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Front row seats at council

I had front row seats at Caledon council Oct. 18, 2016.

I sat in chambers and listened with great interest to a presentation made by Montieth Brown (hired consultant) relative to a Mayfield West Community Centre Update. This presentation was in turn followed by submission of Staff Report 2016-112. I would like to quote a summation paragraph from this report.

?To summarize, the proximity of this site to the Town's largest pool makes this location both operationally and financially challenging. The site for Phase 1 is significantly smaller, creating limitations to the size of pool that could be built at this location. The population of Mayfield West is presently estimated to be one-third of what would be considered the minimum threshold to support an indoor aquatics facility. Given the present capacity of the Mayfield and surrounding pools and the significant capital costs and operating expenditures of this amenity, a new indoor aquatics centre with a larger design template can be rationalized once the Town of Caledon reaches 100,000 residents.?

These sentiments plus many more valid reasons for recommending against an aquatic facility at this point in time were also reflective of those expressed in the Montieth Brown report. As a matter of fact I was so pleased to see a council member make a point of thanking Montieth Brown for such a comprehensive, honest report.

These reports had hardly been tabled when Councillor Johanna Downey, in total disregard to the afore mentioned reports, presented a motion to send the issue back to staff, requesting them to come up with two different design scenarios ? Design A (without an aquatics facility) and Design B (with a pool). Obviously this created much discussion, but at the end of the day the motion passed.

Advance to Dec. 13, 2016. Staff and Montieth Brown presented their respective reports, as requested, containing details for a Design A and Design B. At the end of the day, neither submission changed their conclusions from Oct., 18. As has been outlined in numerous other submissions about the same topic, the reasons for not recommending an aquatic facility are many and could be considered quite complex.

Advance to Dec. 20, 2016. Downey amended the staff recommendation to add a pool, again with total disregard for the second set of reports reaffirming the original opinions of consultant and staff. The consultant's fees to date are greater than $88,000 without staff time included. Why do we hire consultants at huge costs if our councillors don't listen to them.

Keeping in mind there were two councillors absent at this particular session. After a long, very heated debate, the motion passed.

I must commend Councillor Gord McClure. Despite some questionable lobbying/intimidation tactics done to him, he supported the deferral motion so the vote could be held at a future meeting with full council in attendance. Under the circumstances how could a motion for deferral not be considered appropriate? Well it wasn't and therefore was defeated.

Downey's motion and its support were pre-orchestrated and opportunistic in nature. For any councillor to publically state that this recreational facility will ultimately serve a community of 30,000 plus the surrounding area communities like Cheltenham, Terra Cotta or Inglewood just goes to show how quickly elected politicians get out of touch with their constituents. This pool will support Southfields and those living in the north end of Brampton.

After being provided with all the information included in all the reports, the overwhelming recommendation to not include an aquatic facility should be just plain old common sense. I hate to think that campaigning for the 2018 Municipal Election has already begun.

In conclusion I can only hope that as a result of this unsubstantiated decision by council, that more members of the general electorate become involved in municipal politics and hold our politicians accountable for their actions. As can be deduced from the above incident, at the moment they consider themselves accountable to a small minority regardless of the long term effects their decisions have on the majority!

After all it is our money they are spending.

John Rutter,

Terra Cotta