

Aurora to take another shot at regional reps

By Brock Weir

Previous attempts have fallen on deaf ears, but municipalities such as Aurora and King are expected to take another run on gaining additional representation at the Region of York this week.

Aurora could join the chorus of King Township, East Gwillimbury, and Whitchurch-Stouffville in petitioning Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to enact a regulation that would authorise the Regional Municipality of York to change the size of Regional Council to add one additional member for each of the municipalities.

King got a jump start on this, their Council approving the resolution on May 6, as did the Town of East Gwillimbury. Both their resolutions were sent to Aurora, Whitchurch-Stouffville and the City of Vaughan and will be up for Councillors' consideration at this Tuesday's Council meeting.

Also up for grabs is a notice of motion from Mayor Geoffrey Dawe on the heels of the other two municipalities. Although a notice of motion introduced this week is, according to procedure, due to come back for thorough discussion on May 21, given the other items on the agenda it is likely this will be brought forward for discussion this week.

In his motion, the Mayor too calls upon the Town to request the Minister to authorise the change in size of Regional Council to have one additional member for Aurora in time for the 2014 municipal election.

An additional member would obviously be the goal, says Mayor Dawe. Mayors Hackson (East Gwillimbury), Emerson (Whitchurch-Stouffville), Pellegrini (King) and I all have an issue with if we can't make it to a meeting, our towns are not represented.

This problem, he says, can be addressed in one of two ways: an additional seat at the table or the ability to provide an alternate. Despite his motion, Mayor Dawe says he is on the fence about which option would be more effective.

Whether or not that is best addressed by another member sitting at the Regional Council table or whether or not that is better addressed by allowing us alternates I think is really something for the Ministry of Housing to look at, he says. At the very least, something needs to happen!

That being said, he indicates he is leaning towards the second path.

At this point, there aren't a whole lot of people banging on our doors to put more people in government, he says. For an overall efficiency, I think just having an alternate would be the ideal solution. I just do not manage to get to all the [transit and planning] meetings because there is only so much time in the day. I read all the reports but that's not the same as being there and getting all the presentations and having the discussions.

With several attempts already to increase the number of reps for towns such as Aurora, King and East Gwillimbury, why they think now might be the time to take another shot at it, Mayor Dawe says the squeaky wheel gets the grease.

If we keep going back to the Ministry and say we need changes here, I mean, goodness gracious, the members here in the provincial government are doing it with respect to the elected chair. They keep bringing it back.

Considering the previous motions failed at Regional Council at the hands of other towns, however, it remains unclear whether persistence or unanimity will be the deciding factor at the end of the day.

Certainly when you look at the Northern Six and Georgina has a substantially lower population than we do, but they have two reps I think there is support there, he says. Whether or not there will be support from the southern three, I just don't have the

sense for that.?