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Canada The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.



Your Lake Report is the proud winner of 96 national and provincial awards for journalism and advertising excellence.



Contributed by Patty Garriock

“Happiness is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable, or happy and strong. The amount of work is the same.” – Francesca Reigler

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Heron hangs out in St. Davids

Photographer Frank Hayes captured this close-up image of a black-crowned night heron on Saturday, at the pond at Line 9 and Concession 3 roads in St. Davids. The birds are most active during the evening and night, when they leave their nests to forage in wetlands. They live in fresh, salt and brackish wetlands and are the most widespread heron in the world, according to allaboutbirds.org.

Opinion

Dividing our world into left and right solves nothing



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist

Rory and his squeeze moved to St. Davids two years ago. Everything was cool until I started writing this column.

“When I saw you were now doing a weekly comment,” he wrote me a few days ago, “I said to my wife, oh no, Turner’s back.”

Apparently Rory, who is of the conservative persuasion, remembers me as a Harper-era MP who was ejected from caucus for transgressions I recently recounted. (Blogging about stuff and opposing 0 per cent down, 40-year mortgages.)

My failure here in the pages of The Lake Report? “You fit right into the mould of most Canadian reporters, total focus on the U.S. totally ignoring the massive incompetence we have going on in Ot-

tawa with our three want-to-be leaders. Trudeau, Freeland and Singh,” he says.

“I really don’t want our local paper to become a media outlet for the Liberals. You can quit anytime as far as I’m concerned. I used to enjoy picking up our paper.”

So there. Despite having been elected as a Con and even running to be leader of the Progressive Conservative party (remember them?) I’m now a lefty schmuck. And that comes from a column published here detailing what might happen to Canada if Donald Trump were elected.

(To refresh your memory, this includes a trade war and corporate tax cuts leading to higher stocks, more inflation and fatter interest rates, say economists. The deficit and debt would jump and deporting 10 million people would rattle labour markets. A leading bank economist says all this would push Canada into recession and raise our interest rates by almost 2 percentage points. Ouch. Imagine what mortgages at 7 per cent would do.)

Well, lots has changed in the past couple of weeks. Biden’s toast. Harris is ascendant. The election is a

horse race. So what would a Kamala victory mean for we little beavers on this side of the river?

Rory will be happy. It’s not all good.

“She is no moderate,” says Scotiabank’s chief economist Derek Holt, a man I have respected for decades.

“She has been a highly divisive voice with natural tendencies aligned toward the far left end of the Democrats.”

Whazzat mean?

Free trade with us could be impacted since Harris opposed the current deal as being too weak on the environment.

“Her stance could well make her no friend to Canada,” Holt says. She would reverse the Trump-era corporate tax cut, which would certainly whack stock markets for a while.

She’d increase taxes on the wealthy, regulate AI and start taxing financial transactions. Plus a lot more social spending, including a Canadian-style health-for-all plan.

This stuff curls the toes of Trumpers. Economically, it also suggests inflation and higher rates may return.

America is already staggering under almost

\$35 trillion in debt. And remember that our Bank of Canada follows the Fed 93 per cent of the time. Rates zip higher there, they swell here, too.

OK, now what about Rory’s charge of obsessing on the U.S. and letting the bums in Ottawa go uncriticized?

First, we don’t have an election. They do.

Second, what happens there ends up happening here.

Third, it’s not the media’s job to pick sides.

Fourth, flushing out the government in Canada actually doesn’t change the fact houses cost too much or 8,000 people in NOTL have no doctor and the fine woman on Queen Street who gives Cody treats every morning was told to wait a year for a simple MRI.

Dividing the world into left and right, as the Americans are doing (and we’re following) solves nothing. One side is not right and good, the other wrong and evil. Trust me. I’ve been on both.

And that’s why Rory hates me. Tough.

Garth Turner is a NOTL resident, journalist, author, wealth manager and former federal MP and minister.

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Editorial

Poilievre is truly great — at pandering

Richard Harley
Editor-in-Chief

Pierre Poilievre made a stop in Niagara-on-the-Lake last Thursday.

Here is a leader who at first might seem informed, capable of holding rational arguments and making good points.

But what he's really the best at is pandering, lying and misleading.

He panders to a crowd that's so anti-Liberal, they're willing to eat up and digest anything he says. He's hoping that voters so dislike Justin Trudeau that they won't see beyond his simplistic, bumper-sticker rhetoric.

