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Mayor blames 'conspiracy theorists' for probe that 'wasted' tax dollars

Continued from pg. 1

In deciding to turn the investigation over to the OPP, Staff Sgt. Don Cousens of Halton Police said it was "because of the fact we had a local council member (Clark Somerville) on the Halton Regional Police Services Board, (and) we wanted that transparency and an independent investigation."

Derrick Williams, a Georgetown resident who was among the citizens who initiated the complaint with police, said Friday he was "very surprised" by the outcome of the investigation.

"The way they (Halton Hills council) wouldn't tell us what happened in-camera we thought there was something wrong. If they had told us, we wouldn't have bothered going any further," said Williams, who has appeared before council more than once seeking answers on the land swap and Andrews' resignation.

The other citizens who filed the complaint with Halton Police were George Marcoux, Stephen Grasby, Al Kirouac and Ted Thompson— all who have had public disputes on various matters with the Town.

The findings of the OPP investigation did not come as a surprise to Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, who said he was confident "there was absolutely no wrongdoing" on the part of council.

"I felt all along that the council acted in the best interest of taxpayers on the land transfer," said Bonnette. "But the police have to follow through because otherwise we would be disappointed if they didn't."

Bonnette said he was "completely satisfied with the investigation," and added it was done by the OPP because "some conspiracy

theorists would have questioned if it was done by Halton Police."

"These costly investigations on whims from a few people in town do cost tax dollars and it's unfortunate that a few in town were going to Toronto national newspapers to discredit

our community and for what purpose— their own political gain," said Bonnette.

McNally, president of NHGCC said police questioned him about the land transfer.

"I couldn't see any other outcome than what they came out with," said McNally, who didn't have any concerns with the golf club's dealing in the land swap, and was confident that council members didn't break any rules or laws.

"I wasn't concerned at all about the whole thing. I found it alarming in the sense it's (the police investigation) a waste of taxpayers' dollars," said McNally.

"There was nothing ever there," said Councillor Jane Fogal, sister of McNally and a member of the North Halton golf club. She was one of the councillors who declared a conflict on the land swap issue, and didn't vote.

"It's just astonishing that people came forward with this," said Fogal.

Councillor Moya Johnson, who also declared a conflict on the land transfer was confident in their actions. Her husband at the time worked at the golf club.

"I was pleased they found out that everything we did was right," said Johnson. "I know when I have a conflict, and always declare it."

The third councillor to declare a conflict was Bryan Lewis, a member of the club.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

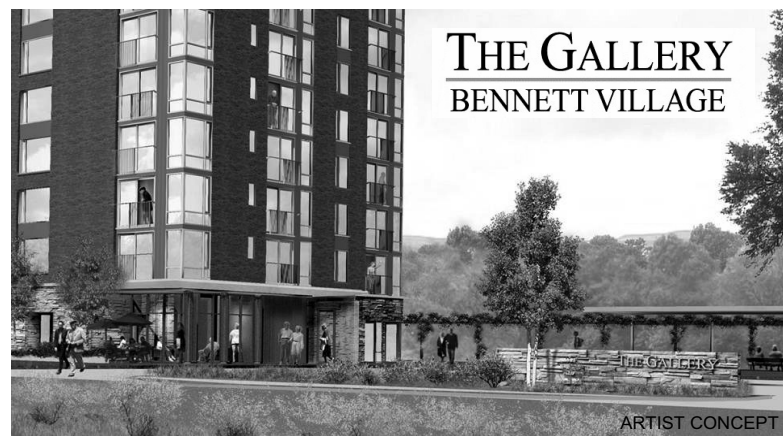


RICK BONNETTE

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