



The Missing Link

On July 25th city council and the general public were purposefully deceived by Administration to believe that Phase 1 of the reconstruction of the Connecting Link was for 2.2 kilometres of road. Councillors were given a paper copy of By-law 2016-7874, entering into agreement with Miller Paving Ltd. for \$4,806,463.00 for the reconstruction of Hwy 101 from Bruce Avenue westerly for 2.2 km (to the bottom of Rae Hill). On both pages of the Bylaw, the distance reads 2.2km. They voted in favor of this, unanimously, after the Bylaw is read out very late in the evening (Note: the Bylaw is not read out in its entirety and the 2.2km sections are omitted in the reading). It was a great surprise for the public, media and certain members of Council to hear that the actual scope of the project though is only 1.4km of road and will go from the Bruce Y to the cemetery. The only place that this change of scope is mentioned is in the Administrative Report, "Upon award of the tender, to discuss reductions in the scope of work in order to be below the approved 2016 budget of \$4.5 million." This document was not read out in the meeting, it was buried in the stack of paperwork that our Councillors are given. Administration had the opportunity to make Council aware of this change; however, they chose to let Council believe that the Bylaw stating 2.2 kilometres was correct. Nothing was discussed about the reduction in the scope of work and what happens to the funding of the 'Missing Link' (ie. 1.6 km).

How did this happen:

City originally applied for 3km of reconstruction at a cost of \$4.5M (bottom of Rae hill to just before OPP offices). The idea was that the Province would contribute 90% to a maximum of \$3M

For this initial application, engineering assumed 6 inches of high grade asphalt thickness, this was changed to 10 inches of high grade asphalt after the funding was received. Without informing the Ministry.

At the last minute, they realized that 3 km of road reconstruction would cost over \$8M, so they called a tender to reconstruct 2.2km. During the tendering process, they were told the cost for 2.2km would still be close to \$7M, so addendum's were issued and the job was further downsized to 1.4 km.

The Province still thinks we are doing 3km of road. It is great that we got the maximum amount of funding available; however, we are now ineligible to apply for funding on the 1.6km of road that we aren't doing since the Province thinks we have already done it! (3.0km submitted – 1.4 km actual = 1.6 km of road not complete).

I believe the city constructed 1.6km.

The city applied for additional funding to the Ministry this year to finish this second of Hwy. and were denied. The city borrowed \$4.5 million to finish the construction. Total cost after all was done was over \$11 million dollars for 3 km of 4 lane rural Hwy.

To give you an example a 20 km rural 2 lane Trans Canada Hwy was reconstructed this summer located on Hwy 11 Cochrane South for a cost of Just over \$10 million. Class A 6" of Asphalt. Now if you just for a reasonable comparison divide the 20 km in half this could reasonably could be a 10 km 4 lane rural Hwy. similar type of construction. Does this make sense. The city spends 11million on something that at best should have cost \$5 million.

This was part of my letter then.

"What is most disturbing if you watch the web-cast is that certain Council members congratulate Administration for coming in so close to budget and they bask in the glory. It is pretty easy to come in close to budget when you are missing almost half the road!"

"Who knew about this? We believe that Council was not aware that the scope of the project had changed to 1.4km when the Bylaw was passed. When we reached out after the July 25th meeting, we were told that the scope of the project was still from the bottom of Rae Hill to the Bruce Y. Council and the public were misled and Administration should be held accountable for both the errors made throughout this process, for their lack of transparency and for their complete disregard and disrespect shown to Council and taxpayers."

I submitted a letter to the Daily Press, which was not printed, but paraphrased to attack my comments. The Administrative Report as written had not used full information and become a none information report that no professional city staff member could listen to without gagging. I consider the omission of critical information to council as lying to council and the taxpayer. Councilor Dubeau rightfully brought this matter up to council. Council went on the attack and defended their honor and their knowledge of the contract bylaw. Some councilors claimed they knew all about the Bylaw at that council meeting. If they did, why didn't they correct or even ask about it. So what does the Mayor and council do they attack the messenger, Councilor Dubeau. Now Councilor Dubeau becomes the target to cover councils incompetence in this matter.

Alex Szczebonski
Director Timmins Taxpayers Association