Here are a few examples of just how good Poilievre is at spinning webs of lies that sound, to the ill-informed, like truth.

And warning, there's a lot of purposeful misleading and contradiction to unpack here, but it's all closely related. So bear with us.

Firstly, we asked him what his party would do to ensure it supports local journalism.

His answer?
"Free speech."

"I am going to repeal the censorship laws, make it possible for Canadian news to be visible again on Facebook, Instagram and all other social media platforms," he said.

"And get rid of the terrible censorship laws that have taken those news stories down from the internet and deprived independent local media to have a voice."

OK, let's digest this: there's no such thing as a censorship law. Full stop.

We assume he's referring to the Online News Act (Bill C-18), which is aimed "to ensure that dominant platforms compensate news businesses when their content is made available on their services."

In other words, when big players like Google or Meta share news content created by Canadian media companies, and benefits from the billions of views those stories produce, then companies like Google must pay for that privilege.

The law is simple, fair and in the best interests of Canadian journalism organizations — and something Google has agreed to, by the way.

The only "censorship"

being done is solely by Meta (which runs Facebook and Instagram).

The company has not agreed to pay its fair share and in response to the laws Canada passed to help ensure journalism organizations get paid, it has banned Canadian news on its platforms.

This shows the core values of companies like Meta are not to help you, but to exploit you.

So recap: Poilievre calls Bill C-18 a censorship law, which it absolutely is not. He's being blatantly misleading. And to the average, uninformed voter who doesn't understand it, it could seem true.

We mean this with as little offence as possible, but he's relying on his voter base to not be smart enough to know the difference.

It might sound good and pander to the right people to say he's fighting for "free speech." But in reality, in Canada we already have freedom of expression thanks to the Charter of Rights.

"It is terrible how ... local journalism has done under nine years of Trudeau ... And now, of course, media and journalism is stronger than ever today."

PIERRE POILIEVRE
CONSERVATIVE LEADER

The next of his lies ties directly in with the lies we just discussed

We asked a question about the future of the Local Journalism Initiative — a government-funded program that pays salaries of many journalists across the country.

His response?

"It is terrible how ... local journalism has done under nine years of Trudeau. He's tried to take it over and basically wants everyone to work for the government so that he can have regurgitated propaganda paid for by taxpayers."

This is completely false.

The Trudeau government has funded the Local Journalism Initiative, yes.

But let's digest this, too.

As editors of a journal-



Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre delivered a plethora of lies during his visit to NOTL, forcing The Lake Report to respond with the longest editorial it has ever published.

ism organization, we can simply say it's not "terrible" how local journalism has done under nine years of Trudeau. In fact, the LJ program is one of the reasons local journalism can thrive in small communities, often called "news deserts" because they have no local coverage.

They don't have a big newspaper and often issues go uncovered because of a lack of reporters covering the area.

Secondly, the notion that Trudeau wants everyone to work for the government and has "propaganda" placed in newspapers is simply ridiculous.

Firstly, LJ reporters don't work for the government. They work for the news organizations that receive the funding. The only person who ever tells reporters what to write about is their editor.

Notably, several conservative-leaning news outlets receive the same funding.

And secondly, the notion that any legitimate newspaper would simply print "propaganda" for any party is ludicrous.

We won't even print a news release without asking questions and vetting the information — as some local NOTL media organizations regularly do.

You will never find verbatim Liberal or Conservative news releases in our paper. Or from any party.

If we did, the majority of

the paper would be Conservative MP Tony Baldinelli's constant criticism of the Liberals, and the Liberals constantly tooting their own horns.

"One of Poilievre's tactics is to throw out so much misinformation, that it's almost impossible to fact check it all, especially on the spot."

RICHARD HARLEY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
THE LAKE REPORT

(Note how we just criticized Baldinelli's approach, even though he advertises with us. That's how journalism works. Advertising with us buys you an ad, not favourable coverage.)

The reality is local news is the least partisan news you'll find anywhere because we report on municipal council and local politicians, who are not beholden to any political party.

Our ideals are our own. They are carefully thought-out, with the best interests of the whole community in mind, and have nothing to do with funding from a government program.

For Poilievre to suggest newspapers like ours are only Liberal-leaning because we receive funding

from the LJ program is insulting, out of touch with reality and just another way to pander to people who lack critical thinking skills.

