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How the ?Not in my Backyard? petition started

To the Editor,

Not in My Back Yard ? NIMBY ? started because Bancroft council decided to leave the sale of our dump on the table ? just in case. I did talk to some of the council before I started the petition. I was told to bring 35 letters in and that should be enough to take the sale of the dump off the table. So that was my goal. I thought that if I got 35 letters letting council know that we did not want our dump sold that they would put forth another motion and they would agree to at least take the sale of the dump off the table. That was my original intent.

It has been said that what I did was divisive and that I was pitting Bancroft and Dungannon against each other. The truth is that I met very few people in either ward who want our dump sold or used to bring in garbage and/or recycling from other townships. My husband and I own property in both wards and we don't want our dump sold or used by other municipalities. As I told the council, we are known as the mineral capital of Canada and have no desire to be known as the garbage and/or recycling capital of North Hastings. There is a majority of residents in both Bancroft and Dungannon who feel this way.

We also know that this and previous councils have quite often not listened to the people and unfortunately, the only way we have to fight back is to wait until the next election and then we get to have our say. I thought this time I would at least try to let this council know how its constituents feel about our dump. NIMBY does apply to us. They have chosen to disregard my efforts and those of many others and to tell others that it was just a waste of time because the dump is not for sale. The problem is that this council has left the potential sale of the dump on the table for them to do as they wish. They are not willing to take the potential sale of the dump off the table so I feel like we, the people, need to continue our efforts to be heard.

All levels of government are responsible for the crisis that Bancroft is now facing. And the people of Bancroft in both wards know that selling our dump or using it as a depot for garbage and/or recycling from other municipalities is not what we want. You can ask almost anyone in our community and you will be hard pressed to find anyone who thinks selling our dump or letting others use it is a good idea. From the richest to the poorest they know that short-term gain for long-term pain is not the solution. It will only be a Band-Aid for a system that is failing its most vulnerable at all levels. The recent increase in water and sewer rates means we will have additional people going hungry or having their hydro shut off or going without heat or having their water and sewer shut off. To me these are all basic human rights that everyone should have access to, especially in a country as rich as Canada. We are not living in a Third World country. To find that all levels of government have let Canadians be forced to make the decisions of whether to have a roof over their heads, heat, eat or flush the toilet is telling of just how far removed all levels of government in Canada are from the reality of struggling Canadians.

I have spent a lot of time and effort showing this council that their people do not want them to jeopardize our dump for a few million bucks. Our provincial government can spend millions on advertising to tell us how great they are. Where are they when citizens of Ontario are being deprived of basic human needs and rights? They have downloaded and overcharged Bancroft millions of dollars. Estimates are that Bancroft has paid over $7 million more than its fair share just in OPP costs in the past decade. I know that the problems run deep but I am still optimistic that a solution other than our dump can be found. We need politicians who are willing to talk to their constituents in an open and honest dialogue that is being done in good faith. You can't negotiate when the playing field is not level and others hold all the cards and the power and are not really open to even listening to the opinions of others.

It is very disheartening to have your voice and over 500 people's signatures ignored. To have a council who have never even looked at the original letters and petitions. To have a council that are so determined that they are on the right path that they are not even willing to listen to their constituents and continue to make decisions behind closed doors. However, having said all that I also believe that ultimately we are all on the same side. I have to believe that we all are concerned about the well-being of all of our citizens especially those most vulnerable. Just because we have a difference of opinion and have been asking a lot of questions, does not mean that anyone is against this council. However, it also does not mean that we will quit asking questions or stop voicing our opinions. I feel very strongly about the dump issue and I know that others do as well. I feel like this is a good time to start an open and honest dialogue. The people deserve to be told the truth, the good, the bad and the ugly. We deserve to know how our money is being spent and why we are in such bad financial shape. Honesty and transparency are waiting for you to open the doors.

Wilma Brethour
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