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# ❖ Speaking Out ❖

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The Truth is Mighty and Will Prevail

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## Speaking Out Denied Media Access by City



By: Doug Peddle

As the newly appointed investigative reporter for Speaking Out I approached City Hall via Clerk Laura Lee to receive a media package. You see the Packet, Orillia Today, Jack FM and Rogers Cable are given media packages weekly which helps them in their work of informing the public free of charge. When Laura learned that I was making the request for Speaking Out she flatly denied my request.

According to Laura Lee who was representing the city Speaking Out is not a credible news source. "This publication has no credibility" according to the city and is not accredited. She also made the point that the "way articles were written was a problem"???. My question then was "What is this thing "accredited" and who decides what publication is considered to be media?? Is it a card or badge and who hands them out??" Unable to answer my questions Laura took the position that Speaking Out is not media and that we could request that council STOP handing out media packages to all media if we had a problem with her interpretation, which I am sure would be welcomed by the POWER. My next question was a request to see the cities policy on media. Well apparently there is no written policy but Speaking Out was still non media according to city hall.

Speaking Out has consistently

published for more than a year. We now have over 2,000 plus readers and growing. Why even Laura Lee and the Mayor read it. In fact I received copies from both Laura and the Mayor. You see I did not get copies every month and Laura and the Mayor supplied me with missed issues???. So how come City Hall now claims Speaking Out has no credibility??

It's understandable why the POWER at city hall does not like the fact that Speaking Out brings the truth to it's readers. If not for Speaking Out would anyone have heard about the sweetheart land deal at Westridge? If not for Speaking Out would the public have known that the MURF property is polluted with PCB's and more? Why council was talking about dumping the contaminated soil at the land fill even though PCB's are present until Speaking Out made the facts public (they then did an about face). Did the Packet or Orillia Today break this news?? No! In fact Speaking Out shared our findings with these news organizations. It was Speaking Out that supplied documents to the Enviromental Advisory Committee and WMAC which spell out what contaminants are really at the MURF site.



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Jim Tolnai  
Editor/Publisher

These committees are supposed to advise council on environmental and waste matters but were kept in the dark by city hall and council. Why???. Even today we are working on getting a copy of the environmental report supplied by Molson to the city by order of the Ministry of the Environment. The Transfer Agreement clearly states that all reports and documents can indeed be made public but the POWER continues to withhold this information. The POWER is working very hard to stop this report from becoming public by stonewalling and misrepresentation of the facts. So you see it is no surprise that the POWER does not want us around. The Mushroom Factor (feed us manure and keep us in the dark), is alive and active at city hall and we will not stand for it.

According to the constitution of this great land the freedom of the press is guaranteed. Nowhere can I find in the CONSTITUTION where the POWER has the right to decide which publication is credible or accredited . Freedom of the press is just that. We under law have the right to publish Speaking Out and just because we write the truth and uncover questionable deals and mismanagement does not remove our rights to Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Press. This is not Iran, Syria, China or North Korea this is Canada. So Mr. Mayor, Councillors, Laura Lee, Ian Brown and all others at city hall attempting to deny our constitutional right to Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press either treat us equal by supplying the package as you do to other media or explain why you feel you can suppress our publication.

## Deja-vue??

Over the last fifteen months I have taken an interest in our elected officials and city management. I have been trying to figure out why decisions are made and deals are entered into. Deals like the sale of 12 acres sold behind Home Depot which gives away over \$600,000 of development charges. Deals like the land on West St. which Molson gave the city for one dollar to be used for the MURF. I have come to the conclusion that neither deal makes economic sense to us the people of Orillia. If it makes no sense to us then why would it make sense to council?

Speaking Out has done an indepth investigation on these and other city business. We have interviewed politicians and city staff as well as interested parties and have come to a troubling conclusion. It seems that councillors are not getting documents so that they have reliable information on which they can make their decisions. According to the Mayor and Ian Brown council does not need to see these documents because they receive reports from staff, but it turns out these reports don't tell the whole story.

