

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Words are what we deem them to be?

From: Gabriel Nicholson

Sent: April 21, 2024 8:47 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Dear Clerks,

And just to clarify, this is a communication that I would appreciate being part of the upcoming Council agenda, specifically regarding 12.1 and 12.6.

Congratulations City of Hamilton!

You have allowed the most impressive, yet horrifying, precedent to stand where it comes to the use of Strong Mayor Powers.

And that precedent is the Municipal Act is open to the interpretation of the one wielding it, and if that person always has the power to fire the one who can fire the rest, surely there will not be any pushback on incorrect future uses.

What crazy times to live in a creeping authoritarian society, where whims can be dictated, based not in law, but beliefs.

Doesn't matter what words are used in the Municipal Act, like "the head of council may veto the by-law", if a future mayor wants to come along and 'veto failed parts of agenda while passing the bylaw", then they only have to look back at this time to recognize it's A-OK.

I look forward to a future use of Strong Mayor Powers to delete the Heritage Registry (for housing, eh), banish bikes from the city (for roads, eh) or an unknown endless list of possibilities that will be attainable because today we say "words in the Municipal Act do not matter".

The next election could be won by someone who thinks our staff are competent and made the correct recommendation in expanding our Urban Boundary!

And then Strong Mayor Powers can be wielded for actual housing!

We get there are some in the building who think every new Hamiltonian should be happy living in an apartment, but perhaps those who speak of 'monster homes' shouldn't write opinion pieces from their mansion on their 7000+ sq urban city lot.

If you have it, then others are entitled to it. Imagine an author gorging on cheeseburgers while writing "people shouldn't eat cheeseburgers"...

The Association of Single Family Home Owners Against Other Families Owning Single Family Homes is the biggest blight on our city.

Who knew mansion dwellers are the first to support this unofficial organization and insane advocacy?

As for affordable housing, maybe let's not listen to people who are sitting on a vacant unit today! We understand, tenants suck, and we're busy, and who wants to deal with that headache. And selling now is not an option because the declared income level will just murder any profit in capital gains, especially with this new federal budget.

So we suck and blow at the same time; we care about affordable housing while insisting everyone else should do the work to house people.

Ask not what you can do to solve societal ills, ask how you can duck responsibility and get others to do it?

We are about to waste so much money and create so many travesties with a Vacant Unit Tax, there will be no "Well, we didn't know" because yes, you knew as it's in the media daily about how Toronto is going to lose money on theirs.

Hire 2 employees, give them a phone number, do some media runs on how to notify the city of a Vacant Unit, let them investigate. Other jurisdictions are doing that.

Truthfully, none of this is shocking to Hamilton residents, from a leadership who taxes its citizens over and above the regular rate to address capital infrastructure reinvestment, and then turns around and spends it on the most ludicrous projects or doles it out as cash grants to a few lucky people; all the while absolutely none of the spending has anything to do with the city infrastructure and every now and then someone is opining in the local media how there is no money for the ever growing infrastructure deficit.

The real travesty regarding Hamilton's use of the Strong Mayor Powers is that it was not an unprecedented situation. An item failed on agenda in Mississauga, and the Mayor there advanced the provincial priority correctly.

And she didn't veto a bylaw, either.

regards,
gabriel nicholson