

# Ron Starr announces candidacy for regional chair

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Mississauga Coun. Ron Starr is running for regional chair in the upcoming municipal election.

"After a great deal of thought and more importantly, consultation.. I've reflected and I think it's time for a change in Ward 6 and so therefore I have decided to run for the Region of Peel as chair," he said.

Starr made it official at the March 28 city council meeting, nearly three weeks after current chair Frank Dale announced he would be retiring when his term of office ends.

"My heart is into it and I'm ready to go. Changes are in the winds," he noted. Starr is the first candidate to announce he will be running for the position, which will be elected for the first time in history.

Queen's Park enacted legislation in November 2016 mandating the chairs of Peel, York and Niagara be elected by the voters. While the regional chairs of Halton, Durham and Waterloo are already elected positions, those in Peel, York and Niagara have always been appointed by local councillors.

Municipal Affairs Minister Bill Mauro said the change would "strengthen local governments and enhance their ability to serve the residents of their communities."

"The way our nomination for chair went last time, it wasn't right," Starr admitted in an interview. Dale was able to cast the tiebreaking vote over rival John Sanderson to become regional chair, which came with a salary of \$184,898.

"That's an old system. Why give 24 people the right to vote somebody in for a population of 1.3 million?" noted Starr, vowing to bring greater legitimacy to the position.

Starr made his debut in



Rob Beinerna/Metroland Media  
Ron Starr has announced he will be running for regional chair in the 2018 municipal election.

municipal politics in 1978, when he was elected to represent Ward 7. He was defeated by Dave Cook in the 1980 election. Cook is now interim councillor for Ward 1.

Following his defeat, Starr founded Deanlee Management Inc., a family-owned building development and consulting firm, serving as president for 30 years.

He returned to council in 2010 as representative for Ward 6, defeating veteran councillor Carolyn Parrish.

During his time on and off council, Starr has served on over 70 boards and committees, including public works, audit, the Mississauga Board of Trade, Urban Development Institute, Sheridan College advisory board, the Municipal Electrical Association, the Art Gallery of Mississauga and more.

"I've been involved in a lot of committees, whether it's here (City of Mississauga) or the electric boards, or at the region. I can read a financial statement and tell you what's wrong with your business. That comes as part of being a business person and I think it's a skill that will be very helpful in being chair."

Starr said his top priority will be to increase awareness about the issues and priorities of the Region of Peel.

"Not a lot of people know what we do up there," he said. "That would be one of my goals, is to broaden the knowledge base of what the Region of Peel does in concert with the various municipalities - the two cities and the Town of Caledon."

Starr also said he plans to take a close look at overlapping services and redundancies at the region, which he hopes will reduce the burden on the property tax base.

"On behalf of all of us, best wishes and congratulations on your announcement," said Mayor Bonnie Crombie.

Campaigning for the position of regional chair will be a daunting task, as candidates will be required to canvass in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. The campaign period officially begins May 1 and is estimated to cost \$1 million for those looking to run for chair.

"I'm ready to go," he said enthusiastically. "And I don't intend to lose."

The municipal election will take place on October 22, 2018.