

MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

Council

DATE: Tuesday, December 12, 2023

TITLE: ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S REVIEW OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

FROM:

Mayor Steven Del Duca

Whereas, a Special Committee of the Whole meeting took place on June 20, 2023, to discuss the Ontario government's expedited and ongoing policy initiatives on the future of regional government; and

Whereas, during the June 2023 Special Committee of the Whole meeting, Vaughan Council unanimously approved a Member's Resolution calling for Vaughan to explore becoming a single-tier municipality and to undertake an analysis required to support further understanding a new governance model; and

Whereas, the above-mentioned Council-approved Member's resolution specifically says that that the City of Vaughan confirms the status quo governance model in York Region should be changed and modernized to reflect the current and future needs of our residents; and

Whereas, on September 13, 2023, the Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister requested the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to assume responsibility for the work initially proposed for facilitators (excluding Peel) to review the future of regional governance in Ontario's fastest-growing regions, like York Region; and

Whereas, Mayor Del Duca immediately wrote to MPP Laurie Scott, Chair, Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy inviting the standing committee to hold meetings in Vaughan, which the Standing Committee has agreed to do; and

Whereas, the Standing Committee has been tasked with addressing the following four key questions:

- Is two-tier government in these regions supporting or hindering the construction of new homes and the provision of effective local governance more generally?
- Are there responsibilities and services that could be combined, amended or moved from one level of local government to another, or combined among existing local governments, to support the construction of new homes and the provision of effective local governance more generally?
- Is the municipal governance structure within each of these regions supporting the construction of new homes and the provision of effective local governance more generally?
- Could any changes to regional governance enhance local services and/or provide better value to taxpayers?

Whereas, consistent with the June 2023 Member's Resolution recommendations, Ernst & Young conducted a financial impact and governance analysis to better explore and understand the potential of Vaughan becoming a single-tier municipality. In November 2023, the findings were presented to Council during a Special (Closed Session) Education Session, and Council voted to receive the report; and

Whereas, Vaughan recognizes that there are critically-important shared services that should continue to be delivered through pooled resources and collaborative decision-making across York Region (e.g. police and paramedic services, public transit etc.); and

Whereas, it is paramount that the critical role Vaughan has in York Region is fully known to all members of the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to inform their work. For example, of all nine lower-tier municipalities in York Region, Vaughan contributes the highest share of property tax revenue (30.87 per cent in 2022) and development charge collection (47 per cent in 2022) to York Region; and

Whereas, achieving critical city-building goals, like building housing, breaking gridlock and strengthening economic development opportunities, remain leading priorities for both Vaughan and Ontario; and

Whereas, in March 2023, Vaughan Council approved achieving the Ontario Government's *More Homes Built Faster, Municipal Housing Pledge* and the City's provincially mandated housing targets to facilitate the construction of 42,000 new homes in Vaughan by 2031; and

Whereas, in October 2023, Prime Minister Trudeau came to Vaughan to announce that the City of Vaughan would receive a historic \$59 million from the Government of Canada's Housing Accelerator Fund to expedite the creation of more than 1,700 new housing units and incentivize thousands of additional homes over the next three years. This is the most significant housing investment in Vaughan's history and marked only the second agreement by an Ontario municipality under the federal government's Housing Accelerator Fund.

It is therefore recommended:

1. THAT in keeping with the June 2023 Council-approved Member's Resolution that Member's resolution specifically says that that the City of Vaughan confirms the status quo governance model in York Region should be changed and modernized to reflect the current and future needs of our residents, Vaughan's Mayor and City Manager (or designate), provide a submission on behalf of the City of Vaughan to a future meeting of the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy; and
2. THAT the City of Vaughan's submission be informed by the critical need for fiscal fairness, and analysis presented in the Ernst & Young financial impact and governance study; and
3. THAT the City of Vaughan's submission be based on the principles of devolving planning, roads and economic development responsibilities from York Region to the City of Vaughan, and streamlining governance to better advance critical city-building issues.

Financial and Staff Resource Impact

N/A

Attachments

N/A