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Mayor McGarvey Rejects Strong Mayor Powers

Media Release

April 15, 2025

Parry Sound, ON – The Town of Parry Sound Council has formally expressed its opposition to the application of new “strong mayor” powers, following the Province of Ontario’s decision to extend these powers to 169 additional municipalities effective May 1, 2025. At its April 15 meeting, Council passed a resolution — introduced by Mayor Jamie McGarvey — unanimously opposing the application of the powers in Parry Sound and requesting that the Province allow municipalities the option to decline them.

While the Province has indicated that the new authorities are intended to fast-track housing and infrastructure development, Mayor McGarvey and Council have voiced concerns that the powers are not appropriate for Parry Sound.

The resolution references findings by the Association of Municipal Clerks & Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), which state that there is no clear evidence the powers lead to increased housing starts. It also raises concerns about the blurring of political and administrative roles and the potential politicization of municipal leadership.

“As Mayor, I value a collaborative and a council-driven approach to decision-making,” said Mayor McGarvey. “We respect the Province’s intent, but these powers are an erosion of democracy and not a fit for how our community governs itself.”

The Town’s resolution and accompanying letter will be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Rob Flack, Premier Doug Ford, MPP Graydon Smith, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and municipalities across Ontario. The Town is requesting that the Province either repeal the legislation or provide an option for municipalities to formally decline the powers.

The Province’s proposal is currently open for public feedback on the Ontario Regulatory Registry until April 16, 2025 at: <https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=50013&language=en>

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