

Ontario Trillium Foundation backs down from reducing Grant Review teams

By Sylvia Jones, MPP

Dufferin-Caledon

Earlier this year, I wrote letters to residents of Dufferin-Caledon and wrote in our local papers on my concerns about the proposed changes to Grant Review Teams (GRTs) at the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF).

GRT volunteer members are responsible for working with local organizations as they application process for Trillium grants and are essential to ensuring that the OTF understands the needs of a local community. The OTF was proposing to reduce the number of GRTs in the province from 16 to 5. I was concerned that reducing the number of GRTs would mean fewer local voices and less local knowledge, thereby hurting the ability of organizations to receive the grants they need.

When communities are given the right amount of support, they benefit from Trillium grants.

Most recently in Dufferin-Caledon, Theatre Orangeville, Dufferin-County Cultural Resource Centre (DCCRC), Caledon Meals on Wheels, and the Caledon Agricultural Society received grants. My concern is that organizations like these will not be heard at the GRT levels if their representation is diluted.

I received many responses from residents who shared my concerns and wanted to ensure that their community's voice was maintained at the OTF. In addition, Mono and the County of Dufferin wrote a letter to the OTF and the Town of Shelburne and Mulmur Township passed resolutions opposing the changes to the OTF.

That is why I wrote on June 30 to the CEO of the OTF and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport calling on them to scrap the plan to reduce the number of GRTs. I am pleased to report that the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the OTF listened to the concerns of the community and have scrapped their plan.

This is a great example of what can happen when a community makes their voice heard on an important issue.

If you have questions regarding the OTF or other provincial issues, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 1-800-265-1603, sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org or visit my website at www.sylviajonesmpp.ca