Does he think that if he keeps the program running, news outlets are going to magically turn Conservative because we're so grateful?

It's almost cute, how ignorant he must be.

He would like you to believe Justin Trudeau is funneling orders to organizations like The Lake Report. It's simply not true — and the worst part is that Poilievre must be smart enough to know it. He's just hoping you buy his baloney.

Perhaps he is afraid that with a healthy media he will continue to be called out on his lies and misleading statements — exactly like what we're doing here.

Next we asked him again point blank what he plans to do with the LJ program.

His answer was that media should be funding itself "and do what media have done for, I don't know, 3,000 years?"

Simply, we have to ask, how out of touch can a person be, when from one side of their mouth they're saying they would repeal laws that give media fair compensation from giants like Google and Meta, and on the other side he says those organizations should be funding themselves entirely?

With one hand he's cutting our income flow and giving it to billionaires, and with the other he's criticizing media for not being able to make enough money and saying the government shouldn't be helping keep an essential democratic function alive.

He goes on: "And now, of course, media and journalism is stronger than ever today because we have the internet, which allows for more voices to reach Canadians and that competition is positive. We can't have the government try to shut down competition just to favour those who favour the political viewpoint of Justin Trudeau."

Again, there's a lot to unpack here.

Firstly, did he just say media and journalism is doing better than ever? We thought he just said how much we're all suffering under Trudeau?

Can't this guy make up his mind?

He's just pandering again. So don't take anything he says too seriously, people.

Secondly, the government isn't trying to shut down anyone. The government is trying to help keep local journalism organizations alive, largely because real journalists are the only ones who will give you the whole story.

"Citizen journalism" like you see on TikTok and Facebook, created by amateurs who don't really know what balanced journalism is, is often littered with untruths, accompanied by half-baked opinions and in general isn't really news.

Citizen journalism — a term that shouldn't even really exist because it isn't journalism — doesn't usually cover council meetings. If it does, it often comes with bias.

It doesn't continue to follow stories to the end. It often convicts people before a court can.

There are a litany of problems with citizen journalism and Poilievre's mindset that journalism is doing just fine because every Bob and Sue can post on Twitter is not appropriate for someone who wants to run this country.

Run it into the ground is more like it.

We realize this is probably the longest editorial we've ever published. Yet, it might be one of the most necessary editorials yet.

Because one of Poilievre's tactics is to throw out so much misinformation, that it's almost impossible to fact check it all, especially on the spot.

It's why he often appears to eat journalists and other politicians alive. Because he's on another planet and it's almost impossible to have a rational conversation with someone who just makes things up.

So it's our duty as a free press — one that isn't going to take anything at face value from any political party — to call out Poilievre's dangerous lies. Or his inability to comprehend the truth.

Either he's lying to you and knows it. Or he's just incompetent.

And because he's not a stupid man, it's not hard to figure out. If you think critically about what he says.

187 Queen plan **diminishes** cultural landscape



Brian Marshall
Columnist

So, if you thought the battle to preserve the Chrysler-Burroughs property at 187 Queen St. was done with town council's close-fought vote that defeated the owner's rezoning application to allow for this historic, heritage designated property to be carved up and significantly altered ... think again.

This week the application, supported by a staff report — significantly enhanced from previous iterations — recommending acceptance, is scheduled to come before the town's committee of adjustment.

The application by the owner of the property, Rainer Hummel, proposes to sever the original historic lot into two parts, create a new driveway off Queen Street to service the proposed front lot compromising the 19th century contextual orientation of the house and land, while profoundly impacting the designated home's facade and historic presentation with a two-storey addition that includes garage doors fronting on Queen Street.

Now, for contextual purposes, let's visit the history of this property.

Completed circa 1822, the dwelling — very likely designed in the cubic form Regency style — was constructed as the home of R.M. Crysler, a prosperous merchant here in Niagara-on-the-Lake and member of Upper Canada's notable Crysler family.

Originally, the facade of the house probably fronted on Queen Street. However, when the property was sold in the late 1830s, the new owner, Charles Hall, embarked on a substantial project to remodel the home

in the latest architectural style — Greek Revival.

An addition was built on the easterly wall which altered the dwelling's square footprint to rectangular. Fluted pilasters with carved ionic capitals were installed to visually support a substantial cornice set with modillions that wrapped the entire house.

