

Towns hire consultants, just in case

FROM PAGE 1

inefficiency and duplication, but we know the job is not finished," it states. DiBiase, a long-time Tory supporter, feels the writing is clearly on the wall.

But in an emotional two-hour debate, some councillors vowed to fight any campaign to amalgamate towns, while others said any initiatives must come from local municipalities.

"For those who are looking at amalgamation, there must be something wrong with their municipalities," Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson said.

After looking at the problems associated with the Toronto amalgamation,

King Township Mayor Margaret Black believes Harris won't be keen on forcing other municipal mergers.

"I will strongly, strongly oppose the amalgamation of the Township of King at this level or any other level," Black said.

"I'm going to fight as my ancestors did in 1837 (during the Upper Canada rebellion) to protect what we have there."

Some councillors pointed to a gentleman's agreement reached by regional council 18 months ago not to discuss amalgamations, after three years of bitter and fruitless debate during council's last term.

But Scarpitti suggested they were

being hypocritical, since local councils have recently been hiring consultants and forming positions on amalgamation behind the scenes.

But regional chairperson Bill Fisch argued the stalemate over the past few months can be traced to rumours of provincially forced amalgamation.

Markham Councillor Gord Landon, who supported mergers during the last term of council, has changed his mind. He argued amalgamations in Halifax have left the city bankrupt.

Markham Mayor Don Cousens argued service levels — and costs — increase when municipalities become too large, because competition is eliminated.



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