

Mayor Bonnette: “If Trump continues to bully, we’ll push back”

**Town passes resolution on U.S. Tariffs:
“Déjà vu all over again”**

By: Vivien Fleisher

In a special motion at Monday’s council, Councillor Johnson read out a newly drafted motion supporting the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ (FCM) in opposition to U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent trade tariffs that have negatively impacted Canada with far reaching consequences. Citing last year’s softwood lumber tariffs that have caused business and economic insecurity, and the recent punitive tariffs on aluminum and steel, the motion supported continuing to work with the government of Canada to support “free and fair trade and vehemently oppose restrictive trade practices.” It goes on to encourage residents to be proactive by becoming informed about the origin of consumer goods and services, and to boycott American—where possible—to protect Canadian interests. The resolution will be forwarded to all levels of government.

Mayor Bonnette followed up with some points about Halton Hills being a prime location for investment, with close to 1,400

businesses, and 21,000 employees calling it home, and that it relies on a strong free-trading relationship with the U.S.

Coming on the heels of last year’s “Most Patriotic Town in Canada” flag challenge he felt “(Halton Hills) should take a stand with our federal government, our newly elected Premier and our municipalities who are going to be negatively affected by a negative trade war.” Both Mayor Bonnette and many on council recalled the town’s response to the U.S.’s 2009 “Buy American” imperative that rolled out south of the border during the economic downturn, causing a loss of 40,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario. This provoked a vociferous response from the Mayor and council then, garnering Bonnette national attention as a real fighter, but in characteristic humour he quipped, “We need to show Canadian backbone, not just back bacon.”

Under the current situation, he reiterated that “no one wants or is encouraging a trade war... this is not a game.” Continued threats have now spread to the auto

industry, and he acknowledged that since drafting the motion last week with councillor Somerville, the pace of new was a lot to keep up with as the Quebec summit on the weekend saw lots of incendiary language directed at Prime Minister Trudeau by Trump and his team. Bonnette also emphasized now is not the time for partisan politics, given how concerned local manufacturers are: their need for support from all levels stems from a worry about retaliation on an individual basis. Mayor Bonnette produced his hockey puck from 2009 emblazoned with the words “fair trade goes both ways.” Councillor Somerville pointed out that while the U.S. is our best trading partner, they were also our worst for always having to get the best deal. Support for the motion was unanimous, with all standing in support. Minor tweaks and some tightening of language to the letter notwithstanding, the intent was clear.

With history repeating itself, Mayor Bonnette was a guest on TalkRadio 1010 Evan Solomon’s Tuesday afternoon show themed around a potential trade war. Solomon characterized the resolution as “retaliation” and a “buy Canadian” motion, but Mayor Bonnette explained it was less about that and more “not buying American”—you can get pickles from India. He went on to say the town hopes common sense will prevail, but if Trump continues to bully they have to push back. “We’ve been to the post in 2009 when America brought in... ‘Buy American’...that affected industries right here in our little town. We brought a similar resolution that went right across Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities supported it. I’m hoping this is a bit of a spark that may light the grass fire. We have such an integrated economy. The whole thing is so ridiculous. Protectionism isn’t the way to go.”

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Advertorial

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