

Region will continue studying governance issue

By Bill Rea

Despite recent developments from Mississauga City council, it appears Peel Region is going ahead with its review of local governance.

Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie had announced about two weeks ago it was time for Mississauga to go it alone as a single-tier municipality, without having to deal with the regional component. Mississauga councillors voted to undertake a study to look into the matter.

That ruffled some feathers in other parts of the region.

The Region has been involved in a facilitation process aimed at addressing Regional government, including seat allocation, the method of selecting a Regional Chair, etc. The facilitation is being run by a task force consisting of the three mayors, Regional Chair Frank Dale, the four CAOs and the Regional Clerk.

Dale brought the matter up at the start of last Thursday's Regional council meeting, alluding to what he referred to as a "somewhat interesting news week."

He referred to the announcement of the study that Mississauga wanted to look into, along with the response from the City of Brampton. Mayor Linda Jeffrey had issued a statement in response, commenting that her City had entered the facilitation in good faith, and commented the actions taken by Crombie "appears to be contradictory to the spirit of this facilitation process."

Dale commented that while he respects Mississauga's right to study the issue, he expects the mayors of all three municipalities to continue to take part in good faith in the facilitation process to benefit Peel residents. He added he had spoken to all three mayors and all three had agreed the process will continue.

He also said he had spoken to Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Ted McMeekin, and he will let the process unfold.

"We are moving forward with the process that was agreed upon by this council," Dale declared, adding the ultimate goal is to find the best way to represent Peel residents.

Mississauga Councillor Pat Saito, agreed with Dale's comments, clarifying that it was not the intention of all Mississauga councillors to announce they were pulling out of Peel. She said some simply supported a motion to update studies that were done in the past, adding the media ignored that point.

"I feel very strongly that our future must be a discussion of the task force," she declared, adding Brampton councillors have certain wishes and Mississauga is committed to working with them.

Saito added the media tried to overshadow the real work that's being done.

"We provide excellent service to our constituents," she said, adding there will always be a little parochialism, but everyone is ultimately working for the whole region.

"That is nice to hear," responded Caledon Councillor Barb Shaughnessy.

"We're all here to serve the residents of Peel," Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson added. "Caledon's here to work with everybody to find a fair result."

Brampton Councillor Gael Miles thanked Saito for the clarification, commenting that Brampton councillors didn't know what to make about the intent of the move from Mississauga.

Jeffrey observed there are strong feelings regarding this issue, adding Brampton plans to continue with the facilitation.

"We will continue to sit at the table," she said.