

Clarification regarding cancellation of curbside garbage pick up in Hastings Highlands

To the Editor,

I just returned from a trip home to the 'big city' and was somewhat amazed by a letter to your newspaper from Mrs. Lorraine Fell, the recently defeated councillor from Herschel Ward, concerning Hastings Highlands' council's decision to terminate garbage pick-up throughout the municipality.

It was a real tear jerker of a letter and caused me to reflect back to when the decision was made. My recollection of the events leading up to this decision would suggest that council put out tenders and received no response and at its final business meeting, before the new Council took over, voted to terminate garbage collection throughout the municipality.

My sympathies for Mrs. Fell and her concerns for garbage pick-up are significantly reduced when I read the minutes of that final meeting and find the motion to terminate garbage pick-up in Hastings Highlands was moved by the outgoing councillor from Herschel Ward and only Lorraine Fell.

The Lorraine Fell Motion, 550-2014, seconded by then councilor Frank Hickey reads as follows: 'That Council approve curb side pick-up will cease Dec. 31, 2014 at the end of the present contract due to the fact that we did not receive any response to our request for proposal and other options were considered as too costly.' The motion went on to suggest ways to improve schedules for open landfill sites and the necessary changes in staffing needs as a result of the decision.

Now, there are a few other observations one can make throughout Mrs. Fell's letter. She has attempted to denigrate our Mayor, Vivian Bloom, suggesting that her choice of holiday time prevents seasonal residents from attending a meeting with the former garbage collector with a view to making changes. If this has been such a pressing problem for Mrs. Fell, she should have lobbied Council sooner. We've been without garbage pick-up since Jan. 1.

Many seasonal residents never had garbage pick-up as the contractor did not venture in to some dead end roads for lack of turning space. Nothing has changed for these folks except they no longer pay their garbage tax to subsidize the rest of the residents. Others showed little or no concern for their neighbourhood as they would place their garbage at the end of their driveway Sunday evening when they left after weekend visits in hopes it would be picked up on Wednesday. Results of these actions were evident for days afterward as the bears and raccoons did intensive inventories of the parcels left at the roadside.

When exaggeration is employed to make a point, it suggests a weakness in the argument. Mrs. Fell as figured it all out and the result of the cancellation of garbage pick-up has replaced one truck with 3,500 cars and smaller trucks all seeking to find dump sites. The point she is trying to make is clear but she should remember those seasonal residents who can't make the meeting in September are not driving back on dump day to deposit their garbage. It's interesting that we have 3,500 cars going to the dump every week and there are only approximately 4,100 voters in Hastings Highlands., a large number of whom are seasonal residents.

The final little jab at the Mayor involved the idea that the Mayor should be seeking a resolution to the Garbage problem. The Mayor is a member of Council and has but one vote. It is the right and privilege of any or of all councillors to investigate and or initiate solutions to perceived problems. As the mover of the motion that created the problem, she has some nerve to suggest Mayor Bloom should be attempting to change anything to do with the result. Find a good book Mrs. Fell and let the elected Council do its job. Your verbal assaults on Mayor Bloom are totally uncalled for and reflect negatively on your motives.

Robt. McPherson

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