

De-amalgamation Meeting in Chemsford
By Lorne Taylor

This was the de-amalgamation meeting in Chemsford held before the election in Sudbury. The organizers had no sound system, they tried to rent a hall from the city and it was refused. And so they sat in what was once a small theater discussing their frustrations. "There were 12 Councillor seven for were from outside areas and five were from the city of Sudbury when the vote for amalgamation was held three years ago. If the Councillor's from outside the city had only stuck together we wouldn't have to be here tonight discussing de-amalgamation.

The organizers invited a lot of Councillor's candidates to the meeting in hopes of getting them to say they supported de-amalgamation as part of their platform. The lady candidate Lousie from ward 5 from the east end with a high squeaky voice deplored the fact that the city would not rent a hall to the group. She ran in 1994 when the area had a two-tier system of government. She won then and it seemed to work. But then a group decided they wanted a single tier system of government. The problem is we are creatures of the provincial government and they make the decisions. Here we are 2006 and people are not satisfied. Why do we need Mr.Langivan and his panel to go around and asked people what the problems are. We know what the problems are. We pay more for taxes and we get less services. We were told we would get lower taxes and more efficiency. We didn't get that. I believe if you elect the right candidates de-amalgamation will happen. You people have started something that is second to none. Everyone is talking about you. The momentum is there and will only grow. We pay our taxes keep paying them pay millions of dollars worth. We should have equal services but we don't have. You people started something good for you I'm proud of you.

The candidate from Ward 9 was next. I was a Councillor for nine years. I was not in favor of amalgamation then and I'm not in favor of it now. And here tonight to support this movement of de-amalgamation. With many others -- we've gone door to door to support the movement. We must continue to fight and never let the goal go out of sight. We need the support of all the communities. The Councillor's letter written now should be put out to pasture. They are hired a consultant to find out why we are having problems. We need an open-minded council. This is not about you and I. it is about our kids and the future of our community. The day after the new council is in place they should sit down and set up a referendum so before the next election comes along we know we can have a de-amalgamation vote. It will be a lot better than we have today and for a lot less taxes.

John Rodriguez said that the present Councillors should've taken the transit to see all the communities. But when the present bus schedule to be three years to accomplish. My decision to run started when the school board I work for decided I was too old to work. The kids thought I was great the staff thought I was great and the parents thought I was great but so how when I turned from 362 days to 363 days suddenly I became

incompetent in 24 hours. So they retired me. The first day following Labor Day in 2005 about my usual time, five o'clock in the morning, and I get ready my shaved in my paced through the house, picked up my bags, but I had nowhere to go. My wife got so pissed off at me she said "why don't you go down to Tim Horton's, I hear all those retired guys at Tim Horton's. Get out of the house". So I went to Tim Horton's and I wasn't there five minutes when I knew we had a problem. A big problem. Because I was hearing all that has been said here tonight. So I said to myself. I'm not one to sit back and complain and bitch about things as they are. I want to see things as they should be. I should be asking why not, and I am paraphrasing Robert Kennedy. So the people in the Tim Horton said to me "why don't you run for office". I said I will think about that. I thought about it and I've thought about it and I thought, could I and make a difference?. Could I turn things around. Did I have the skills to bring people together. To build on communities. To give ownership of communities back to the people who live in the community. I've heard these horror stories. I live out in Capriol. We built our playground facilities. We built our recreation facilities, our arena. A lot of people did bake sales. We control who use those facilities. Local people use those facilities. Now you have to go to the White House. When you go to the White House you have to fill out a permission slip. Then after screen you as to what kind of meeting you are having. And if you're having a meeting which does not jive with what they are thinking, then they do not give you permission to have the meeting in your own hall. A hall that you build and you paid for. It is your community. These decisions are being made somewhere else.

So I decided, after praying on it, it was a big task. And after discussing it with my wife, and listening to friends, I decided to seek the mayoralty of the City of Greater Sudbury. The feelings you have. The feeling of not being part of this Greater City of Sudbury. Some call it the greedy city of Sudbury. That feeling is not unique to you. I received the newspapers from Ottawa, my two sons lives in Ottawa. People are not happy they're with in their amalgamation either. And for the same reasons you have just been describing. Evelyn talked about the things that really tick people off, but you in Rayside Balford and Valley East are not the only people, who are ticked off about the city of greater Sudbury. The people inside the city are too. The people in Donovan too. You think you've got things rough. Have you ever driven on Kathleen Street lately. It's a new system if have for gallstones. They put some water in your tummy and shake the stones and break them up so you can pass them out. You don't need to go to hospital for that just drive on Kathleen Street. The people in Llewellyn. I got a call the other night from a guy that used to be a planner from the city. There are a group of citizens now in the Llewellyn Park area where he lives that are really ticked off about the decisions this dysfunctional council is making. The rock tunnel is number one. They paid their sewer charges on their properties and now they're going to have to pay again. They are hopping mad. They are hopping mad about decisions of development in their community. You are not the only ones who are feeling alienated from the City of Greater Sudbury.

