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Mayor Kevin Ashe

By Kevin Ashe
Mayor, City of Pickering

Dear Friend,
As we transition through the seasons and embrace the arrival of warmer weather, I am excited to share some wonderful updates happening in our vibrant city.

Over the past few months, Pickering has seen significant progress and exciting developments. From bustling community initiatives to innovative projects and announcements, there's a lot to be proud of in our growing City. I encourage you to read my newsletter below which includes some highlights and exciting updates happening in Pickering.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our residents for their ongoing contributions, ideas, and enthusiasm, which plays an integral role in making Pickering the best place to live, work, and play.

As we approach the summer season, I am delighted to invite you all to join us for a variety of community events taking place over the next few months. This includes Pickering's Outdoor Pet Festival - Petaplooza on Saturday, May 11 at Esplanade Park! Join us from 10 am to 5 pm for a day filled with fun and excitement for our residents and furry companions. With over 80 exhibitors, captivating performances by the Official SuperDogs, free giveaways, and more, there will be something for everyone to enjoy! Visit pickering.ca/Petaplooza for more details!

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office at mayor@pickering.ca or 905.420.4600. Also, I encourage you to stay up to date on the latest news in Pickering by subscribing to my newsletter if you haven't already.



Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

The Truth Will Set You Free

By Lisa Robinson - Pickering City Councillor

In today's world, it often feels like questioning the narrative pushed by those in positions of power is like committing a cardinal sin. Many people are confused as they look at the truth being told it's evil, while evil is being pushed down our throats to be looked at as truth. Many confused with this reality are afraid to speak out for fear of the repercussions of being labeled as conspiracy theorists, bigots, racists, you know the usual. It's become very "normalized" to insult and call

people names to whom you do not agree. Especially by those keyboard warriors over social media with fake accounts.

Politics is no different. Whether it's city staff, politicians, developers, or consultants, there's a prevailing expectation that their version of events is beyond reproach, and anyone daring to challenge the status quo is swiftly labeled as being the problem.

In my opinion, the real issue lies in the many different manipulation tactics employed by these individuals and entities. They are well-versed in the art of steering public opinion to serve their own interests, not the people's.

From meticulously crafted websites and carefully curated social media posts to surveys designed to yield predetermined outcomes, every tool in their arsenal tool kit is wielded to shape the narrative in their favour. And when faced with inconvenient truths or probing questions, they resort to tactics like half-truths or verbal diarrhea, all in an attempt to deflect attention away from the crux of the matter and make it all about you, the alleged perceived problem.

It's a phenomenon reminiscent of the frog boiling method which I have written about in a previous op-ed about the gradual, imperceptible changes to the environment that lull the unsuspecting into complacency until it's too late to react. Many among us remain too busy or lazy to delve into the truth or even entertain a different perspective. It's this lack of critical thinking skills that allows authoritarian and/or dictatorial tendencies to seep into our everyday lives virtually going unnoticed.

The irony is stark when we consider the tales of resistance that captivate us on the silver screen. Whether it's the dystopian worlds of "Divergent," "V for Vendetta," "Terminator" or "The Hunger Games," we readily identify with the brave souls who defy tyranny and champion freedom. Yet, when confronted with similar dynamics in reality, some choose to look the other way, their eyes firmly shut to the encroaching shadows of oppression.

History has proven that when leaders exploit economic hardships, and societal grievances using propaganda to manipulate public opinion, it will lead to the rise of authoritarian regimes and the erosion of democratic principles. Mark my words, you are, this is, history in the making, and years from now they too will be wondering how did the people let this happen.

But as Simon wrote, "A leader is someone who can see what everyone else can see, but can think differently." True leadership demands the courage to challenge the status quo, to question everything, and to employ critical thinking skills in the pursuit of truth and justice.

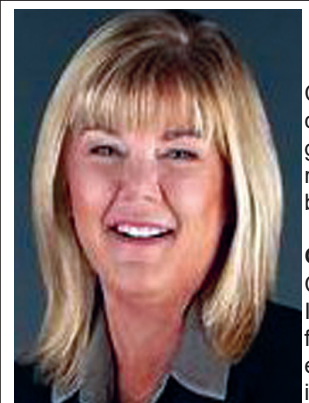
It's high time we heed the lessons of our favorite fictional heroes and become the architects of our own destiny. Stop being a slave to your phones, stop relying on mainstream media, and politicians to tell you the tailored truth, and emerge yourself in research.

