

Asking for a friend?..

by SHERALYN ROMAN

To say there was a lot of news to absorb last week would be an understatement. Caledon residents have been bombarded with announcements, appointments, press releases and, the ongoing release of some information (related to campaign finances) that quite possibly some folks would rather wasn't part of the public record. By no means am I suggesting that any of the news I've been reading is 'fishy' but I am definitely curious about the coincidences in timing. I'm asking for a friend, is there anything here we need to be concerned about Caledon.

The announcement of a new CAO seems to have taken just about everyone by surprise, including some of our area councillors. While no one is casting aspersions on the qualifications of Nathan Hyde, apparently attending both Harvard and Cambridge University comprises just one small part of his resume, but the timing of his appointment has not landed without some controversy. Is it good planning on the part of Mayor Groves who recognizes Caledon's plans for growth and therefore sought out a candidate who has experience pushing through large development projects in the adjacent county of Erin by 'developing a plan for the community to double its urban population'? Or, as has been alleged, was this appointment an abuse of the so-called strong mayor powers, used to oust one CAO and bring in another without any council consultation?

As well, as we inexorably creep toward a mega-quarry taking up space in Alton, potentially devastating the water supply to homes, businesses and our beloved Forks of the Credit, is the appointment of Mr. Hyde, who 'currently serves as the provincially-appointed Chair of the CTC Source Protection Committee, responsible for protecting drinking water sources across the GTA, including the Town of Caledon,' a brilliant ploy to derail the efforts of the company who hopes to build said quarry, or merely window-dressing? The committee, by the way, was formed to guide the development of the source protection plan which came into effect in March of 2022 and is meant to address 'all new threat activities' by bringing them 'into compliance with SPP policies.' I'm asking for a friend whether anyone thinks Nestle removing drinking water from Erin was a 'new threat' to their drinking water supply?

Speaking of water, and appointments, there's a new voice at the Niagara Escarpment Commission table too. Lynn Kiernan, who represents Ward One, currently ground zero for two water-impacting related projects, is now a member of the NEC. With the aforementioned mega-quarry potentially bearing down on Alton, the Cataract and Forks of the Credit, along with a large housing development project now seemingly approved for Belfountain, environmental concerns - particularly water-related concerns - are coming to a head for the Councillor. Timing is everything, 'they' say. Let's hope the timing of this particular appointment is related to continued efforts to curb excessive depletion of a natural resource rather than one which sets up Councillor Kiernan to be the 'face' of local inclusion at the provincial level without any real impact on the decision-making process of these projects. Yet another example of window dressing? One hopes not.

There have been other announcements too but you get the idea. In and of themselves they aren't necessarily 'fishy,' but they are incredibly well-timed and that's what's got me wondering - is there anything to see here or is this just really smart, proactive planning to address the future needs of our growing community? I'm asking for a friend.