Let's look at the MURF land. The environmental report given to the city by Molsons was never given to council before they agreed to take the land. As reported to council and the public there really wasn't anything on the site that should concern us. In fact councillors were saying that dirt from the land could be moved to the dump for disposal. No mention was made of the presence of PCB's, Cadmium etc. In an interview with Councillor Morano he stated that he had never seen the Environmental Report, Appraisal Report and the Transfer Agreement. When shown two of these documents he became upset and stated "these guys told us everything was OK". Councillor McLaughlin also stated he had never seen these documents and Tim Lauer stated he decided to support the deal based on staff reports. So what is going on?

After being sworn into council Ralph Cipola went to city hall and asked for copies of the Environmental Report but was turned down and was not allowed to see it. He was actually told to go and ask Molsons for a copy. Folks we are talking about a fifty million dollar decision and our elected officials are not allowed to review vital documents to be informed. Seems Councillor Morano was no more successful in his quest to get the documents. How can this be???

The same is true of the land deal behind Home Depot. For the last 25 or more years when ever the city sold land a standard agreement was used. This agreement had safeguards that the land would be developed

within one year and speculation was not allowed. But for the sale of this land a new agreement was drawn up which removed the safeguards. Even though these safeguard were removed the Mayor made hand written changes to exempt the buyer from over \$600,000 development charges and other clauses. When councillors voted it seems they had not seen these documents, at least (Smith, Morano, McLaughlin and Gardy). I don't suppose the others saw them either. You see according to the Mayor council does not need to bother with these documents and are not given to them unless they ask. So how are these councillors to know the existence of these documents unless they are told of the change. It seems they presumed that the standard agreement was being used. Why councillor Smith said that "the land was sold so that it would be developed." But the safeguard of building within a year of purchase or the city reclaims the land was not in the document. Nor was the clause that the land can not be resold without having it built on. The only conclusion a person can come to is that decisions are being made in the dark. I can not believe that most councillors would have agreed to this deal if they had of known what really was in it. You see this deal makes absolutely no economic sense to us. So why would the Mayor and staff report to council that this was a good deal???

So why is this article titled Deja-vue? Well about nine years ago I had a run in with the infamous Doug Little. You see my son Todd at 12 years old wanted to set up a Sausage Cart at the farmers Market. I directed him but insisted that he do it himself. Well he had to deal with Doug Little who gave him a hard time. After much frustration the poor little guy was wanting to give up his idea and I went to speak to Doug. Well! I had never met a more arrogant man who was under the delusion that this was his downtown and he ruled. Not being timid I told him he now interested me and I would be investigating his ownership of Mississaga St. I know that Doug took me seriously and he did issue the permit for my sons cart. But that certainly did not stop me from looking into his affairs.

So the more I looked the more I found. It was obvious he had a problem with gambling. I watched as he bought thousands of dollars worth of Nevada tickets. I watched while he was losing tens of thousands of dollars at the Oddfellows Charity Casino and every other Charity Casino in the area. It was not hard to figure out that this guy was not making enough money to sustain this addiction. It wasn't hard to find out he had already gone bankrupt twice. It was easy to find out he was getting paid off

by outside vendors setting up in prime locations at special events. I witnessed him going to a local motel at midnight to pickup his payoff from a Montreal vendor.

I started talking to people downtown questioning Doug's behavior and passing on information. Guess what? No one seemed interested. Then he came tumbling down and everyone claimed they did not know and resigned from their boards. You see Doug had been telling these people "trust me". You don't need to know, just rubber stamp and I will do all the work. The board members were more than happy to let Doug do all the work. As time went on more and more responsibility was assumed by him. Because it looked like business was being taken care of the board members entrusted to direct, took the credit but really were not involved with how business was being run. When warned they could not believe and ignored the obvious while emboldening Doug to take more and more liberties. Why it was his downtown after all.

