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Subject: ward review discussion at council August 6
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attached is a report of the progress on the ward review petition. You have already received our deputation as presented July 24. this is a report of how council is handling the legal request we have given them.

I ask that if possible you email this report to your membership. they signed the petition and deserve an update. if you cannot email it to the membership perhaps you can post it on your website or circulate it to those you know who signed. notice of the public meeting is important as well as knowledge of the attitudes of the council members many thanks lola

Report on Ward Review Proceedings at Gravenhurst Council August 6, 2009 without prejudice

Summary:

Council after extended debate voted to **approve the hiring of consultants to review the ward boundaries** and recommend an effective and equitable system of representation for the town.

The review will be conducted according to the principles the citizen representatives laid out in their deputation of July 24. These are: equity or parity, simplicity, accountability and accessibility, communities of interest, population growth, straightforward boundary lines and appropriate size of council. The consultants' report is to provide options and make a recommendation to Council.

Overall Comments:

The proposal to review and change the wards now goes back 2 council terms, 6 years. Councillors have delayed on and refused to make change and turned down proposals for change. Some are now trying to introduce 2 red herrings into the discussion: the first that this public request for change is an attack on their competence and second that the town's tender process must be adhered to. **Neither of these concerns address the petition request.** They put themselves in this position of tight time frames. The public is concerned about fairness and equity not the individual performance of councillors. Why are the Pilgers, Clairmont and Wilson still opposed to change? There was lot of huffing and puffing and heated debate and not much listening or opening of minds.

We will keep you posted on the process as it continues.
Remember the **public open house October 3**

Detail report.

The clerk presented 2 motions to council. The first was to hire a consultant to conduct a review for a cost between 10 and 25 thousand dollars. The second was to exempt her from the requirement to tender the service due to the tight time frames.

The discussion opened with a brief summary of the situation and of the need for immediate action. The time line proposed would have a **public open house on October 3** to look at the options and provide comments. The final report and council vote would be October 20.

Councillors had the following discussion:

Sandy Cairns: she felt staff did not have the time to do this. But thought spending 25 thousand was not right.

Mark Clairmont: wants to deal with it internally. A committee of council could look into options. Wanted to table an amendment to just change the number of councilors in certain wards. (reporter note: he voted against this change when it was proposed in a formal motion on April 7) He perceives that this is about the public thinking that councilors are not doing a good job and this offends him. He misses the whole point about equity and fairness. He feels that there will not be an OMB challenge. He verbally opposed the contract then changed his mind to support it and agreed to waive the tender process.

Paisley Donaldson: Council still does not get the message. The citizens have given clear direction. It is time to review the wards. Just get on with it. Council has shown it cannot make a decision. This has been in the strategic plan for 2 terms of council. We have done this to ourselves and now must deal with it.

Lou Guerriero: Council has no choice under the municipal act. Council must act. People are not questioning the performance of individual councilors.

John Klinck: feels the expert will make a fair assessment and he will come back with several options and Council will make the decision. Citizens have executed their right and it will cost more to go to the OMB than to do this study. He feels that there is a strong chance of an OMB challenge if council does not act. People are still asking where they can sign the petition. They want this change.

Bryan Pilger: opposed to spending money. Does not see the need for change. Could have all councilors elected at large and no wards.

Terry Pilger: reviewed the petition which says the citizens want the boundaries changed. Council cannot be wishy washy about this.. If the public doesn't like what council does they can still go to the OMB. He thinks council can do this work with staff support as it will not take much time. At the vote stage he emphasized procedural matters such as the order of the vote and whether the chair has a vote.

Tracy Wilson: wants to know why cost has gone up to 25 thousand. (reporter note: this was the original estimate of the clerk at budget time)

How they voted

Those who voted to let the contract: for Cairns, Clairmont, Donaldson, Guerriero, Klinck. opposed were B. Pilger, T. Pilger and Wilson.

Those who voted to let the contract without tender: for Cairns, Clairmont, Donaldson, Guerriero, Klinck. opposed were B. Pilger, T. Pilger, Wilson.

Lola Bratty

Based on notes taken by the GGRA at the council meeting