

We should be ?outraged? over Bill 23: Reader

OUR READERS WRITE

As citizens we should be outraged by the undemocratic nature of some of the proposed changes in Bill 23.

It is as if every effort has been made to find and block any avenue a citizen might have to legitimately challenge ill-advised development:

1. The Planning Act will no longer require that the public is notified of proposed development.
2. The public will not have the right to appeal municipal council decisions, only developers may do so.
3. The Ontario government will have the power to override municipal council decisions, change official plans and impose development.
4. The Ontario Land Tribunal will have power to order an unsuccessful party (read citizens) to pay a successful party's (read developer) costs. Previously, costs orders were based on egregious or frivolous behaviour, not on the outcome of a decision.
5. The Ontario Land Tribunal will have expanded power to dismiss an appeal without a hearing.

At no point during the June election were Ontario voters told of these plans to disenfranchise them of a say in how their communities and neighbourhoods are to change, and at no time were they debated.

Now, debate is being curtailed to an extreme extent by the government's intention of rushing through the legislation ? at a time when there is a hiatus at the Municipal level, with existing Councils departing and new Councils only just being sworn in. This is profoundly wrong.

We should all urge the Ford government to find a better way.

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