So what has this to do with council? Well council has abrogated their responsibility to perform their duties. By trusting blindly they are doing exactly what the people involved with Doug Little did. Now I am not saying anyone is benefiting financially. What I am saying is that when you allow one or two people to control you are setting up the scenario where bad things can happen. When city staff can tell Councillor Cipola he is not allowed to see city documents or when the Mayor can state councillors don't need to see information that is vital to good decision making then we have a huge problem. We elect councillors to do a job. They should be allowed, no in fact they should insist on doing their job. Every councillor is responsible only to us and not staff or Mayor. We need a Forensic Audit to clear the air and every councillor should make sure we get it. Let the chips fall where they may. Bad decisions have been made. Let's not cover-up any longer. Do the right thing. Council take control it is within your power and is your responsibility. Truth shall prevail why not be part of it? The more we look the more we are finding. Stay tuned.

Jim Tolnai

Jim Tolnai

## We Get Letters

## Gagged



### Smart Cards



Is the smart meter really smart or is the salesman of smart meters smart? I have learned the cost of a smart meter is around \$500.00, that's an extra cost to you of \$7.50 a month. Who is responsible for the upkeep of these meters and for how long?

We are into a private power system, which works for maximum profits. All costs that can be downloaded to the consumer will happen. As we become more deregulated by corporate lobbyists, you become more squeezed for your electrical dollars. You will no doubt learn who uses more electricity in your home and the large families will be blaming each other for any use that the rest of the family perceives to be wasteful. You have to remember private power systems hold back power to drive up price no matter how little or how much power you use. So conservation in this instance isn't all that helpful to your pocket book. As the profit driven machine gets greedier, some people won't be able to pay their power bill. That liability will fall on the taxpayer and the municipalities to pay. Be ready, because this is where you give the private power corporations their profits. Some of you have had property assessments done. If people can't pay their hydro bill, the municipality must make up for it, so your property taxes may rise. Now think back to the smart meters, does the place where you work use a lot of electricity? Because that smart meter is not going to help you there, why?

because smart meters cannot be used in Industry. You just have to hope you boss only cuts your wages, because the other option is worse (moving company to Quebec). This is not good for you, your community, your province. Less jobs equals less taxpayer base, so who is left to pay? Me and you. Being taxed out of ownership of property is devastating and should be criminal. Don't complain too much about paying now, because you never know when you will be the recipient of that deficit, if privatization continues. It would take so little effort if people would protest together. I hope the will for justice will get people to organize for the good of all in this province. For instance we have so much new information, we need to build a website and are trying to raise money and volunteers to help us do this. If you want to call someone and do nothing, call Garfield Dunlop, Ron Stevens or the 'brilliant' Ernie Eves. Remember they helped cook up this brilliant scam and they were even voted back in to continue to lie and betray for another four years.

If you want to become active and involved call me, Maurice McMillan at 705-689-5860.

Regards,  
Maurice McMillan

Well I tried but the wonderful council that we have elected has now thought that open forum is not the way things should be.

I made the application for deputation and was denied. Now for the really funny part, the reasons.

1. City council of Orillia does not believe that the problem of taxi drivers needing pardons for past crimes, even some as old as 20 years is their problem but that of the Police Services Board. Even though members of the council sit on the Police Services Board and even though it is my understanding that the Board answers to Council.

2. The By-law in question is not a Council By-law but a Police Services By-law therefore Council takes no responsibility in looking at the By-law to see if it is flawed. It is also my understanding that a municipal By-law had to be passed by Council and therefore making it Council's responsibility.

I was directed to the Police Services Board and told to make my application to go before them. I was given a phone number and contact person in order to make my application in the proper fashion. I made a phone call and received a voice mail. And never received a reply. Called again with the same results. I called thrice and again to no avail.

Really gives you a good feeling about our City Council and those that were put in charge of the workings. Working for the people? I think not. Doing unto others and then leaving? Yes a verse from the Book of Sunshine City in my estimation.

Nick Montague

Editors Note: Taxi drivers are being denied their Civil Rights and their Constitutional Rights by Council and the Police Board.

