

From: AllanTurnbull
Sent: March 5, 2015
Subject: Letter to the Editor

Hello Dear Editor,

Recently, Don Furniss, Mayor of Muskoka Lakes, replied to a constituent who had written to Council expressing concerns about Swift River Energy Limited's (SREL) proposed hydro plant at the Bala Falls. Here is how the Mayor started his reply:

"Have just finished reading your letter for the third time, because I was unsure if you were talking about the current SREL project or perhaps some vision that exists among certain residents in the Bala area."

Mayor Furniss picked out 3 of the constituent's points to argue with. Unfortunately for the Mayor, he got it wrong on all 3 points.

Point number 1) Mayor Furniss said it would be "highly unlikely" that the proposed generating station would fill the entire Crown land site with concrete. Yet the proponent's own drawing (which has been presented to the Mayor and Council) shows that that is what they are planning.

Point number 2) Mayor Furniss denied that the proposed hydro plant would tower 3 storeys above the road level, claiming that it will only tower 18 feet over it, yet drawings from the proponent's own engineers show that the roof would be 28 feet above the roadway; in other words, 3 storeys. If the Mayor has information that these engineering drawings are no longer valid, he should share this information with us.

Point number 3) Mayor Furniss denied that SREL's original proposal was for a low building, claiming that this referred to the building that they proposed in Option 2, which would have used Township land. In fact, the below road level concept was a promise SREL made in their original proposal which did not contemplate using anything other than the Crown land, exactly the same land that their current proposal uses. Here is a direct quote from that original proposal: they will be "installing a low-profile power house built mostly underground (bunker-type). Its roof will be below road level."

Mayor Furniss finished his reply by lecturing: *"Your request would carry much more weight with me, if it contained current factual information rather than selective misinformation."* It is clear, however, that it is the Mayor who is misinformed.

It is somewhat surprising, after being on Council for over 4 years and after all the meetings he has had with Swift River Energy, that the Mayor is so ignorant of the details and history of their proposal. And I don't know which is sadder: the fact that the proponent can get away with such radical and damaging changes to their original proposal, or the fact that Mayor Furniss, in dealing with by far the most controversial proposal in his Township, seems more intent on spreading propaganda for the proponent than in listening to and learning from the concerns of his constituents.

Allan Turnbull, Bala