

Jack's Recap

May 25th, 2015: "When is handy not so handy?"

Councillor Campbell has brought this subject back to the table in the form of a new resolution to deal with the handy transit problem as he sees it. With an aging population creeping up quickly in Timmins, he would like to have all of the city covered by handy transit and would like to accomplish this in phases starting with phase 1, which would include Gold Mine Road, Fairway Village, Delnite property, and Buffalo Anchorite (all of which are very close in proximity to the city garage). Phase 2 will cover the remainder of the city. Councillors Marks and Doody spoke against this stating that there is a dedicated committee (MACC) which oversees such matters and this committee should be the one bringing this forth to Council. Councillor Bamford disagrees with both his co-councillors stating this is an economic decision and any economic decisions are made around the council table. He further adds that this would be a deal with the devil, pointing out that everyone residing in the rural areas would expect this service as well. He expressed himself further by saying there is a discrepancy of service in rural areas and would like to have a creation of a tax differential for those living in rural areas admitting that he would not know how to implement such a plan. Councillor Dubeau then proposed an amendment to the resolution, which was only to include Phase 1 for a trial run, which was passed by majority vote. Councillor Rinaldo argued vehemently that a member of MACC has not attended the last three meetings because that member could not book the service because it is booked weeks in advance. She says we need to spend some money to expand the service by purchasing at least one new bus and hire a new driver or drivers. She argues that this is an economic problem. She serves on the MACC board and cautions all councillors that just because someone wants to use handy transit does not mean that the person would qualify for the service. In exasperation, she blurted out, "where do we get the money for this?" Councillor Campbell assured her that this will not break the bank and a vote on the phase 1 amendment was taken and passed by a majority decision. The usual tandem voting of councillors Marks and Rinaldo stood alone in opposition.

Another item was brought up by the Mayor: the annual clean up weekend which has been proposed by numerous groups. Councillor Dubeau agrees with this and will meet with the originator of this idea Rick Cecconi of TimminsGetClean. Under Rick Cecconi's leadership, this organization had great success in cleaning up this city for many years and large enthusiastic groups including many young students and children with their parents were in attendance. Local car dealerships donated pickups to help amass this garbage and transport it to the dumpsters. A consensus vote was taken with all of Council in support of this initiative.

Council was then asked to approve the cost of the audit for the MATTAGAMI Secondary Waste Water Treatment Plant by the firm of Deloitte. Councillor Marks asked to be heard on the subject, where he proceeded to say that the money earmarked for this Audit would be better spent on the Handy Transit expansion. He completed his remarks by sarcastically stating that should the city require another secondary Treatment Plant it would come well after his death.

However, during the March 23rd, 2015 council meeting the resolution to have this audit was passed unanimously. Even councillor Doody who spoke against it, voted in agreement. Why now would three councillor's (Doody, Rinaldo and Marks) vote against this resolution? Would the purpose be the deniability factor that many politicians practice? They could say "We never voted for this!" leaving their fellow councillor's holding the bag as it were. But I must say that the TTA will never forget their initial vote. They agreed with the initial resolution only to oppose it later. Maybe Timmins should be the first to create a Municipal Senate the branch of sober second thought.

I would be remiss if I didn't include the surprise award given to councillor Doody by Ontario's lieutenant -Governor for his many years of service to this city when serving as Councillor and Mayor of this city as well as sitting on many service boards and his participation in many grassroots activities. Congratulations from the TTA to Councillor Doody. This award is indeed merited.

Again, I will remind all that have missed this meeting that it can viewed it in its entirety at Timmins.ca/webcast

That's a rap on this week's recap!