

provided at the special
Committee of the Whole
meeting - April 16, 2015

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Madame Chair, Mr Mayor, Councillors,

I am here representing not just myself, but almost 900 residents, who, in a two week period, just one and a half years ago, signed the petition asking that the ward boundaries remain unchanged. As you all remember, the motion for change was defeated. Again, a few months later, a similar motion was defeated.

Now we are facing the same thing again. Why? Three minutes is not very long, but please consider the following ...

Firstly ... There is certainly no fiscal reason for a change... there will be no financial advantage.

Secondly ... Certainly, a smaller council may be able to reach decisions more quickly. However, the point of our large council is exactly that ... that all the varied facets of this County can be adequately represented and heard.

Thirdly ... with possibly much larger wards, campaigning and running for office may be impossible for all but a few wealthy retired persons to consider.

Fourthly ... workload. We do not pay our councillors a full-time wage. If you do not have a pension, you have to hold down a job. I know how hard all of you currently work, to get to all the Council meetings and other committees (internal and external). The material you are expected to read and keep up with is monumental. This workload will increase, as there will be fewer of you to cover the same committees, and you will be required to respond to many more residents' issues.

Fifthly ... representation. Under the currently proposed system of two wards, the majority of councillors for a ward could come from one area. For example, all the councillors for the north could come from the northeast (Rossmore, Massassagua or Rednersville), leaving Wellington, Hillier, Consecon and Carrying Place without anyone with a real knowledge of the issues affecting those communities. In the south it may very well be that Athol and North and South Marysburgh may never have another councillor from their area.

Lastly, I would like you to consider historic Prince Edward County, and the place we are making for ourselves as a tourist destination in Ontario. Our history and our historic wards (townships) are integral to this. Do not imagine that these historic features will remain, when you set up a new ward system.

Recently someone said to me, "people are not even really over amalgamation". Mr Mayor, as you pointed out to me with justified pride, you are the first County-born mayor of Prince Edward County. Will it be under your watch that so much of the historic fibre of the County is destroyed for no real purpose?

Kathleen Vowinckel