

Sparks still fly over closing doors at Town Hall

By Bill Rea

Caledon OPP Inspector Ryan Carothers has asserted he alone was behind his decision to address Caledon Council last week on security issues at Town Hall, but even that resulted in more harsh words Tuesday.

The detachment commander sent a letter to Council, which was part of the General Committee agenda package, regarding provisions for locking a door within Town Hall.

The door separating the entrance area and cafeteria at Town Hall from the Emil Kolb Atrium, which leads to the rest of the building, including various departments, the Town Council Chambers and the Mayor's Office, was closed and locked earlier this year. The door had been closed as part of the new Service Caledon initiative, which was aimed at having people greeted at the front counter just inside the main entrance to find out where they were heading and to help steer them in the right direction. Town staff had been adamant that the intention was never to restrict access to the building, although there had been concerns raised by the public, and they were articulated by some councillors.

Carothers appeared before Council last week, voicing his support for the move, considering it an enhancement to the 'security of the facility.' He also said he had expressed his concerns to Mayor Allan Thompson when he later noticed that the move had apparently been rescinded and the door was open.

'I was thrilled when I had to use a pass to get into the Atrium, and within a two-week period, while attending different meetings at Town Hall, I noticed the doors opened on one occasion and closed on the other,' he stated in his letter.

There had been questions raised last week about why Carothers made his delegation, including suggestions (made after he had left the meeting) that someone had put him up to it.

'I know he didn't show up here on his own volition,' Councillor Barb Shaughnessy declared later in the meeting, commenting she had been told Thompson was behind it, something which the Mayor denied.

'The reason I initiated and asked for delegation was purely to pose further questions regarding security to all Council members to consider prior to Council making a final decision on same,' Carothers wrote.

Thompson was still upset that the suggestions had been made, and was concerned that questions had been raised about Carothers' integrity.

'I'm going to tell you that man is a ton of integrity,' he declared, adding Carothers was owed an apology.

Councillor Annette Groves denied questioning Carothers' integrity, commenting she had worked on a number of issues with him.

'I have absolutely no questions when it comes to his integrity,' she declared.

Shaughnessy said she had listened to the tape of the meeting, and she didn't think there was any intent to question his integrity. She didn't think any councillor said anything that could be interpreted that way, and added there were just some questions that had been raised by members of the public that were being passed on, and some of them dealt with the reason behind Carothers' delegation.

But Councillor Jennifer Innis said she had heard things differently, citing that Groves had suggested Carothers had not appeared of his own volition, while Shaughnessy said he had been used as a tool.

She also charged that two members of council had called into question the integrity of both Carothers and the Mayor.

Groves maintained she didn't owe any apologies, stating it's her job to bring people's issues and concerns to the table.

'This is called politics,' she declared. 'This is called respecting your constituents.'

'It is our job to bring concerns to the table,' she added, stating her integrity has been questioned by members of council and she's never received an apology.

'This issue shouldn't have been brought up again,' Shaughnessy lamented, repeating she had heard concerns from residents.

'Am I to ignore my residents, or am I to work on their behalf?' she asked.