

Saga continues over ruling against Shaughnessy

By Bill Rea

Councillor Barb Shaughnessy has her supporters in the community, but her husband Tim Forster took up the cudgels for her Tuesday night.

He made a final pitch to Town councillors not to ratify the acceptance of a report from John Fleming, integrity commissioner for the Town of Caledon. He had issued a report last month, in which he stated Shaughnessy had breached Code of Conduct rules. The report had been accepted by the General Committee of council.

Complaints had been launched by Councillors Johanna Downey and Jennifer Innis, as well as CAO Mike Galloway.

Galloway had alleged Shaughnessy had repeatedly portrayed staff in a negative manner, requested confidential information that was not appropriate for her to have and had undermined staff, using her position to try to influence staff.

In his address to council Tuesday night, Forster said his wife had a number of supporters in the community who wanted to attend, but they had asked them not to.

"This Integrity Report has actually become a negative news story for all of council," he observed. "At the last session, councillors were falling all over themselves, taking some responsibility for council's dysfunctionality, but most voted to support the report."

He also pointed out that Councillor Gord McClure had commented at the April session that the report was an embarrassment, and should go in the garbage. Forster said those comments "crystallized public sentiment in the room that night."

Shaughnessy declared a pecuniary interest while her husband was speaking and while council dealt with the minutes of the April meeting, and left the council chambers. She had done the same thing while the issue was being discussed in April. But Forster pointed out Downey and Innis stayed in their seats. "They were, and still remain tonight, accuser, judge and jury," he said.

Forster also stated there was no clear violation of the code of Conduct on the part of his wife.

"There are no references to Councillor Shaughnessy's alleged poor behaviour in council or at events, ill treatment of employees in any form and no reference to any intimidation or threats against staff in any of the original complaints," he declared.

He added his wife should have been given the opportunity to respond to the report before it was issued, and her responses should have been incorporated in it. He also said there were no affidavits, reports or supporting emails to back up the conclusion that Shaughnessy showed disrespect to staff.

"We did not participate in any of the investigation," he told Councillor Annette Groves.

"These accusations would never hold up in court," he said.

"Councillor Shaughnessy will continue to serve the residents of Caledon in an open, transparent and straight forward manner," he concluded.

In dealing with the minutes, Groves repeated her concerns over the report.

"I don't think this was a fair report," she remarked, reiterating that Shaughnessy didn't get a chance to respond to it prior to it's being released.