

King supports move to add councillor for Vaughan

By Mark Pavilons

King Township is supporting a move to add another regional councillor representing Vaughan. King councillors supported the move May 4, after receiving a request from York Region. As part of the regional governance review, York opted to change regional council's composition. The move would give Vaughan 5 regional councillors, from its current level of 4. This is the only change being recommended at this time and York wanted King's response and consent as soon as possible. The matter isn't cast in stone, as it requires a triple majority process to pass. If approved by the majority of municipalities and regional councillors, the change would be in effect for the 2022 municipal election. Mayor Steve Pellegrini noted this issue has come up several times during his years on regional council. In the past, he hasn't been an advocate of increasing the size of government. However, he believes it's time to supplement Vaughan's representation. If you follow the representation by population model, this "seems fitting. It's time to support our friends to the south." Councillor Debbie Schaefer said while the size of York regional council is "lean," she doesn't think representation should be based solely on population. There are other factors that come into play when considering political representation. By granting Vaughan's request, it slants regional council in favour of the larger urban centres in York, which gives them greater influence at the council table. She's concerned about this influence by the "urban giants" Vaughan and Markham. Mayor Pellegrini noted there have been three debates at regional council over the mandated review. Canadian politics, he observed, tends to be representation by population. "I believe it's fair," he said, adding the move still requires the triple majority. King has only one representative at York Region, and that's the mayor. There is a "designate" should King's mayor not be able to attend and vote at the region. Councillor Bill Cober is the current designate, and he said this ensures that King always has a vote at the region. King Township is the largest municipality in York in terms of geography, but has the smallest population. The mayor added that hopefully in the future, King will get another representative, too.