## MURF Questions

Ms. Laura S. Lee, Clerk  
City of Orillia  
Orillia City Center

Re: Transfer Agreement dated Dec. 2002 between BLCL Inc. (Molson) and the corporation of the City of Orillia (Orillia)  
Dear Ms. Lee:

I write in my capacity of concerned resident in the City of Orillia. I have several questions about the transaction cited above, but for now I will be satisfied to raise three questions relating to information. Other questions may, and probably will arise when I am able to learn more about the transaction.

First information question: Since Orillia acknowledges and confirms receipt of the report of Shaheen & Peaker Ltd. to Molson dated May 15, 2002 and since the said report seems to have crucial bearing on the transfer of the property and future liability and possible use, I would like to have a copy of the report. I assume that all Councillors and the Mayor must have read the report before passing the necessary by-law, but I do not recall any public discussion of a document which must be in the public domain.

Second information question: Para. 11 of the Transfer Agreement begins by reciting that "Each of Molson and Orillia understand and agree that it may not be possible to keep the terms and conditions of this Agreement confidential and exclusive to themselves." I would like to know whether any collateral arrangements, undertakings, or agreements, oral or written, were made between the parties regarding confidentiality, and also whether any assurances or promises of confidentiality were asked for by Molson or given by Orillia. I might add that serious questions of corruption arise if the municipal corporation even thinks about keeping any aspect of such transfer "confidential" or "exclusive".

Third information question: Did all Members of Council at least receive (even if some of them are notorious for not reading) the Appraisal Report dated February 18, 2003 prepared by Andrew Thompson and Associates for Molson, and the amended pages (transmitted March 5), all of which were sent to the Corporation

of the City of Orillia, and did they receive it before the Closing Date?

Yours very truly

Allan Millard

Editors Note:

Allan Millard is a retired Lawyer and Council candidate 2003.

Office of the City Manager

Dec. 8, 2003

Dear Mr. Millard

I am pleased to provide the answers to the three questions asked in your letter of Nov. 24, 2003 to the City Clerk.

First information question: No the reference report is not in the public domain.

Second information question: No, there are no collateral arrangements, understandings or agreements regarding the confidentiality of the Transfer Agreement.

Third information question: No, the appraisal report was provided to the City Treasurer to verify the amount of the charitable receipt he was required to provide to Molson pursuant to Clause 5 of the Council-approved Transfer Agreement.

Yours truly,



Ian C. R. Brown,  
City Manager.

Editors Note:

We now have Ian Brown City Manager the Power Behind the Throne confirming that councillors indeed were not given or shown vital documents necessary to make an informed decision on a matter that will cost us Fifty Million or more dollars. Unbelievable but TRUE.

## Personal Gift



Taryn Tolnai for the second time in two years had her hair cut to donate it to victims of cancer. Taryn was inspired four years ago to grow her hair for cancer victims by Nan Steinmiller. Nan was a neighbor who suffered with the disease. She had lost much of her hair and wore a wig. The first time her hair was cut it was some what of a traumatic experience being a sixteen year old. But the wonderful feeling of helping those less fortunate soon overcame her negative feelings. This time she had nothing but good feelings. Who says young people don't care. Taryn and many others show that the next generation will do just fine. We are very proud of this young woman who is a credit not only to our family but to her community. Way to go Taryn!!

## Get Involved

It's not surprising that the Power at City Hall does not want to recognize Speaking Out as media. It is true that we are not like the Packet or Orillia Today. We actually do investigative reporting and don't hold back on the facts, truth, and don't publish for personal profit like the other two media. Sure we get people mad at us. That is bound to happen when you expose sweet heart land deals and questionable behavior. So if you agree that Speaking Out is a worthwhile information source then get involved.

Because we don't have a revenue base we are asking for help in getting Speaking Out into peoples hands. You can help by delivering to your street or paying for distribution by Post. Our goal is to eventually cover the city. Give me a call so we can discuss your participation in making Orillia a better place for all of us.

Jim Tolnai 327-5717