

Platform #2- Openness, Transparency and Accountability

Here is a message I received from a fellow councillor, copied to all of council, when the issue of spending \$11m for the vacant land surrounding the “proposed” new hospital came before council:

Hello Carolynn. I have been trying to manage how to deal with your unending requests for so much information on so many issues.

If this information is of significance, there is a process for dealing with these questions and I would think that the rest of council and staff would agree with me.

I would like to suggest that you bring your issues forward at the next council meeting in the form of a motion, and, let's deal with these issue the way they should be dealt with....by debate.

Thank you.

My response was basically that I had been trying to understand the reason why they asked absolutely NO questions and that they should refrain from telling me how to do my job. My response may not have been as polite as that, if I am being honest.

At that point nothing shocked me anymore. But it did make me double down on the questions I asked, such as “Who brokered the deal between the “land donor” and the city? Who exactly thought it was ok to accept and pay the higher appraised value by the land owner? The city appraisal was lower. I asked pointedly, to specific people “did you coordinate this deal”? Not one person could explain how this land deal price had been decided upon, or admit to who had negotiated it. Seriously?

My questions were out of line? Too confusing? Not significant enough to get a response? Or too uncomfortable for anyone to answer and this councillor could not justify their vote because they voted with NO information?

So I voted against buying the land. It was a bad use of public money. In a deal that nobody would admit to putting together. It only benefitted the family that was supposed to have “donated” the land free for the “proposed” future hospital. There are so many other things that council could have directed that money to. But most importantly is the fact that the people responsible for this waste of public money, refused to answer my questions.

But that’s just one instance. There is Thundering Waters and the lack of answers from the Mayor on specific details of his paid trip to China? Why did the Mayor agree to help the Thundering Waters developer with immigration issues if the Paradise project was going to be

built by locals creating thousands of jobs? Why refuse to answer who paid for the Mayors and staff's trip to Romania? Why are preferred developers who paid for trips for the Mayor and certain staff members being given preferential treatment? Why did we cancel the building of the new fire station on Lundy's Lane to keep the residents in the west end safe?

No answers, no answers, no answers.

I will always ask the difficult questions as to how, why and where your money is being spent. Someone has to ask them.

Voters should be asking the incumbents why they don't ask any questions and ask the new comers if they will have the courage to ask the difficult questions because there is nothing private about public money.