To complete this remodel, an impressive entry way was introduced into what had been the side wall of the house (possibly because the proximity of the house to both Queen and Simcoe streets would not allow for the construction of a statement portico in keeping with its new Greek Revival style).

Importantly, this alteration established the building's facade orientation into the lot as it still presents, 187 years later.

Some eight or nine decades later, the portico — no doubt in substantial need of repair — was rebuilt in the then-popular Classical Revival style while the rest of the building retained its Greek Revival elements.

This historic gem has anchored this section of the Queen Street streetscape for 202 years.

And, its deep original lot — as surveyed in the late 1700s — has served to echo and enhance the open space opposite on Simcoe. Moreover, located as it is, open to view from the street, it provides a very rare glimpse into the historic land requirements of 19th-century town dwellers to grow food for their tables.

Therefore, I would argue that, combined, the land and dwelling fulfil virtually every requirement to be classified as a critical component and vitally important element of Old Town's cultural heritage landscape and history.

Indeed, this is why, according to the Burroughs family (who had the property designated in 2002), the inclusion of “the lands” in the designation was done. They viewed the entirety of the land and building as inextricably conjoined in terms of heritage.

Hence, the document in



For 200 years this house and property has anchored the cultural heritage landscape at Queen and Simcoe. A history which may be under the chopping block. BRIAN MARSHALL

Schedule B under “Designation” reads: “This designation applies to the lands and more particularly to the entire exterior facade and structure of the house, the exterior doorcase and entrance portico and to interior features including the early trim and doors on the first and second floors, all existing fireplaces and mantels, original pine floors and both the main and rear staircases.”

But, to no one's surprise, town staff do not see it that way.

Indeed, while they admit that the designation document states that it “applies to the lands,” they argue that because “the lands” are not specifically identified as an individual heritage attribute (included again after the words “and more particularly”) then “the lands” are not intrinsic to or “contribute meaningfully” to the property’s cultural heritage value or interest.

Finally, working from this premise, they suggest that “severing the property does not diminish” its heritage or cultural importance.

It is a patently fallacious argument based on the completely untenable position that the words “more particularly” can be used to

limit or quantify the existent heritage attributes that contribute to this property's cultural heritage value or interest.

But let's move on ...

The second last paragraph of Section 5 (Discussion/Analysis) reads:

“Staff are of the opinion that the policy framework has been sufficiently addressed by the applicant through the submission of supporting documentation, and do not anticipate adverse impacts to the heritage character of the dwelling, adjacent properties and the overall character of the neighbourhood.”

Since I am not a planner, let's accept that the author of this report, with a university degree and four years of work experience in the discipline, is sufficiently qualified to advance the opinion that the policy framework has been sufficiently addressed. However, exception needs to be taken on the next three items.

Consider the first point claiming there will be “no adverse impacts to the heritage character of the dwelling.”

Allowing a severance will require a driveway entrance to the new, smaller designated lot. There are

two options, one off Simcoe Street and the second off Queen Street.

Now, the Simcoe option is feasible and, at 30 feet, 11 inches, would just barely allow for the construction of an attached garage off the easterly wall of the designated dwelling within lot setbacks (given that this would be considered a side yard setback based on the orientation of the house).

Accepting that the separating link from the designated dwelling to the new addition would be severely constrained — or eliminated — this option has some merit in that it presents the least impact, albeit not “no impact,” on the heritage elements of the designated dwelling.

On the other hand, the Queen Street option, which the applicant has advanced, is a completely different story.

In this scenario, and the one generally recommended by town staff, the gracious front lawn in front of the building's facade has been replaced by a drive court. A single-storey 12-foot link has been attached to roughly 25 per cent of the designated facade that leads to a two-storey garage with living space above, that has

its garage doors presenting
directly onto Queen Street.

Not only does this option adversely and significantly affect the 187-year-old heritage facade and its historic grounds, but it would be the first allowance of an attached, directly street-fronting (20th-century phenom) garage on the entire length of Queen Street — something that carries with it a very dangerous precedent for future applications on this anchoring street in Old Town.

Not to mention it requires the removal of a relatively young, but completely healthy boulevard tree, thereby reducing even further NOTL's inadequate tree canopy — the lowest in Niagara.

The next point referencing “adjacent properties” can be generally summarized by suggesting the single shouldering property on Queen Street would be acceptably impacted, however, the shouldering property and the facing property on Simcoe would be profoundly affected.

