

A Friendly Reminder

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Just in case anyone is wondering, I am NOT an employee of the Town of Caledon, nor the Region of Peel. I will not receive any special favours *nudge, nudge, wink, wink, for the public service announcement I am about to make. You might even wonder why I'm going to say ?it? at all, but as with so many other times when I pound away at the keyboard in frustration, I feel the need to vent and sharing with you, dear reader, is how I prevent heart attacks - specifically mine.

What is ?it?? What is my friendly reminder this week? It's the rather novel idea that IF you have a problem with the Town, call the Town. If you have a problem with the Town, email the Town. If you have a complaint, a compliment, even a suggested compromise - call, or email the Town; or if it's a really, really big deal, delegate to Council. You know what you should NOT do? Post your complaint/comment on Facebook. Nor should you post on social media the following question: ?Who do I complain to about (fill in the blank)? I mean first of all, obviously you have a computer or some type of device that is wifi enabled and allows you to access Facebook so presumably that means you also have the ability to Google from whom and how to get help in the first place. Whether your issue is snow removal or an unkempt front lawn, excessive garbage in the local park or you are concerned about your taxes, I'm pretty certain if you sat down and reasoned it out, you'd realize that it's very likely the Town that can help you sort out your concerns, not your neighbours on Facebook. I'm equally certain that if you thought to yourself, ?I wonder if the Town can help?? but you weren't sure who was the best person or department to call, the people who answer the phone at the town would in fact, help direct your call appropriately. In other words ? yup, you got it - CALL or EMAIL the Town.

What set me down this path? Yet another series of exchanges where folks are complaining about snow removal. Sometimes the threads become so long, with so many people chiming in that things start to get nasty. Councillors' names get thrown about, insults included, yet I can count on one hand the number of times someone will actually take the time and trouble to find, and post, a link to the correct Town department to handle the complaint. To those people I say thank you! Occasionally, I will also see people ?tag? their local Councillor (and, full disclosure, I have done this myself) so that they are at least aware of what's happening in the community, but it should always be followed up with a reminder that calling or emailing is far more productive than complaining on social media.

Things aren't always perfect. I get it. Are you? Neither am I. So, if the snow didn't quite get plowed properly in your community there are any number of reasons why that might be the case but problems are only solved when we know there is a problem in the first place. By far the most efficient way of notifying the Town about a concern is to actually notify the Town because ? friendly reminder ? unlike me, they are not constantly checking and re-checking their social media accounts! As well, calling or emailing ensures a record of the request now exists and any response (or lack of) can be tracked accordingly.

By all means, use social media as a tool to help your neighbours become aware of bigger issues that will impact your community. Tag Councillors as a means of calling their attention to concerns but not to expect a comment or actual results. Share information as a valuable tool toward education and bringing attention to matters of larger concern ? like the fiasco of a proposal suggesting a Tim Hortons drive-thru in Caledon East. This is a great example of using social media to heighten awareness of the need for neighbours to mobilize, band together and delegate to Council. Simply kvetching about your neighbours - not so much.

I'll end with these important contact points so you can clip from here down, rather than cutting out this whole column (even though it's chock full of sage advice.) If you need help, here's how to find it:

Town of Caledon - ?Caledon.ca?

ByLaw - ?Caledon.ca? then follow the prompts to ?Report a Problem? Whether it's a pothole, litter or a broken streetlight?. Just click on the ?Report a Problem? button and you can immediately fill out a service request.

If you are concerned your neighbour is not following Town standards, you can send a complaint to Regulatory Services by email or by phone. These links are also enabled to take you straight to a page to complete your request.

#311 - If you wish to remain anonymous while complaining or complimenting, simply pick up the phone and call #311. Or call 905-584-2272 and ask for your call to be directed. By the way, help is now available in a variety of languages too!

If you are looking for your Ward Councilors, just go to the Town's website and follow the connections ?til you see their pictures! All their contact information is clearly listed underneath. <https://www.caledon.ca/en/government/mayor-and-council.aspx>

There are numerous ?click here? and email links throughout the Town of Caledon website enabling fast, simple connections to the people or departments you need. If you can navigate Facebook, you can navigate the Town of Caledon's website for information! Now if only we could make it even easier. Town Council, if you can get a good enough price per unit, have those fridge magnets made by ward - with the added bonus of including the email of the Town Councillor.