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by: jim tolnai

Politics

My wife Anne called Ralph Cipolla the other day regarding the wetland that is being destroyed on the MURF site. One thing led to another as conversations sometimes go and the subject turned to use of the Molson site. During the conversation Ralph offered up the fact that the location of the MURF is due to politics. He said it is a highly political decision.

I have never been able to understand first why this toxic site was chosen knowing what we do about it's history and how hazardous it really is. I also can not understand why council is unanimous. I know you will say that there is opposition from some councilors but the truth is the very people I thought were against this site have shown to be on board all along. You see I was fooled into thinking that at worst Morano and Smith were against the site and would fight for a sane second look. Although they sometimes talked the talk they never walked the walk saying one thing and voting another. As for Tim Lauer this guy has proven he's all for the site regardless of the half assed efforts he put up to seem like he's on side but voted with the rest of them.

This got me thinking about what the hell is going on. Here we have big time Liberals joining hands with big time Conservatives to push this through. None of this made any sense until Cipolla made the slip that politics was driving this thing. But how can politics drive this? Most people are against the site and more are coming on board as they find out just what is actually on the site. Why do nine supposedly independent people who are supposed to represent the community plowing ahead with such a bad decision? 1. Is it because they are embarrassed about the initial land deal? 2. Is it because they have spent so much money that there is no turning back? 3. Is it because this area has to be revitalized and cleaned up? 4. Is it to bring business and traffic to downtown? 5. Is it really the best site for a MURF. 6. Is it the most cost effective use of taxpayers money? I am afraid that the answer to all these questions is a resounding NO. You see politics is always about someone benefiting. Now that someone does not have to be an individual it can be a business or other organization. But why would a guy like Smith and Morano who are always talking about "Costs" on board without really having put up a credible fight?

The best place to start is at site selection. No other site was considered. Cipolla claims there were 17 sites considered but he can't tell where they were because some were private property? Morano and Smith brought Angelo Orsis's offer of FREE land at Westridge but council turned that offer down flat. Not a very good decision for use of taxpayers money. People suggested that maybe the downtown could benefit if the MURF was built up at the Oval. It is closer to downtown and there was enough space to build the building. This was turned down because it was claimed there was no room for the outside amenities. It was suggested the outdoor amenities could be built elsewhere including the Molson site. That too was turned down. Then council gets a real estate evaluation for the Oval property of \$800,000.00 less \$100,000.00 for the demolition of the Community Center. Smith on several occasions talked about getting rid of this property and using the money for the MURF. When Tim Lauer suggested that maybe the Community Center should remain in service after the MURF is built he received a cold shoulder.

It's now time to float my theory as to why there is 100% support for the Molson site

even though it is the worst place to build whether from a financial, health or environmental point of view. Now remember this is only a theory and I suppose council will dismiss it out of hand but it really is the only reason why such cost conscious councilors like Morano and Smith are on board. You see Smith is a former Catholic School Board Trustee. He is a man committed to his faith and church. Now we all know that the Oval property is located behind Guardian Angels Church and school. Once the Community Center is gone what use could this property be put to? Houses? Parkland? Apartment buildings? Retail development? I don't believe anyone of these choices apply. I believe that should the property not be used for a MURF then either the church or the Catholic School Board will acquire the property for Orillia's second Catholic High School. After all Patrick Fogarty had portables on opening day. What better place to have a school based on religion than next door to a church.

You can turn this upside down inside out and nothing else makes sense. Remember when Lauer asked for a second thought on the MURF sight and Smith voted against it because of a Pissy Fit (see Speaking Out Issue #20 Another Kick at the Can)??? Here was an opportunity to have a sober second thought and with Smiths vote it would have happened but he voted against it. Why????

So the politics comment by Cipolla makes a lot of sense. It will be interesting to see if my theory proves right. Should there be an interest in the property for a school or should the church be interested in the property I won't be surprised in the least. This theory also explains why Liberals and Conservatives are falling all over themselves to co-operate.