It's not a coincidence that what is happening here in Pickering is also happening across Canada, and other parts of the world. Stop blindly accepting the narratives handed down to us.

One of the first things I was told as a Politician was "These people are not your friends." It didn't take me long to recognize the truth in that advice. But even more importantly, was when I realized that statement wasn't solely for me, it was directed to all of us, the people.

Don't be afraid to speak the truth, for as the saying goes, "The truth will set you free."

"Strength Does Not Lie In The Absence Of Fear, But In The Courage To Face It Head-On And Rise Above It"



Council Highlights - April 2024

Mayor Elizabeth Roy

Council highlights gives an overview of important decisions, discussions, and agenda items from Whitby Council meetings. The goal is to give residents a snapshot of the meetings. More information, including Council meeting minutes, can be found at whitby.ca/CouncilCalendar

New scholarship partnership between Whitby Fire, Durham College - Council has approved a partnership between Durham College and Whitby Fire and Emergency Services for a new Inclusive Excellence Scholarship Award. Durham College will fund two scholarships per year of approximately \$7,500 each, in exchange for the use of a Whitby fire vehicle in its Fire Pre-service Program. The agreement is in place for three years, with the option for Durham College to renew for an additional three years. The scholarship is for racialized and/or economically challenged high school students from the Town of Whitby, who have been accepted into either the Fire Fighter Pre-Service Education and Training or Fire Prevention and Technology program at Durham College.

Council approves traffic calming measures for Port Whitby area

In response to community concerns about speeding, aggressive driving, and noisy vehicles, Council has voted to introduce new traffic calming measures in the Port Whitby area including: a Community Safety Zone from Charles Street to Dufferin Street, crosswalk pavement markings at stop signs to delineate pedestrian crossings, an area-specific speed limit of 40 km/hr and installation of signage to advise of the speed limit, and a request for additional enforcement from Town of Whitby By-law services and Durham Regional Police Service. The Port Whitby area is one of several areas in Whitby where increased residential density, infilling, and intensification are expected to create a compact neighbourhood.

2024 Downtown BIA budget approved, includes increase to special tax levy

Council has approved the 2024 budget for the Downtown Whitby Business Improvement Area (BIA). The 2024 budget totals \$282,283, which is \$93,159 lower than the previous year's budget. Despite the decrease in the overall BIA budget, the special tax levy that funds the majority of the BIA's operations will be increasing by five per cent (or \$10,500).

The special tax levy applies to business properties within the Downtown Whitby BIA boundary. As recommended by the BIA board, the 2024 budget includes the continuation of the flower and planter program and the Christmas Market event, however the annual Beer Fest event has been removed from the budget and will be cancelled for 2024. Council also received for information the BIA's 2024 Beautification Report, which outlines beautification plans for this year. These include floral planters and baskets in the downtown, an annual on-street patio on the northeast corner of Brock Street and Colborne Street, art activations in four storefront windows, and a downtown clean-up on Earth Day.

Dredging work will impact use of Gordon Fields

Work is moving forward on plans for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canada to remove contaminated sediment from the Whitby Harbour through a multi-year dredging program. In exchange for the use of Town land to facilitate remediation, DFO will increase the scope of the dredging work to include two Town-owned water lot areas.

Recent studies indicate that the Town would otherwise be liable for \$1,064,000 in estimated remedial dredging costs. Whitby Council has given approval for DFO to use a portion of Gordon Fields adjacent to the Gordon Street Boat Ramp from July 15, 2024 to October 31, 2026 in exchange for the in-kind remediation work. Council also approved giving DFO access to Town lands adjacent to Promenade Lake Park to allow loading and unloading of barges from the Federally owned portions of the promenade and pier. Removal of harbour sediment will require a period of containment and drying followed by trucking to an approved landfill site. The project is anticipated to begin in mid-July 2024 and take 27 months to complete. The remediation project as well as restoration of Town lands will be entirely funded by DFO. Use of the Gordon Fields by DFO will impact Town of Whitby events and community events held in that space such as the Town's annual Canada Day event, Ribfest and India Day. A Town report says events will be reviewed to determine whether they can be relocated.

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