

OPINION

I hate to say I told you so, but council finds a way on fluoride

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I hate to say I told you so, but...

I floated the idea last week that maybe, just maybe, city council could end up in a position where the rulebook suggests we must fluoridate water in Cornwall – but a tie council vote could throw some confusion into the mix.

Guess what happened Tuesday night? Instead of simply voting on whether or not to complete upgrades at the water filtration plant (completing the work automatically ensures fluoride returns to our water) Coun. Andre Rivette called an audible of sorts and decided to ask councillors individually if they support water fluoridation or not.

His motion was totally unscripted and not included in the meeting agenda.

And, as someone who kind of predicted last week this might happen, the vote ended in a 5-5 tie.

Those against water fluoridation, including Mayor Leslie O'Shaughnessy, interpret this as the official end of the practice here in Fun City. But proponents of fluoridation are having none of that.

Coun. Denis Carr, for example, thinks the mayor is wrong and plans to do some research to determine just what Tuesday night's decision means. He thinks a two-thirds vote from council must take place to reverse the previous fluoridation policy.

He's not alone. The five others who voted to keep Cornwall's water fluoridated are likewise trying to find something, anything, that will keep this issue alive.

Not long after Tuesday's vote I turned to a fellow sitting beside me and muttered something about this city council and its efforts to organize a two-car funeral.

This issue, which has been about as polarizing as you will find, could have finally been put to rest Tuesday night if council simply followed the agenda and voted on the motions put forward. A vote on the water filtration plant upgrades would have finally ended this whole shemuzzle.

A vote against the upgrades kills fluoride. A vote for them means fluoride returns. It's that easy.

Instead your city council, thanks to Rivette and his short-sighted idea to ask councillors specifically about their support for fluoride in general, resulted in not only a tie vote, but real concern that this issue could continue to be debated at city hall as politicians knit-pick over procedures.

Things were supposed to be finally put to rest Tuesday night. But instead you should fully expect to see more fluoride headlines in the days and weeks ahead.

The real problem with that is there finally appears to be a razor-thin council majority being created, in spite of Tuesday's tie. In addition to O'Shaughnessy, councillors Claude McIntosh, David Murphy, Maurice Dupelle and Carilyn Hebert are against water fluoridation. You can also throw Coun. Justin Towndale into that group as well. Before he left for basic training Towndale made comments that suggest he is against water fluoridation.

Even if council finds its head and actually gets around to voting on the filtration plant upgrades, it appears any vote to complete the work is likely



to end 6-5 against.

So, let me make this one suggestion: let the fluoride issue go. Those who lost the vote Tuesday night don't have the support they need to see the practice resumed in Cornwall.

Any moves to suggest otherwise would be a colossal waste of our time – and we've already beaten this subject to death.

WE WON

As a fellow who was against water fluoridation, Tuesday's events at city hall have to be taken as a victory. We all knew the vote on fluoride would be a close one, and even a 5-5 tie has to be taken as a win by anyone who wants to see fluoride continue to sit on the shelf.

I feel happy for the workers at the water filtration plant. Their job just became a whole lot safer

now that they don't have to worry about hydro-fluorosilicic acid, the highly toxic substance that is added to water to create fluoride.

And finally this makes sense from an economic perspective. The \$340,000 to complete upgrades at the filtration plant, in addition to annual operating cost increases, can now be set aside and spent on something else.

If we were getting more bang for our fluoride buck I might think otherwise, but with most of our fluoride being used to wash our clothes and cars, water our lawns and flush our toilets, does it really make sense to spend so much money on the practice?

I still say no...and thankfully just enough people agree with me and the thousands of others in the community against fluoride.

See you at the dentist's office ;)

LETTERS

Mulcair punished for campaign disaster

Dear Editor:

Tom Mulcair's ouster as the leader of Canada's NDP at the federal NDP convention on April 10 is a repudiation of the disastrous campaign run by Tom Mulcair and the central party in the October 19 federal election with its cautious platform, failed strategy of moving the NDP to the mushy middle, lack of vision

and poor messaging.

The federal NDP can now renew itself under a friendly, progressive leader who inspires people, who listens to the party members, and who works with our allies in the community.

Going forward, the NDP must be true to its social democratic values and principles and make income inequality, tax fairness, climate

change, good paying jobs in a green economy, and improved public healthcare, pensions and child care the centrepiece of a social democratic platform. That compelling vision is the path to victory.

The federal NDP is fortunate to have several potential leadership candidates such as Megan Leslie, Nathan Cullen, Avi Lewis, Alexandre

Boulerice, Paul Dewar, Niki Aston, Charlie Angus, Peter Julian, Brian Topp with the social democratic credentials, passion, and skills to present the NDP as the real progressive option for everyday Canadians. Let the renewal begin.

Brian Lynch,
Past President,
SDSG Federal NDP association

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