

June 1, 2024

Mayor and Council, CAO Fournier, Clerk Truelove

Township of Rideau Lakes

Re: ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLOR P. BANKS AT MAY 13TH COUNCIL MEETING

1. You commented about how we treated staff. Howard French and Dan Berty sent letters accusing staff and council of wrongdoing:
 - Dan accused staff and myself of possible wrong doing regarding assistance to the Port Side Pub
 - Howard accused staff of wrong doing when making changes to procedural bylaws.
 - Council investigated and staff were found innocent, did RLG ever apologize to staff?

Asking questions and/or seeking clarification are not accusations of wrongdoing or assumptions of guilt or innocence. It is not unreasonable that having a number of senior staff depart the Township, and the circumstances of those resignations, within a short time period, would lead to observations about the treatment of staff which was only reinforced by watching the Council meetings themselves. The treatment of other members of Council at public meetings and treatment of members of the public would also support those observations.

2. Councillor P. Banks stated that the recreation agreement with Smiths Falls covers all sports and recreational facilities and asked the following questions:
 - Would you agree with that?

No...we have previously pointed out that the recreation agreement with Smiths Falls (which is the same agreement Smiths Falls has with Montague, Drummond/North Elmsley, Elizabethtown/Kitley and Merrickville/Wolford) ONLY covers the Community Centre (and hall) and the Youth Centre (and hall). In a previous meeting when Councillor Banks made the same claim, the Clerk actually read out the terms of the agreement including that clause saying "nothing in the agreement shall restrict parties from a separate agreement for other services".
 - Is it correct that 1% of RL annual taxes go to SF for recreation which is used mostly SE - residents. This is the reason that we don't provide rec facilities for SE residents.
 - ***No...this 5 year agreement was signed in January 2022...it is a weighted cost sharing model designed by Howard Allan of Perth. It equitably distributes the audited net cost of operating the Community Centre and the Youth Centre in Smiths Falls between the five townships who utilize those two facilities. The suggestion that Rideau Lakes doesn't provide recreation facilities to South Elmsley residents because of the recreation agreement with Smiths Falls is without merit. Perhaps though it explains the party of 5's narrative allowing for the abdication of responsibility for recreation facilities in South Elmsley.***

3. What have we passed that your group opposes...not what we discussed but we passed? What are 1 or 2 examples?

RLGG isn't limited to just commenting on is passed by Council. Council discussions lead to decisions and proactively commenting on discussions at Council in advance of decisions is

important. For example, when allowing proxy voting was discussed at Council we reacted by informing the public and voicing our opposition in advance of the decision. By the time it came back for further discussion and decision, members of the public had made their opposition clear to Council members. That is also public engagement from Council's perspective...it is always better to have an informed population but lives are busy so RLG does the homework and provides commentary and/or opinion for the population to consider. When "dark skies" policy was discussed it was rejected out of hand as was the battery storage options and potential benefits presented to Council....both of these were commented on by RLG. The public's rankings of priorities on the Township survey for the 2024 budget was completely ignored. The position that the only people that should be heard from on the Portland Hall/Library \$3 million dollar project were those from Portland itself while the entire Township will provide the needed monies. The changing of the procedural by-law on motion to reconsider from long standing and province-wide accepted norms to a simple majority. Now a further amendment, proposed by Councillor J. Banks which will change the definition of "majority" on motions to reconsider. For example, if Councillors eligible to vote (no one is absent or has declared conflict of interest) there would have to be a minimum of 5 votes to pass any motion to consider.

4 . Dan Berty said I advocated for a private company to take over management of the Portland docks which is a lie.

- Who fact checked this?
- Who gave you that information?

In a meeting on October 16/23 discussing Council priorities for the 2024 budget Councillor P. Banks states with regard to management of boat launches in Newboro should also happen in Portland. A letter from Rob and Heather Heins had been received and that the Clerk could share that letter later. Councillor P. Banks went on to say they "had been in business for 30 years and were willing to "step up" to make it profitable for the Township. They knew the proper cost of mooring and parking and are there 12 hours a day running their own business and feel they could make a partnership with the Township and make it profitable". Councillor P. Banks advocacy for the Heins' proposal resulted in staff being directed to bring a report back to Council on the subject. At a following meeting, when the report was returned, the decision was deferred until 2025 budget discussions as the current arrangement for 2024 was already in place.

5. Information on RLG website with regard to Planning is a lie

We will admit that the language is clumsy so we will be more precise. The Mayor, as one of his duties, makes the appointments to Council committees after discussions with individual Councillors. The goal is to distribute the committee workload between the 8 Councillors as well as attempting to ensure the remuneration is spread equitably between all since participation on each committee is associated additional remuneration. At the Council meeting on May 23/23, less than an hour after Councillor P. Banks was sworn in, a motion was put forward to amend By-law 2023-09 to add 2 more members of Council to the committee, those being Councillors P. Banks and Hutchings (neither of whom had any training or experience to the provincially legislated Planning and Committee of Adjustment Committee.). This committee makes

recommendations on planning matters to Council. There is only 1 member of the public on that Committee but arguments were dismissed that more public members should be appointed rather than councillors. The argument was also dismissed that having 5 Council members on Planning would constitute a majority at Council and that potentially all recommendations would be then be accepted. The motion to change the by-law, in a recorded vote, passed with 5 councillors (P. Banks, J. Banks, Dunfield, Carr and Hutchings) voting in favour.

6. The "blue" flyer came out of this building, came off of this property and did any other council members besides Pollard and Maxwell help distribute the flyers?

While it has been often repeated by the party of 5 that the "blue" flyer information is incorrect there has been no specific details given as to what is perceived to be wrong. We understand that you don't like or agree with the opinions expressed on the front of the flyer but those same opinions are held by many and we are entitled to express them. Statements made after RLG's delegation on May 13th seem to infer that the flyers came out of the Township office. Let us assure you they did not and we have the printer's paid invoice that we ordered 5000 copies on "blue" paper. There were about 25 people involved in distributing and posting the flyers over the course of a week throughout the Township. We do not speak for the Councillors you "accuse" of being involved but from the statements made, it is clear you have no firsthand knowledge of who, what, when or how the flyers were distributed.

In closing let us again be clear....your statements, and those of Councillor J. Banks, at the May 13th meeting repeat that RLG is responsible for the obvious division on Council. We are the observers of the division but not the cause of it. You should consider that during Council meetings, 75% of the talking and 100% of the drama comes from 5 members of Council itself.

Sincerely,

Wendy Alford

RLGG Spokesperson