

## 5.7 (c)

June 25, 2017

City of Hamilton Councillors:

I'm just one member of a large group "passionate about protecting the unique heritage and character of Dundas."

Our Public Laneway has provided me with many fond memories including walks and bike rides to and from the Dundas Driving Park. To this day, I use it several times per week as it links the street my son's Day Care is on with the street my daughters' school is on.

Len and Heather Medeiros purchased the property of 63 Sydenham Street and wrongfully assumed independent ownership of our 160 year old Public Laneway. They paved a section of our Public Laneway and worse, erected a fence blocking the Public from walking through our Public Laneway. This was quite the way to announce their arrival in the neighbourhood.

Approximately two months later, the CBC did an article about the dispute and just one week after that, the fence came down. Councillor Arlene VanderBeek, who unfortunately for us, claims to be "our Dundas voice on City Council" issued a letter exclaiming the removal of the fence and the withdrawal of the application to close and purchase our Public Laneway. This would prove false and be nothing more than a stall tactic.

In late September, 45 neighbours opposed to the closure and sale of our Public Laneway gathered to show support for it remaining Public. This event was covered by The Hamilton Spectator, who felt the story was strong enough to place it on the front page of the newspaper. In the article, Heather Medeiros acknowledged the Public's use of our Laneway, stating "People (are) always walking by." Len Medeiros added, "We're not trying to start a kerfuffle." If not, what was he trying to do?

October 10, Councillor VanderBeek issued yet another letter to the people of Dundas stating the application to close and purchase our Public Laneway had in fact not been withdrawn. She told concerned citizens of Dundas, "I will ensure the feedback I have received from the community is reflected in the process." Really, Councillor VanderBeek?! Have you done that?

The 600 plus folks opposed to the closure and sale of our Public Laneway want to be heard. Dr. Bob James appeared on AM 900 CHML's 'Bill Kelly Show' as well as Cable 14 TV's 'City Matters' to discuss the issue. A Halloween costume contest for kids that use and enjoy our Public Laneway was held. A walk sponsored by the City of Hamilton

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was organized in which approximately 100 supporters walked through two Public Laneways including the one being discussed today. The walk was supported by Dundas businesses and saw participants receive beer and pizza. It was a wonderful event. Heather Medeiros took to her Twitter account to mock the City supported event, telling our organizer, "You're an idiot." She also used her account to label supporters of our Public Laneway as "pathetic" and challenged them to "bring it on." Is this the behaviour of people 'not trying to start a kerfuffle'?

In February, Public Works installed signs at either end of our Public Laneway, intimidating users while suggesting they find an alternate route. Public Works has repeatedly refused to answer direct questions regarding who gave orders to install the signs and for what reasons. In fact, laughably, Public Works created their own list of Frequently Asked Questions, none of which answered the questions put forth by supporters of our Public Laneway.

In March, after cancelling several Public meetings, Councillor VanderBeek finally held a Public meeting in Dundas where she told those in attendance they were to remain quiet. However, after coming unhinged, she allowed Dr. Bob James to speak for five minutes. Councillor VanderBeek then exhibited rude and unprofessional behaviour and went on a 40 minute rant about our Public Laneway. Shouldn't she have been listening instead? A member of Councillor VanderBeek's Council and a prominent Dundas business owner described Len Medeiros as "a monster" for the harm he is causing Dundas.

The next day a letter is sent to Hamilton Mayor Eisenberger asking for answers regarding the installation of the Public Works signs.

The day after that, the Dundas Star printed an article about the absolute refusal of Len Medeiros to adhere to the Ontario Heritage Act. He faces a fine of up to \$50K for work done on a Cross Street property without a required Heritage permit. Sound familiar? It's the same thing he did when he paved our Public Laneway. Mr. Medeiros obviously believes he can do whatever he wants with no respect for the rules in place.

Most of us believe our Public Laneway is a much safer alternative to Sydenham Street. A Dundas Star article from last September reported a collision between a motorcycle and a child on Sydenham. The City of Hamilton thinks the street is so dangerous that measures were taken to slow traffic down, all while hurting the beauty and heritage of the area. These forced changes affect the character of the neighbourhood.

"Preserve the past and protect the future of Dundas." Is that what you're doing, Councillor VanderBeek? She states that the closure and sale of our Public Laneway "reduces the city's liability." This is our Public Laneway, not a tobogganing hill. Shall we list the Dundas Driving Park and our two arenas for sale, as well? Do not jot that down as an idea.

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A petition signed by hundreds of people opposed to the closure and sale of our Public Laneway was delivered to Public Works. Councillor VanderBeek had the audacity to question the credibility of this document as she only received 24 e-mails from persons opposed to the closure and sale of our Public Laneway. How many do you need for you to finally get it?

In the Public Works recommendation, regarding documents submitted by supporters of our Public Laneway, preparator Miss Preston writes, "City staff did not verify or validate the content." Why not? Shouldn't City staff be practicing neutrality? In the 'Analysis and Rationale For Recommendation' portion of the submission, Miss Preston writes, "Given that no internal stakeholders expressed interest in the alleyway, staff recommend the alleyway be closed and sold to the applicant." This gives no thought to the Public as 600 plus people who oppose the closure and sale of our Public Laneway are completely ignored again. The recommendation further states, "The application to close and sell a portion of this alleyway has brought about significant interest from the community, both in support and in opposition of the sale." This statement is intentionally misleading as the significant interest from the community lies solely in opposition to the closure and sale. It further says that although there has been "considerable interest... in opposition to the alleyway sale, the proposed sale is consistent with the city's practice." Does this mean that the City is well versed in ignoring the Public?

The Medeiros owned LM Enterprises currently holds Public Works contracts worth more than \$9.2M. Councillor VanderBeek chairs the Public Works Committee. Councillor VanderBeek accepted the maximum campaign donation from Len Medeiros. While claiming to have only met Len Medeiros five times, she was able to quote his vacation schedule at the Public meeting in March. Appointed General Manager of Public Works just ten months ago, Mr. Dan McKinnon, came to the position from his role as Director of Hamilton Water, a division that LM Enterprises holds more than one multi-million dollar contract with. Somethin' stinks and it stinks bad!

It is a sad day for Dundas when its residents have to plea for Councillors representing other wards to protect us against the wrongdoings of our own elected Official.

At the very least, I'm asking City Council to pause on this issue and not rush into giving away prime land that the Community has come forth and told you it loves. Please table this for the time being to give the Heritage Committee the chance to do their thing. I quote my brother in this fight, Mr. David Jones. "Why is she supporting one person who wants to purchase the Public Laneway, while ignoring more than 600 Dundas residents who are passionate about preserving the Public Laneway for generations to come?"

Thank you.

Bill Kehoe