The third point, suggesting this application would have no impact on “the overall character of the neighbourhood,” we have already visited in this column so, in summation, allow me to suggest that granting the severance as presented, would fundamentally and irreversibly diminish the cultural heritage landscape of NOTL.

If you agree, be present in the council chambers on Aug. 15 to respectfully voice your opinion before the committee of adjustment. Provincial legislation allows that any person physically present in the chamber during this meeting must be heard and their comments documented to be included in the committee's decision.

Again, it is back to you folks ... stand up and be counted or accept a future town designed by unsympathetic developers working in your backyard.

Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.

A promotional banner for Niagara Golf Warehouse. On the left is a logo featuring a golfer in mid-swing with the letters 'NGW' in yellow. The text 'Niagara Golf Warehouse' is prominently displayed in a large, bold, black font with a white outline. To the right of the text, a man is shown wearing a grey polo shirt and khaki pants, standing next to a red polo shirt and a white hoodie. Further right is a QR code that, when scanned, likely leads to the discount. To the right of the QR code, the text '30% OFF ON ALL APPAREL' is written in a large, bold, white font on a green background.



LETTER OF THE WEEK

Build elegant retirement residence, not a hotel

Dear editor:

Having read all the columns and letters to the editor of The Lake Report over the last few weeks, here are my two cents' worth.

The development of a "five-star" hotel by Benny Marotta's Two Sisters Resorts on King Street and the Hummel hotel on Queen Street are faux pas in so many ways. It's obvious when looking at all the negatives and trying to find something positive.

Despite what the tourism strategy experts have suggested, the addition of two more large hotels is superfluous to the needs of the market, when other

hotel owners admit to empty rooms in all but the summer months, casting doubts about economic viability.

The negatives are compounded by their inability to hire suitable, or in many cases, any, staff at all.

Hundreds of Old Town residents directly affected and accompanied by others who see the light have even been irate enough to march on the town hall with placards to protest that such power has been assumed by the lord mayor and council.

They agreed to allow building heights of 62 feet and disregard the 36-foot limit of the official plan and

the residents' right to quiet enjoyment.

All of that by a simple 5-4 vote. Democracy gone mad.

The decisions are in direct opposition to the views that they expressed to be elected.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town is unique. It's different from everywhere else and that's why people come here, for the wonderful world-class theatre and wineries.

There will, however, be a limit to NOTL's attraction if its small-town historic charm is overwhelmed by architecturally irrelevant buildings, such as those proposed for King Street and Queen Street.

As residents, we tolerate a lot of traffic noise but the addition of thousands more vehicle movements by the overnighers, weekenders, wedding guests and commercial deliveries will push us even closer to the brink ... to the point when the "five-star" visitors will conclude that NOTL is way too busy to put on their bucket list.

However, it's not too late to save the situation. Ask Mr. Marotta and Two Sisters to build something that is desperately needed and would be welcomed with open arms: An elegant retirement residence.

Hamish Kerr
NOTL

Trash cans were overflowing during Peach Festival

Dear editor:

I live in Toronto, but frequently visit your lovely town.

I was in Niagara-on-the-Lake last Saturday enjoying the Peach Festival.

However, as I have noticed several times in the past, your open garbage bins on Queen Street were filled to overflowing and not only looked disgraceful, but were definitely also a health hazard.

As well, a racoon dragged a plastic bag of garbage onto the property of one of the lovely homes on the street and made a huge mess.

I do think the Town of NOTL should look into having much more frequent garbage pickup, particularly when the town is hosting these special occasions.

Melissa McGroarty
Toronto



Letter writer Melissa McGroarty was among the thousands who flocked to NOTL for the Peach Festival. She says the Town of NOTL's garbage cans were overflowing. SUPPLIED

Why only three stars for 'remarkable' Shaw play?

Dear editor:

My spouse and I enjoy our weekly reading of The Lake Report for informative news, restaurant and winery ads, special events and Shaw Festival reviews.

The review of Shaw's "The House that Will Not Stand" left me puzzled, ("A remarkable play and

excellent debut in Canada," Aug. 8).

Command of language, excellent. Context description, excellent. Period appearances, great.

Headline for the review: "Remarkable play" got me.

We head over the bridge to scoop our tickets but hold on. Hit the brakes.

Your reviewer gave it just 3 out of 5 stars.

Why? Let's see, ah, direction? Acting? Boring? Poor seats? No British accents?

