

Arnprior Chronicle 5-8-07

Conflict arises at

McNab-Braeside council table

By JAKE DAVIES
Chronicle-Guide Reporter

Veteran McNab-Braeside councillors feel they are being left out of the loop on township matters.

Coun. Jim McGregor put forth two motions at McNab-Braeside council on May 1 in an effort to feel more included in council initiatives and decisions.

McGregor feels many recent issues have arisen giving him concern for some of Mayor Mary Campbell's decisions.

While discussing the mayor's report, councillors McGregor and Elzias Raycroft were concerned over the use of the township logo in an advertisement run in this newspaper promoting an April 24 meeting that was not an official township meeting.

"Really it's troubling," Raycroft said. "It's not official. It never came to council. I think this is totally unacceptable. They used our logo."

The mayor accepted responsibility for using the logo saying it was a mistake.

But that was just one of the complaints McGregor had.

The mayor's report discussed the Kinship McNab-Braeside Community Association meeting held at her residence on April 24. Campbell wrote 15 individuals showed interest in the formation of a community association and 10 showed up for the meeting to discuss the idea. The report said discussion covered general purpose and the group prioritized their concerns.

The top three were protecting water quality, "Clean, Green" township - addressing roadside rubbish and protecting the

Braeside Alvar.

"When I see protecting the Braeside Alvar, I wonder if it's a guise of some sort to stop Miller's (excavation, which owns a pit nearby)," McGregor said. "If the alvar is important, why don't we protect all the alvar (on both sides of Golf Course Road)? It smacks of stopping Miller's."

Coun. Raycroft pointed out there wasn't supposed to be any established committee on the issue until the township received an official application from Miller's to expand the pit. "You are putting us as a council in a very bad situation," Raycroft said.

The mayor defended the association saying "the kinship association is not a task force that is anti-Miller's. That was just one of the dozen projects proposed." Campbell said she hosted the meeting but was not making any decisions during the meeting.

"If someone comes to me for my help, I'm going to help," she said. "I'm troubled you are suspicious."

Raycroft feels these actions could put council in a "bad light" with the Ontario Municipal Board, which would deal with any appeal Miller's potentially could file if council turns down a pit expansion request. More than a year ago Miller's Pit wrote a letter to the then-council stating it might apply for a zoning change in the future.

"We as a council are supposed to be neutral," McGregor said. "I don't want to be seen as taking sides. I don't want it to be used against us."

"Two representatives of council were (at the April 24 meeting)," Raycroft said. "I wasn't invited. I don't know why you went ahead with this without informing

council."

McGregor was concerned there was a relation between the proposed community association and Friends Addressing Concerns Together (FACT) - a special interest group opposed to quarry expansion.

Campbell said there were three members of FACT at the meeting but said "it is intended as a community association."

"Everything this township needs is not going to be completed by five people," the mayor continued defending the need for the association.

She also pointed out community associations are effective at attracting and qualifying for grant money Campbell said she felt "trounced on" by other council members for supporting a community association.

Continued on Page 3

Council motion requests more transparency from M-B mayor

Continued from front
No councillors were against a community association, some were worried the association might have political leanings.

Raycroft feels making the Braeside Alvar a priority for the community association is putting the cart before the horse. In the mayor's report Campbell wrote she met with Ministry of Natural Resources officials to investigate options and process in taking measures to protect and retail Braeside Alvar. She wrote completing classification of the Braeside Alvar is estimated to cost \$80,000 in consulting fees.

"I don't see why you seem to want to jump the gun and go to the Ministry of Natural Resources (regarding the zoning of land)," Raycroft said. "I thought the planner was going to do that. We have other priorities here."

Coun. Raycroft mentioned the landfill site as an important issue. A \$50,000 scale will need to be purchased in the future.

"There is no sugges-

tion from me for us to hire a consultant," Campbell said.

"Some of these actions trouble me," Raycroft said. "You are doing things on your own without informing the other four members of council."

"In my point of view, I'm bringing information back to council," the mayor said. "I understand council resents this."

"I don't feel like I am part of the process," McGregor said.

Coun. Andy Dunlop defended the mayor's position.

"It's just information," he said. "By madam mayor going up there and pushing buttons, maybe that will make things happen. It's a recommendation and that's it. We don't have to accept it."

"(Protecting the Braeside Alvar) has nothing to do with Miller's the mayor said. So why are we talking about Miller's?" Raycroft asked. "I think you are taking council business to your private residence and shutting us out," Raycroft said. "I didn't go there purposefully because I

didn't want to jeopardize myself. These things are very dangerous to council. You are the mayor and you can't take your hat off for one day."

"I was very clear to them, if they want to qualify for grants they have to remain apolitical," Campbell said. "I've already apologized for using the logo three times. If (meetings) were not at my residence, would that make you more comfortable?"

Raycroft feels all things with the township logo or involve council should be dealt with "under this roof," referring to council chambers.

"If it's a bona fide group that's going to work with council, I think this chamber should be offered to them free of charge," Raycroft said.

The motion requested the mayor of the township of McNab-Braeside be more transparent with all of council, staff and ratepayers in that the mayor individually not make unilateral decisions about any matters affecting the township and its business and that council as a whole make the deci-

sion for the township.

McGregor requested a recorded vote and all five members voted in favour of the motion. McGregor mentioned the 417 intersection discussion the mayor had with the Ministry of Transportation, use of the township logo, the meeting with the MNR and "possible other meetings," as issues he was concerned with.

"As a councillor I'm trying to voice the opinion of other ratepayers," he said. "I want to be more involved in decision making and I want transparency in decision making."

Raycroft also brought up the Vision 2027 workbooks.

"We had no input on that initiative," he said.

The mayor felt things being introduced to council as information is being taken out of context.

"There are lots of things I'll raise for conversation," she said. "Nothing is cast in stone. I don't think I'm making decisions unilaterally."

The second motion put forward by McGregor requested the mayor not

personally create, formulate or write any part of the new official plan or its drafts. Also, the planner only take direction from council as a whole and the process be kept to a minimum.

Again a recorded vote was taken and all but Mayor Campbell were for it. Campbell was against the motion based on no more focus groups.

McGregor said he forwarded this motion because the mayor once offered to help write the document.

"And that has bothered me ever since," he said. "I don't think council members should have any more influence than another. I want this to be a normal official plan. I do want the opinion of the public. Let's get on with the job."

McGregor said every meeting with the planner would be a public meeting and council would have at least one meeting to present the plan.

The mayor said, "I was just offering (to write the document). I thought I could save the township money."

County - McNab