

stouffville comment

Ninth Line: It's about time, region

It's about time. The people of this town may soon be free to drive on Ninth Line without taking their lives into their own hands.

Ambulances may soon be seen rushing to Markham Stouffville Hospital along an unbroken stretch of pavement.

And cyclists and pedestrians may soon be assured they won't be struck by swerving motorists.

Ninth Line is now the Region of York's problem. And what a problem it is. The hope is to have the infrastructure grants cover the cost of resurfacing the road. And not a moment too soon.

Hats off to the region for taking on this responsibility. Hats back on for taking so long to decide it is a regional matter.



Police, Town cooperate on investigation

Are there a handful of bad apples rotting the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to its very core?

Maybe, maybe not. Are there town politicians, and easy-to-be-bought staffers taking taxpayers for a ride and leaving an unethical trail of wrong-doing behind?

Maybe, maybe not. Project 80, a task force set up three years ago this month to investigate a growing number of municipal wrongdoing complaints in the area, has now knocked on Whitchurch-Stouffville's darkening doorstep. This busy government affairs bureau, set up to monitor political operations across Metro and the outlying

municipalities, is now fraud-squading in Stouffville - only the third York Region public office to be subject to legal examination.

Metro Police investigators say they will look into complaints about the possibility of a few grey areas within the files and documents of this public office called The Corporation of The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Police sources say there will likely be a lot more municipal probes undertaken in the next few years across the GTA - noting a whopping 100 complaints recently lodged at Metro's Project 80 headquarters.

Fraud investigators are



working undercover to find out if complaints - and there are some being acted on in Whitchurch-Stouffville - have backbone and warrant a deeper digging into the affairs of politicians whose duties and intentions have been questioned.

Using public office to fatten one's personal bank account is a serious matter.

This is fraud of the shoddiest sort.

Could such dirty deeds be unfolding right under the taxpayer's nose in lily-white Stouffville?

Maybe, maybe not. A thorough five-month preliminary investigation process across this vast 82-square-mile municipality will now focus inside the town buildings to be sure.

Police will either prove to the people that nothing underhanded or unusual is going on - or they will show the people something bad.

And if somebody or something is rotten in the state of

Whitchurch-Stouffville, police say residents can rest assured the culprits will be punished.

And if everything is on the up-and-up, as we would hope and expect, we'll find that out too.

In the meantime, it is important to not speculate. Rumors and innuendo do not serve the public interest in cases such as these. It is best to allow the police room to do their work. The Town, for its part, has offered full cooperation in the investigation.

But at the same time, if anything is uncovered, we would hope it comes to light before the fall election.

Just back from Neverneverland

Peter Pan - Middle-Aged Woman in Tights.

Last Friday, at an hour when most of my contemporaries were no doubt enjoying the blameless activities appropriate to ladies of a certain age, your faithful correspondent was decking herself out in a body-hugging suede jerkin and a pair of green tights.

Just as well I was seated demurely at a table, hidden from the waist down, when *The Tribune* photographer began brandishing her flashbulbs in my direction at the Markham Stouffville Hospital Gala.

The theme of the evening was *The Enchanted Forest*, and I was one of a number of volunteers, reconstituted as fairy tale characters, who were on hand to take care of the guests.

To those who attended, I would like to emphasize that I'm not in the habit of walking around, posh



ballrooms clad in little more than my self-confidence.

When an old friend (male) asked me to dance, I underwent severe gender confusion. I explained to him, with sincere regret, that the volunteers were there to work, and dancing with another man was simply not in my job description.

I thought I detected a sigh of relief and who can blame him? Earlier in the evening, I was standing at the doors to the banquet hall, pointing people in what I hoped was the general direction of their tables, when I was joined by Prince Charming. This was one, cool dude. Tall and handsome, with flowing

blond locks, he had one major flaw. He looked a lot better in tights than I did. It's typical of my luck that I had to meet him when we were both men. And then there was my adorable Tinker Bell - a delightful young lady who was never lost for words, not even when I was desperately trying to sort bids for the silent auction into some kind of numerical order.

At one stage in the proceedings we sat down to dinner, the white rabbit carefully removing his head to eat. Halfway through the second course, I was summoned to be a live auction spotter.

It's not until you do this job that you realize how many people gesticulate wildly during regular conversation, and I can't help thinking the auctioneer would have done a splendid job without my intervention. At least Peter Pan and I have an excuse for our shortcomings. We both refuse to grow up.

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