

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bannon should resign, council call byelection

During November's municipal election, we were confronted with a political rumour regarding Ward 2 Councillor Phil Bannon. The rumour was passed off as community gossip as part of the political game.

However, on May 27, The Sun-Tribune's front page confirmed that lingering rumour as fact.

The rumour we heard was Mr. Bannon had intentions of pursuing the Conservative nomination in the riding of Oak Ridges-Markham for the 2007 provincial election Oct. 10.

My friends and I discussed the issue and asked ourselves, if the right candidate elected to office last year.

On June 7, The Sun-Tribune's editorial stated, "Mr. Bannon knocked off incumbent councillor Mark Carroll four years ago and squeaked past political newcomer Justin Altman last year."

We googled the names and found out Mr. Altman was, indeed, new to politics and, yet more impressively, won nine of 14 polls in the community at large.

The question for Mr. Bannon is if a young man new to politics almost defeats an incumbent, how does he plan to defeat a well-weathered politician such Liberal

candidate Dr. Helena Jaczek in the provincial election?

In our opinion, Mr. Bannon's focus has not been on the constituents of Ward 2, but on his personal pursuit of higher political aspirations.

Did Mr. Bannon ever intend to complete his four-year term as a dedicated and reliable leader or were we nothing more than pawns in his personal political game of building a resume?

Why should taxpayers continue to support and pay Mr. Bannon for the position he now holds?

If he does not win on Oct. 10, are we just second best? Do we really want someone with no true intent of representing us for another three years?

The Sun-Tribune asked if a byelection should be called. What would it cost? Did Mr. Bannon ever think of the cost to taxpayers?

Could that money be the difference when it comes to funding the old town hall arts centre, building a playground at Musselman's Lake or making Main Street improvements?

If Mr. Bannon is so eager to run for MPP, why not hand in his resignation, let a byelection be held and a candidate who is dedicated, reliable and for the people be elected.

SHAWN D'ANDREA
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE



Keep lightbulb hazards in perspective

Whenever a new product comes to market, inevitably it will have flaws that can drive some people to distraction, so much so they may be unable to see the forest for the trees.

Case in point: compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFLs.

Much has been made about switching from standard incandescent bulbs to CFLs to help save energy. On the surface, it's an easy choice. CFL bulbs put out as much light as regular bulbs while using one quarter of the energy.

Incandescent bulbs, on the other hand, haven't really changed much since their invention over 100 years ago. More than 90 per cent of the energy they use actually produces heat rather than light.

With CFLs now on the scene and issues like global warming and air pollution at the top of people's radar screens, it's only natural that switching to CFLs would become

an issue. In fact, I'm even doing a series of advertisements with Powerwise, an energy-conservation partnership between the Ontario government and local power producers, to get people to start replacing their old bulbs.

Still, the switch to CFLs is not without criticism. Some folks suggest because the bulbs use less electricity, people will be tempted to keep them on longer, negating their energy-efficiency advantage.

Others point out all that extra light from people keeping their bulbs burning for longer will add to the burden of light pollution in our cities.

Still others say that the quality of light is less pleasing and lupus sufferers tell me incandescent light is better for them.

Far and away the most common concern is about mercury. CFLs contain a small amount of mercury — a toxic metal. Mercury poisoning can be a serious health hazard.

The term "mad as a hatter" actu-



David Suzuki

ally comes from the days when hat makers used mercury to improve the felt on hats. Many hatters exposed to large amounts of mercury over long periods of time suffered brain damage. Mercury accumulation in fish can also be a health hazard to those who eat certain types of it regularly.

But we have to keep things in perspective. The amount of mercury in a CFL is tiny — many times less than is found in a watch battery

or dental filling.

Coal-fired power plants are the single largest sources of mercury in our environment today, because coal contains mercury.

By reducing our electricity consumption through measures such as switching to CFLs, we reduce the demand for power, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions, along with mercury and other pollutants. Naturally, we have to consider the entire life cycle of a product before we make a wholesale switch. But the stats on CFLs are pretty compelling.

According to Environment Canada, replacing even one 60-watt standard bulb with a 15-watt CFL in each of Canada's 12 million households would save up to \$73 million a year in energy costs and reduce greenhouse emissions by nearly 400,000 tonnes.

This isn't to say people don't need to be educated about the safe use and disposal of these bulbs — only that these shouldn't be used as yet

more excuses for inaction.

Retailers should be required to take back old CFLs for recycling, as a few — such as Ikea — already do.

Consumers should be careful when installing or replacing these bulbs and if one breaks, follow safety guidelines recommended by Environment Canada or the Environmental Protection Agency.

CFL bulbs alone are hardly the solution to all of our environmental problems, but they certainly are a step in the right direction.

They may have their flaws, but they're getting better all the time. Better light, less mercury and shatter-resistant bulbs.

So until something even better comes along, they're a good, simple and effective way to help lower electricity consumption, save money and reduce our environmental footprint — which is ultimately the whole forest we need to see.

Take the Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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