

I haven't written for quite some time, but feel compelled to do so now after reading Mayor Ron Stevens's response to Colin McKim's column "Politicians tough pests to eradicate," which appeared in The Packet & Times July 18.

Having come within four votes of being elected to council, sitting on Orillia's committee of adjustment for six years, and the waste management advisory committee for four years, plus being the self-proclaimed "city watchdog" for about 10 years, (for which I was nominated for citizen of the year by a former mayor), I feel I am somewhat of an expert on the political scene of Orillia from the inside and out.

I've been called a "troublemaker," a "NIMBY" (not in my backyard), a "dissident" and a few other choice things over the years. I've even been characterized (satirized) by a sitting councillor and accused of "tilting at windmills" and "ranting" by councillors. I've even been chastised by councillors for doing my job by following the bylaws, goals, and intent of policies set out by the city.

Well Mr. Mayor, your skin has become a little thin, so I've got three words for you: Suck it up.

As for qualified people being afraid to step up to the plate and run for council for fear of criticism -- I think not.

I seem to recall 27 candidates lining up at one time and I'm sure for the next election we'll see quite a number stepping up again.

The accomplishments you mention, are in my opinion, only an attempt to cover your collective behinds.

The effort to bring a university to the city was started long ago by another mayor.

The new twin-pad arena and ice surfaces, new soccer fields and new tennis courts are all as a result of the persistence of one sitting and one former city councillor, some people behind the scenes and public advocating by citizens of Orillia to right a gross mistake, called the MURF (multi use recreation facility) project and location. I'm sure they all feel somewhat vindicated.

As for the road repairs and the trails, those processes were started by Mr. Clayt French and Mr. Ken McCann-- don't get me wrong, I didn't always agree with them, either.

This council has also seen a number of senior staff leave the city under some "questionable" and/or "mysterious" circumstances, only to see some of what they

were advocating finally come to be done. The new library, new fire hall and increased development charges are a few I can think of.

As for not getting the help you require from McKim in the future, I think he'll do just fine being a thorn in your side -- like the rest of us were -- to finally get council collectively to do the right thing.

My final comment would be this: Over the years I worked hard with my opinions, I've won some battles and lost some and have been vindicated much later on by others. To those of you who believe in advocating your right of expression on a subject of political concern in Orillia, keep up the good fight. There can even be victory and satisfaction in defeat by the attempt to voice your opinion and make the public, and members of council rethink their positions on subjects of public importance, in managing Orillia city affairs.

Orillia is still a fine city despite the occasional thorn.

I. Dennis Edmonds Ramara Township