

Mono Mayor John Creelman seeks support for justice centre designation

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Caseload growth in Orangeville courts suggests merit in the municipality being designated a provincial justice centre.

Dufferin County Coun. John Creelman, who is also Mono's mayor, gave notice of motion when council met July 9 that he will seek its support to lobby Queen's Park officials for the designation.

The province has created so-called Justice Centres at various court locations, including Toronto, Kenora, and London, moving justice out of the traditional courtroom and into a more community-based setting, better engaging community, health, and social services.

As Dufferin County already embraces a holistic approach to the delivery of social services through its HART Hub initiative, a Justice Centre designation would strongly complement those efforts, Creelman said.

In his notice of motion, he said that the Justice Centre model has been enthusiastically supported by the judiciary, including Chief Justice Sharon Nicklas, as indicated by comments in her last Opening of the Courts address.

A new Justice and two new Justices of the Peace were recently assigned to Orangeville in recognition of the court's growing caseload here, he said.

He will ask the county to request that Attorney General Doug Downey designate Orangeville courts and the community as a Justice Centre to complement the work being done at the HART Hub. The designation will also recognize the "rapidly increasing workload and space pressures faced by local courts, the judiciary, as well as supporting services," Creelman said.

Among the local services affected are Legal Aid Ontario, Dufferin Caledon Victim Services, probation services, area John Howard Society branches, Elizabeth Fry Society, Canadian Mental Health Association Peel Dufferin, and OPP court services, the local family responsibility office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Provincial Offence Administration, Crown Law Offices, and Attorney General Support Services.

In addition to Downey, Creelman suggests copies of the motion be sent to Deputy Premier and Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, Chief Justice Nicklas, Judge Anthony Leitch, Judge James Chaffe, Justice of the Peace Samantha Burton and Justice of the Peace Andrea Jones.