

Things that make me say ?hmmnnn??

by SHERALYN ROMAN

I have a friend (shout out to Angela) who often starts sentences with the above statement. It seems appropriate to borrow this phrase today, as there is such a long list of things that make me question not only what's going on in this world, but more specifically what's happening locally. One wonders where even to start, and whether perhaps, you too share some of these same concerns. To keep this column short, I'll just focus on a few of the local things that have me saying, ?hmmnnn.?

It seems the ongoing saga of staffing at Town Hall continues. Two more senior staffers, both of whom to varying degrees, possessed what might commonly be referred to as one Councillor noted, ?significant institutional knowledge and expertise,? are no longer with the Town. We're not sure if this is the start of another mass exodus, but it is concerning, given what happened last year and particularly in light of our ongoing traffic and trucking woes. Why? Because these two individuals each played an integral role in helping to address them. One attended all the recent meetings with residents to listen to, and address, issues like traffic calming, increased heavy truck traffic and pedestrian crosswalk concerns (amongst many others) and was responsible for Caledon's Multi-Modal Transportation Master Plan (MMTMP). The other significantly, had delegated on behalf of Caledon, at the provincial level, specifically addressing the ever-worsening issue of illegal truck yards, asking how we might be empowered by the province to enforce meaningful action against said yards. Kudos lobbed at this individual include calling her ?a great source of information and crucial asset to the Illegal Land Use Task Force,? and a dedicated employee ?who stood up for us.? I can't help but see their departures as a significant loss for the Town.

Things that had me saying ?hmmnnn? yet again, and still on the topic of these same two employees, was the sharing of this information on social media. It's always a delicate dance between the right to freedom of information and ?how soon is too soon? to post on a public platform. Certainly access to news that residents might (or should) be concerned about is important, and empowers the community to ask the kind of questions that attempt to hold the Mayor, CAO and the Town accountable for their actions, but if, or when, should that information be shared?

This question sent me down a rabbit hole on the powerful role of social media in society today and how we each play a role in policing content. Are we sharing something for the greater good? Is what we are sharing factual, harmful, good news or bad news and who might be impacted by what we share? In this particular circumstance, I found myself wondering, with the social media post appearing to have occurred very soon after the actual departure of said employees, had they even had a chance to notify those closest to them?

While pondering these thoughts (and still down the rabbit hole) I came across a recent posting from Peel Regional Police, specifically addressing this hot button topic. In it, they ask people to stop posting everything they see and record on their phones. Posted on January 8, the media release addresses more than one recent tragic event where people recorded, then posted, directly to social media. The officer in the video is quoted: ?While it might be your right to do so ? it is inappropriate, repugnant and extremely disrespectful.? While I am not suggesting posting Town news is on par with posting graphic videos involving violence, injury or worse, each, as the force also referenced, ?can be some of the most vulnerable moments of a person's life. Posting online exposes family, friends and loved ones to these devastating moments.? Especially in this latter example, am I wrong to think we shouldn't even have to tell people not to do this?

What more can be said about traffic that hasn't already been said? Hmmnnn, I don't know ? how about addressing what feels like the deafening silence of our MPP Sylvia Jones? Sure, traffic and trucking and illegal truck yards are not your specific responsibility Minister Jones, but my goodness, your constituents here in Dufferin-Caledon, who are impacted by them most definitely are! There may have been that one small meeting between several local residents back in early December, but this issue has galvanized thousands of residents, caught the attention of other MPPs who presented to the legislature on our behalf, involves the trucking industry and its various representative member organizations, and the Minister of Transportation! If I understand correctly there might also have been some other support taking place quietly behind the scenes and that's both necessary and welcome, but I

honestly feel a little more ?visible by us residents' support? would be most welcome by many.

Finally, back to the Town. Just a couple of additional questions come to mind that also have me, once again, saying ?hmmnnn.? An online story recently quoted our Mayor as she shared her top five priorities for 2025. These include ?more programs and services, (such as) winter programs like outdoor skating.? Excluding Palgrave that is, although that was not specifically stated. Also on her list? Addressing the truck and traffic situation which of course is a good thing. However, while we should be happy that the Mayor has included the infamously dangerous Highway 10 corridor as a priority area needing attention, we couldn't help but note her proposed list of fixes is virtually identical to the list first posited by an earlier iteration of Council in 2022, and addressed previously in correspondence between certain members of Council (representing Wards 1 & 2 along with Wards 3 and 4 which were at that time combined) and then Transportation Minister Caroline Mulroney.

These remarkably similar proposals were addressed again last fall during a meeting between Councillor Kiernan and current Transportation Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria. Frustrating as this apparent duplication might be, perhaps now that they are one of the Mayor's priorities, they will actually be addressed. So many things that make me say ?hmmnnn??.? I wonder if my friend Angela has anything she'd like to add?