Bill O'Neil
Williamsville, N.Y.

Editor's note: Reviewer Penny-Lynn Cookson appreciates the feedback and

notes the play is a wonderful contribution to learning about the history and life in New Orleans at the turn of the 19th century and future implications. While 3 stars may have been puzzling to some, to earn 4 stars requires a wonderfully executed and performed production, like "My Fair Lady."



We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com or drop them by our office at 496 Mississagua St., NOTL.

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An alternative view of the migrant farm workers program

Dear editor:

When I and maybe others read The Lake Report's story, "New migrant worker crisis line not the solution, advocate says, Aug. 8) our minds naturally went to the migrant farm workers in our area.

The program for our migrant farm workers has been going on for more than 55 years. However, now the program also apparently includes migrant workers in different industries: restaurants, fast-food chains, hotels, etc.

Therefore, when Kit Andres speaks of the foreign worker program, is Andres including all migrant workers or only specifically about our farmworkers?

Let me advocate against this. If our farmworkers were given permanent residency, we might no longer be assured that we could bring our tender fruit and vegetable crops to harvest.

The workers would be able to leave our employ and find a job elsewhere. That is the main reason this program began in the first place. Farmers could no longer find reliable help to see the crop through from start to finish.

Migrant farm workers are not slaves to their employers. They sign a yearly contract and are free to decline a position before the start of the following year.

They can request to go to a different employer or they can decide to stay in their home country. It might also be difficult if migrant farmworkers are granted permanent residency.

The worker would no longer have a rent-free, utility-free place to live, they would require transportation to and from their place of employment and in almost all cases would be unemployed after completion of the year's farm work.

They would still have access to their Ontario Health card (as they do now), the worker and most likely the family being brought with them would now not have access to a drug or dental plan.

Currently they are insured through Cowan Insurance, which is far cheaper than what it costs self-employed farmers to buy into.

As for migrant workers being mistreated, if Kit or anyone else has knowledge of this, they must report it to the appropriate liaison department.

It is sad, but true that mistreatment may occur, however it can and does happen in many workplaces that have nothing to do with migrant workers.

Our workers come here in order to give their families a better life back in their home country. It is a sacrifice for them to be away from their families, but do our armed forces not sacrifice the same for all Canadians' benefit?

It is a privilege for us that sacrifices are made by our migrant workers as well as our military.

One thing I tried to accomplish years ago was to have the government lift the restriction on deducting EI from these workers as they could not collect if out of Canada while not working.

It could be a bonus for them not to have EI deductions.

Overall, I think that whenever articles appear denouncing the problems faced by migrant workers, it should be specifically stated what type of migrant worker is being spoken about as, for the most part, Niagara uses only the migrant farm worker program and it is excellent.

Susan Pohorly
NOTL

Why don't some councillors respect town's official plan?

The following letter was sent to members of NOTL council. A copy was submitted to The Lake Report for publication.

There have been many concerns expressed regarding the handling of two recent development applications by Niagara-On-The-Lake council members. Both applications were approved by 5-3 votes.

It is probably safe to say most residents do not want council members to reject development applications on principle and expose the town to significant costs associated with appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

In addition, most residents likely do not support council members rubber stamping approvals of development applications to avoid what may be legitimate appeals to the tribunal.

There must be valid reasons for approving or rejecting any development application.

It is quite apparent that any development applications for large-scale residential proposals must take into consideration the province's overarching mandate for increased housing achieved through higher densities.

The track record of the Ontario Land Tribunal solidly favours developers on residential development appeals.

However, it is not prudent to apply the same criteria to other types of development applications.

In particular, there is likely an opportunity for a different approach to official plan and zoning bylaw amendments required for commercial development.

The recent approvals of two large commercial development applications for hotels are such cases. It is suggested that the province does not have the same imperative to encourage such commercial ventures as compared to its stance on residential development.

Decisions are more focused on criteria detailed in the town's official plan and zoning designations of land in its bylaws.

For instance, the Parliament Oak property requires a significant change from institutional to commercial zoning and locates a large hotel in a residential area.

Further, with the application for a second hotel at Mississagua and Queen streets, the two hotels will have a combined 210 rooms. Both applications require amendments to the official plan and zoning bylaws.

Why are certain members of council reluctant to enforce compliance to the official plan and zoning bylaws to prevent these unsuitably located big commercial developments in the already overcrowded historic area?

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