

## Delegation Speech October 11, 2018 – Mr. William Dawson

On behalf of concerned citizen group, I would like to thank Council for its response letter regarding the land acquisition and mortgage of 4 – 10 Willow Avenue. It is good to know that all current Councillors have listened to the Ministers request and have received legislative training. It should be mandatory that every elected official receive training regarding their responsibilities on the *Municipalities Act* prior to taking a seat on Council. Unfortunately, the letter does not address specific issue as to why there was training required in the first place. If someone spent \$425,000 on a business without the proper authority to do so, they would likely get charged possibly with embezzlement or the minimum get fired. Council can blame Municipal Affairs Officials with providing them with bad advice when it came to purchase the property. However, we did not elect people from Municipal Affairs to protect the interest of our community.

Council's letter stated that they could not rescind the motion because the action was completed last December. Council can indeed rescind motions and would not change the fact that the property transaction occurred, it would however, tell us as residents that you understand the training you took and the mistakes you made. Leaving those motions on the books may protect you from being sued by the vendor however does not protect you from being sued as individuals by the voters. Council cannot even rent the property without the Minister's approval and the Minister cannot give approval because he did not give required approval to buy the property in the first place. So, who owns the land? You may have a legal document that says the Town owns the land but how can it when the people who bought it didn't have the signature of the one person who mattered the most, their boss, the Minister. So, to us, it looks like 6 individuals used public funds to buy themselves some land. It was probably not what you thought you were doing, but it maybe is what you did. And to make matters worse, none of you now are at arms length when it comes to making any decisions when it comes to that property. You all have a personal vested interest and can be considered in conflict. Either way you turn, by having acted outside your legislative authority, you have created for yourselves, a very unfortunate situation.

Council should not be in a rush to bring anyone new onto Council or even into its employment until this very serious matter is cleaned up in full. It has taken the hard work of many Councillors over the past 15-20 years, in our community to put us in a healthy financial situation that we have been in. Possibly too healthy. Residents have been paying too much in taxes for far too long. But this Council just held the status quo. By the end of your term, our community will have the lowest debt servicing ratio probably in the history of the town and that was before you unnecessarily raised the taxes even higher. You have all known for months that training was required because you didn't follow the Act. That was 4 times longer than it took for you to buy the property in the first place.

We as voters and taxpayers now want that money back and the more money the 6 of you spend on your property, the more money we will want back. \$425,000 is too much money for us to ignore and besides, what kind of community would we be if we allowed our Councillors to operate outside of their own Act. The possibility that Council is still considering throwing good money after bad into a misguided balance scheme forces us as voters to nip this before it becomes our own little boon...

Mayor Donna Thistle tells Mr. Dawson he is now 2 minutes over his time and offers to give him another minute.

Bill Dawson Replies: Thank-you, and why isn't government stepping in? The same Government Dept. that led you to believe that it was a good decision to buy the property is the same Government Dept. that is suggesting to us that the best way for us to get our money back is to take legal action. And why is that? Because it's a mess. It is nothing more for us as residents to do their dirty work and to make an example of you 6 which would then send a message to all Councillors in the Province regarding the importance of their duties as Councillors. There are some within the group that would like to see more today. As a collective group, we recognize that you are our fellow citizens. Residents we voted for, volunteers we prefer not to hold personally or individually responsible for \$425,000. This is your chance to rectify this mistake. This is what makes this community great.

If you still like to own the property, pay the money back to the community, keep the property and don't develop the land until you are off Council. If you don't want to own the property, then sell the property and put the money back. There may be conflict of interest issues to be addressed, you will have to deal with that. If you still thinking about developing the property, well we are here to tell you, that we will be getting a judge to put that money back and get what behind this deal. You have known long enough, and we have been waiting long enough. We trust you have an action plan requested prepared for tonight and we would like to thank you for this opportunity to address Council.