



Caledon Residents Take Town of Caledon to Court Over Rezoning that Threaten Farmland, Greenbelt and Ratepayers' Tax Bills

Caledon, Ontario (December 9, 2024) – Democracy Caledon, a residents' group in the town of 80,000 northwest of Toronto, is taking legal action against their Town government over its June 2024 decision to “pre-zone” 5,000 acres of mostly prime agricultural land for 35,000 housing units across 12 new urban development areas.

Democracy Caledon’s legal counsel filed the notice of application in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice on December 5. The Court served the notice on the Town of Caledon on December 6.

Democracy Caledon’s lawyers contend that Caledon Council’s approval of the 12 zoning bylaws does not conform to the Official Plans of Caledon and Peel Region and can be quashed for “illegality” under section 273 of the Municipal Act.

Debbe Crandall, President of Democracy Caledon, noted that “a successful court action by Democracy Caledon would quash, or cancel, the 12 zoning bylaws and thereby take the Town back to the drawing board to do proper planning for phased and managed growth. A phased approach to planning would mean an orderly roll-out of water lines, sewers, roads and other public services, thus better protecting Caledon ratepayers from an as-yet undetermined property tax increase needed to pay for the developers’ wish list.”

Democracy Caledon felt compelled to take this legal action in light of the Mayor’s decision to schedule a Council vote in the last week of June, despite making a public promise to not hold a vote during the summer. Linda Pim, a Democracy Caledon Director, added “the Mayor ignored requests by Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Paul Calandra, the Region of Peel, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and hundreds of Caledon residents to abandon this ‘pre-zoning’ as it is considered premature.”

The Caledon rezonings, if left in place, would generate the largest urban development in Caledon’s history.

The controversial “pre-zoning” on land controlled by many large corporate land developers may have significant long-term implications for Caledon ratepayers’ property tax bills, farmers and the

environment. The “pre-zoning” does an end run around the normal sequence of planning steps, jumping right to rezoning the land before completing all the required earlier steps such as environmental studies, financial assessment and plans for public infrastructure (roads, water lines, sewers, firehalls, parks, etc.)

Recent polling commissioned by Democracy Caledon indicates strong community opposition to Town Council’s bylaws decision, with six out of 10 respondents expressing discontent. Moreover, almost eight out of 10 believe that rezoning these 12 land parcels for urban development without a comprehensive financial forecast of the costs of public infrastructure is irresponsible, and 59% support an independent inquiry into the rezoning situation.

Democracy Caledon, through this legal action, “aims to protect not just the farmland and greenspace, but the well-being and wallets of our community, at the same time as supporting the urgent need for affordable housing in Caledon,” Crandall added. “We also need to protect the democratic process since it was badly eroded by Town Council’s decisions on the 12 zoning bylaws. There was poor public notice of Council meetings, inadequate information provided to residents, unhelpful public information sessions, and an appalling disregard for residents’ concerns.”

Crandall stated that “allowing our Town Council to run roughshod over proper planning for our unique, beautiful and fragile rural/urban community in order to favour land developers sets a dangerous precedent not only for Caledon but for the rest of Ontario.”

Democracy Caledon is hosting a public meeting on Wednesday, December 11 at the Caledon East Community Complex, 6215 Old Church Road, Caledon East, from 7 to 9 pm. The group will share details of the legal challenge and answer questions about Council’s hastily made “pre-zoning” decisions. Democracy Caledon will engage residents in a public campaign to quash the 12 bylaws.

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For additional information and to arrange media interviews, please contact Debbe Crandall at democracyleadon@gmail.com Please provide your phone number for Debbe to call you.

Democracy Caledon is a residents' group based in Caledon, Ontario, that is focused on civic engagement and advocacy for responsible land use planning and environmental protection. The group was formed in response to decisions made by the Town of Caledon Council that they believe compromise the long-term interests of the community, particularly regarding the rezoning of prime agricultural land for development.

Their goals include:

- *Opposing decisions that they see as detrimental to the community's financial health, environmental integrity, and quality of life.*
- *Advocating for transparency, accountability, and democratic participation in local planning processes.*
- *Raising awareness among residents about potential impacts of zoning changes and encouraging public involvement in decision-making.*

Donations to the campaign to quash the bylaws can be made at democracyleadon.org