



What a Year It Has Been in Caledon!

December 31, 2024

So much more to accomplish in 2025...

For many of us, 2024 was the year that Caledon found itself at a crossroads and took a turn into uncertainty, public mistrust and grave concerns for the future. On March 26, Mayor Annette Groves shocked some, but not all, residents when it became public that she had instructed an outside lawyer to draw up plans to pre-zone 12 parcels of land comprising 5,000 unserved acres of (mainly) prime agricultural land in Caledon's Peel Plain.

In a joint announcement, Mayor Groves and CAO Nathan Hyde used "transformative," "proactive," "groundbreaking and innovative" to describe zoning Caledon's largest single urban expansion ever after only 20 days' notice and one public meeting for 12 zoning bylaws. Poof, enough land to build 35,000 housing units – a build-out population in excess of 100,000 people – zoned virtually overnight against so many provisions of Caledon's and Peel's official plans.

March 26 - the day the campaign for Caledon's future began. This is the day that spurred the formation of Democracy Caledon – this was the "thing" we had feared since February 2023 when Mayor Groves took on Strong Mayor Powers offered by the provincial government. In August 2023 came the unilateral replacement of CAO Carey Herd with Nathan Hyde, former CAO of Erin (who, it must be said, was at the helm, when the Town of Erin was named by four press-freedom advocacy groups, the most secretive municipal government in Canada).

Over the next six months, over 15 senior managers either resigned or were terminated, leaving Caledon's staff woefully short-handed and devoid of critical institutional memory and knowledge.

The Mayor's 2022 election campaign promise that "developers do not plan our community but the people plan our own community and our future" was an empty one. After watching the concerning changes at Town Hall, learning about the massive rezoning at Democracy Caledon's April 2024 public meeting, many residents had had enough!

This signalled that the public was no longer a welcome and valued partner. That Council as a decision-making body was being sidelined with staff having delegated authority over critical

planning matters. That our agricultural heritage of farming the Peel Plain had no future. That protecting our precious natural features as a system of ecological interconnections with our surface and groundwaters was no longer a strategic priority. And that the expectations of families who live here and those who will move here for an affordable place to live and thrive, are dashed.

This is why Democracy Caledon jumped into action this past April and why we haven't stopped since. This is why we are in litigation with the Town of Caledon to have the Ontario Superior Court of Justice quash (cancel) the 12 zoning bylaws. And this is why we have an ambitious fundraising campaign. Our polling shows that a majority of Caledon residents oppose Caledon Council's decision to pre-zone 5,000 of our precious acres and that this decision will be a factor in the next municipal election.

The stakes are too high to do nothing. Caledon's financial future is at stake. Our ability to contribute to the health of the Humber and Credit River watersheds is at stake. Our ability to contribute affordable housing is at stake. And quite frankly, our local democracy is at stake.

Please join us in this campaign. There are many ways you can make a difference:

- Talk to your neighbours and to friends and family around the dinner table
- Wear a "Quash the Caledon Bylaws" lapel button
- Write an opinion letter to the local papers
- Contact Mayor and Council using our convenient QUASH letter campaign and ask them to revoke the bylaws
- Introduce us to your local service clubs and community groups – we'd love to come and speak with your members
- [Make a financial donation](#) today

On behalf of Democracy Caledon, we wish you a Happy New Year and look forward to 2025.

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