



# TOWNSHIP Watch

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## TOWNSHIP WATCH – May 2011

This report is going to be a little different than the usual format. The May meeting of Council raised three sets of issues that have made the Township Watch team increasingly uncomfortable. The proceedings have raised questions, to which we have no answers.

### **Township Council Meeting - Monday May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – 9:00 am**

The Mayor read a legally prepared statement saying that she has no fiduciary conflict of interest with regard to the Bala Falls issue.

Sandy Currie delegated on behalf of the Moon River Property Owners Association against the Green energy Bala Falls Hydro project.

Mitchel Shnier, representing the “Save the Bala Falls” group spoke against the project. He thanked the Mayor and Council for their help they have given to this cause, saying in part “in recognition of your help, our group is presenting a cheque for \$10,000.00 to the Township”. Shock ran throughout the chamber as people whispered they had just witnessed what had every appearance of being a bribe. Then, as it was being accepted, one of the Councillors stood up and said loudly that they could not accept the cheque. However, the damage had been done. The would-be donor left. Council took a short break and came back to pass a motion that the cheque be returned.

### QUESTIONS

- Why did the Mayor, the Staff, and the Council not immediately refuse to accept the cheque? What are the ethics and the optics on this?
- If Swift River does sue the Township (which seems to be an increasingly distinct possibility) since they were contracted by the Province to build the Green Energy Project, who would pay?
- Are you Ratepayers, happy with all this? We believe that the taxpayers would be obliged to pay these costs. Do you agree?

### **District Council Meeting - Monday May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 - 7:00 pm:**

Daron Earthly, a lawyer with the firm Loopstra Nixon, who represent Swift River, asked Council to repeal the resolution to transfer a small bit of land in Bala from the District to the Township. This could enable Township Council to further delay Option 2. This land is pivotal to the viability of Option 2 for the Green Energy project at Bala Falls. Ms. Earthly noted that the resolution had been passed at a closed session meeting, adding that it was “arbitrary, hasty and not transparent”. She

went on to state her opinion that Mayor Murphy does have a conflict of interest due to the location of her own private property directly across from the falls.

A long day!

QUESTION:

- Were there extra legal fees associated with the acquisition of the District land in Bala, and if so, who paid them?

### **Committee Of The Whole – Tuesday May 17th, 2011 - 9:00 am**

Sheila Durand, Chief Librarian for the Township of Muskoka Lakes made a presentation to discuss the future of the Milford Bay and Walker's Point libraries. Both branches are experiencing severe economic problems due to very low usage. Part way through the Librarian's statement, the Mayor told her to stop and began to question her extensively, continuing to do so until Ms. Durand broke down in tears. This persistent questioning in our opinion is disrespectful.

QUESTION:

- What do you think of this confrontational approach and lack of common courtesy toward one of our senior professionals?

The Township Watch Team is feeling quite uncomfortable about so much discourteous and unprofessional conduct – rudeness, belittling, and intimidation. It does not make for effective, efficient meetings and is not moving the Township forward in a positive atmosphere.

We invite and encourage you to tell us how you feel about all this. You can contact us at:

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