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## Council **reverses decision** that blocked St. Davids project

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Town councillors admit they messed up.  
In the process of trying to approve part of a controver-

sial development application in St. Davids, they say they inadvertently made an error and rejected something that actually had already been approved.  
That led them to get legal advice and then reverse a

decision they made just two weeks ago.  
It's all very complicated, but the result is the entire Tawny Ridge development – which residents campaigned vehemently against – now has the green light.

Two weeks ago, only 12 homes in the first phase were approved and 74 units were rejected – but councillors say they made a procedural error and now they have corrected it.  
Council emerged from a

closed session on Tuesday, Feb. 6 and reversed a decision to deny planning applications for the controversial subdivision project put forward by developer St. Davids Riverview Estates Inc.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said there was nothing nefarious about the reversal and the town was just ensuring all decisions on the project were consistent with

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### The Lake Report honoured with **27 more awards** for journalism

Staff  
The Lake Report

The Lake Report has again been honoured for its journalism excellence, earning a “phenomenal” 27 awards from the Ontario Community Newspapers Association.  
The association on Wednesday unveiled the finalists in its annual Better Newspapers Competition.  
The Lake Report is a finalist in 26 categories in addition to receiving one honourable mention award — more accolades than any paper in the province for the fourth consecutive year.

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On the upcoming expedition, Edward Spera will be providing guests with guidance on how to capture images of wildlife. JULIA SACCO

Julia Sacco | The Lake Report

Thirty years ago, Edward Spera – then a recent graduate of philosophy and psychology – decided to pick up a paintbrush and create something.  
His life was changed forever.

“From memory, I did a painting of a wolf that I saw on a program,” Spera told The Lake Report.  
When his wife saw it, she asked where he had bought it.  
“I told her I had painted it

about an hour ago,” Spera said.  
“That was kind of the eureka moment.”  
At this point, just coming out of university, he wasn’t sure of his life’s direction.  
“I had just finished a degree

in psychology and philosophy – nothing related to what I do now, besides analyzing everything to the nth degree,” he said.  
“My wife had a stable job as a

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### Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson  
Columnist

So many of us have inaccurate ideas about life in other countries.  
For example, it is easy to believe there are murder-

ous cartels in Mexico, often controlling the illegal drug and arms businesses.  
Perhaps true along the borders, but so inaccurate when describing most of that wonderful country and its fine and peaceful citizens.

I just returned from Chapala, in central Mexico, after 19 days of dental treatment.  
The cost was less than half what I would have paid in Canada.  
Why did I get 16 crowns, six root canals and two

plates in Chapala instead of Niagara?  
Back in October, I went to a highly regarded dentist's office here in Niagara-on-the-Lake to get a quotation for required dental work.  
One of the receptionists

was a total professional and enthusiastic about my plan to improve my fairly pearly whites.  
The other receptionist? Not so much.

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## Going to Mexico to avoid Canada's overpriced **dental cartels**

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# NOTL artist leads expedition of a lifetime to Norway

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wedding planner and said that if this was something I wanted to pursue, she would support me.”

He has been painting and pursuing wildlife photography professionally ever since.

The owner of Edward Spera Gallery on Queen Street, Spera has captured thousands of wildlife images from his own reference photos onto a canvas.

“Everything that I create is 100 per cent from the wild, something I’ve seen, with no exception,” he said.

He has interacted with wildlife around the globe, including Africa, India, South America and North America.

When it comes to his favourite animal encounters, one creature takes the win from the artist’s perspective.

“If I could only see one animal over and over again for the rest of my life it would probably be a tiger,” Spera said.

“I’ve seen one more than 20 times now and still, every time I see one in the wild it’s pretty amazing.”

His favourite animal in general, though, is the polar bear.

“They are only in extreme locations and that’s why a trip like this is so special,” Spera said.

After having been all over the world to capture the beauty of wildlife, Spera has partnered with Quark Expeditions to offer a unique travel experience for those wanting to get in touch with nature.

Quark approached Spera to host the expedition in September and by November confirmed the location in Svalbard, Norway.

This may be Spera’s first time partnering with Quark, but he is no stranger to leading an expedition, gathering years of expertise.

“We’ve led clients on journeys to Africa, Kenya specifically, so this is definitely not the first time and won’t be our last,” he said.

This also isn’t Spera’s first time in Arctic conditions, having spent two weeks in Nunavut with 10 to 12-hour days out on the ice.

On snowmobiles, Spera followed many of the animals he hopes to come



Edward Spera discovered his love of wildlife art and photography after painting an image of a wolf from memory. He’s leading an expedition to the Norwegian Arctic. JULIA SACCO

into contact with while in Norway.

He said that while he stayed in an abandoned RCMP cabin from the 1920s, Quark will provide a far more luxurious cruise.

During the expedition to Svalbard, guests will come up close and personal with polar bears, whales, seals,

Arctic foxes and more.

“We’ll be focusing on all the big iconic Arctic species, polar bears, walrus, 12 different types of whales, including narwhals and caribou,” he said.

They’ll use zodiac boats to go searching for those “iconic species.”

While on board the cruise

to Svalbard, Spera will create field studies for attendees, something hosts usually don’t provide.

“During the 14 days I’ll be creating on board and giving a few presentations,” he said.

Spera has been to Norway before to capture images of killer whales: “They are

always exciting trips.”

He has not been on many cruises for excursions before, but Quark Expeditions are much different, he said.

“This is not your typical cruise, this is an adventure expedition,” he said. “It’s very active and the weather will dictate where we go and how long we stay in certain areas.”

“This is a top-notch, qualified ship to be up in that area as well.”

He is familiar with all of the main types of cameras including Canon, Nikon and even iPhones and will help guests with framing and composition and guide with creative creations afterward.

“I’m not going to be locked away in my cabin. I’ll be out in open areas so people can be looking over my shoulder while I work,” he said.

Those who book the Norway expedition before Feb. 28 will be eligible for a discount. After that, prices will increase 25 per cent.

More information is available at 289-895-7638 or [sweatherill@expediacruzises.com](mailto:sweatherill@expediacruzises.com)  
[juliasacco@niagaranow.com](mailto:juliasacco@niagaranow.com)



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