like roads and water, and public amenities like schools and emergency services."