

NEWS

Resident says rural area will be 'eaten alive for representation'

10 an existing rural area. My concern is those are two distinct communities of interest with two distinct needs and wants," she said. "A councillor will have to be slightly schizophrenic to represent both, in my opinion. I worry about the representation they would be able to get and the effect it would have on the elected official." Danielli said this option also takes Milton's central business district and divides it in half. On the school board front, she noted it presents issues with workload balance for the trustees due to where schools are located. Former Milton councillor Wendy Schau said the decision to reduce the number of wards and councillors "made no sense."

"I don't think going to four wards serves the community properly," she said, noting that reducing the number of councillors yet increasing the size of the wards will make it more difficult for any fresh voices to get on council.

"It also means that when things are discussed, only eight voices will be heard to represent a town that is the fastest-growing town in Canada," she said.

Schau went on to criticize the process that led to the controversial decision to shrink council's size and the number of wards, noting there was only one public meeting beforehand that she felt wasn't well-publicized. "My question is, is it doable for council to reconsider its decision?" she asked.

Town Clerk Troy McHarg said the matter could be reopened for council to debate once again with a two-thirds majority vote from councillors.

McHarg reminded residents that it's their right to write letters or email their councillors to share their concerns on the matter.

"That's what democracy is all about," he said.

Resident Jennifer Smith expressed her support for the current eight-ward system and the diversity it brings to council. She pointed out that under a four-ward system, councillors would also be dealing with three to four times as many constituents. Preliminary numbers show the average urban ward would contain 30,000 to 40,000 residents, with those numbers increasing to a range of 40,000 to 50,000 by 2022.

Alan Collver of east Milton said he feels the area between Trafalgar Road and Hwy. 407, which is largely farmland and market gardens, hasn't been given any consideration in the review. Each potential configuration has the area included in a ward dominated by an urban section of town. "We're going to be eaten alive for representation," he said. "We won't survive."

In speaking with the *Champion* afterwards, he said he would like to see rural Milton put together in one ward. The boundary review focused on five key principles: equitable representation by population, communities of interest and neighbourhoods, consideration of present and future population trends, consideration of physical features as natural boundaries and effective representation. A report with a recommendation on the ward boundaries is slated to go before council on December 12. Once in place, the hope is that the boundaries will be useable for two municipal elections before they have to be reassessed.

To view the proposed boundaries and maps, visit www.milton.ca/en/townhall/CouncilCompositionReview.asp.

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