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MPP Laurie Scott told Letham that considerable lobbying is going on behind the scenes.

Letham hopes Kawartha Lakes on early re-open list

from Province

Published on June 4, 2020 — in Municipal — by Kirk Winter

Mayor Andy Letham says he is in favour of Ontario opening different regions at a time, depending on their situation with the COVID-19 virus.

Letham said he is fully supportive of the idea of rural re-openings with appropriate public health protocols. The mayor said he hopes that Kawartha Lakes will be included in some of the first regions that are allowed to re-open under Premier Doug Ford's plan unveiled last Friday.

Ford said at a Queen's Park press conference that Ontario will move ahead with a regional approach to re-opening the economy as the pandemic lingers.

In recent weeks Quebec, Manitoba and New York have all rejected a complete provincial re-opening accepting a regional re-opening strategy instead. Quebec is allowing many rural townships to move a little closer to business as usual while maintaining tough public health rules in the Greater Montreal region.

Many feel that is where Ontario will be going beginning in early June by allowing rural areas to slowly re-open while keeping the Greater Toronto Area, with 66 per cent of all provincial COVID-19 cases, under strict public health protocols.

Letham expressed some frustration that since Friday the municipalities have heard very little from the province about this proposal. Local MPP Laurie Scott confirmed to Letham that considerable lobbying is going on behind the scenes at both the cabinet and party level to get the premier to begin the re-opening process sooner than later.

While Letham did couch his support for the regional re-opening idea with an admission

that he is concerned that people from locked-down areas could arrive in Kawartha Lakes he stated that “people can be trusted to make good, safe decisions.”

Business leaders and municipal politicians from North Bay, Parry Sound, Sudbury, Algoma, Kenora, Kingston, Renfrew, Huron-Perth, Prince Edward County and Peterborough have all added their own opinions and many have spoken directly to Ford about getting the restrictions lifted with the all-important summer tourist

season just beginning.

Dr. David Williams, the provincial chief medical officer of health, suggests it is “unlikely a region with a low number of cases would be allowed to open if a neighbouring region like the GTA has a lot.”

If Williams’ advice is considered it might be difficult for any area within an hour or two of the GTA to find itself on the initial list of regions to re-open.

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