I entered this race because I felt I could make a difference. I want to work really hard and return the communities to the people who live in the communities. I want to develop some structures were by once again people can make decisions about things in their community. So I want to have the people in the community determined whether

playgrounds are going to be, how many arenas they will have. So you don't have to go up to city hall and ask some bureaucrat and say please, Sir you paint my arena. No you have to make that decision. And budgets have to be decentralized so the communities can make those decisions. Because you know best what fits your community. When they set up the city of greater Sudbury they use in cookie cutter. They thought everyone was the same, you use the cutter and stamp out the cookies. But the communities are different. They have different aspirations, different ways they do things.

Question is that why they screwed up the ward system?

It's quite possible, said John Rodriguez. I never understood what Donovan had in common with Azilda. (Much applause). The one thing you do have in common with Donovan is they are just as teed off about what is happening to them as you are. I think that the city, I know it is a truism, but there is a lack of leadership in City Hall. (Applause). The issue of alienation. It took them three years to discover people are unhappy. Instead of setting up Floyd with a committee and giving him \$75,000, to go and find out what it is that is bugging you. They should've come to face the people. This is where they belong. I hear it from you so went Claude makes his argument before council they understand where he's coming from. That's the important point of all that. You have a problem with taxes. So the people in the whole city of greater Sudbury. We are taxing people out of their homes. The assessments are going up and up and you multiply the assessments by the tax rate and you get these humongous tax increases. On top of that we have tacked on service charges. Water charges, and sewer charges. I want to say Mr. Chairman and to Claude that scenario of the rock tunnel, the compromise was to pay \$3 million from the developers in the know with the other dollars 4 million is coming from? It is coming from the surplus in the sewer and water account. It means they have had to overcharge to have accumulated surplus account. So what they did was they are making you pay more so the developer can pay less. I like the mathematics if I was a developer. But I find me or you I don't think it works. It doesn't work. They cannot even make the decision, they tried three times, they had to recess, and come up with a scheme.

They've hired a consultant, I want to tell you that I had an accountant look at the city books and try to find out how much they spent on consultants this year. The figure that was embedded, they hide the figures, Claude put the print these figures for me. We've come to the estimation and it is \$10,000,000 on consultancies. I am the first to admit that I do not know how to make a blueberry pie. So I would ask Eveline to come and consult on my blueberry pie. But if Evelyn says to me you've got to put their and that there could cook at this temperature and I said no I don't have to listen to that I will do it my way. They hired consultants, they paid them with your and my tax dollars and then when they give advice they ignore it. The consultants on the rock tunnel said the developers should pay their share of the rock tunnel. They said they should not exclude the ICI. Why in gods name would we leave money on the table. When the school is built, or a hospital is built, the provincial government picks up 99.9% of the cost. So why would we relieve the provincial government of paying the developing charges. Why did we give the province of break? I don't know when the province has given us a break. So we have a real problem. The consultants and the bureaucrats at City Hall said look we have one of

the lowest developmental charges in the province, and this is what we should do. They rejected them. And we ended up, 11 months to make a decision.

The Kingsway. The guy makes a bid, gets the contract to pave it up to the bypass. Then he comes along after he started the project and said I didn't figure oil would go to \$70 a barrel so you have to bail me out. \$8 million. City Council paid him the 8 million dollars. My question or did the \$8,000,000 come from. Now oil is down to \$66 a barrel. Do I get a refund? (Laughter)

I want to tell you that around City Hall has built up a culture of entitlement. I think you've heard about it when Paul Martin had his problems with the scandals in Québec. A culture of entitlement. These people spend money like it's somebody else's money. Sudbury Hydro. 14, it's 10 members now on Sudbury Hydro. The mayor and three Councillor's and each of them get paid \$8,300 plus they get \$150 for attending a meeting and then \$125 for meals.

Many of the candidates were there including the man that won the election to be mayor. He was asked very straightforward question. Do you support what was happening? Do you support the denial of citizens the rental a hall to hold a meeting that concerned them? If you were elected and he got a council and supported it would you vote for de-amalgamation.

John said when you leave the hall tonight you have to be very clear on my position. I do not like to start with the end of the story. When I read a mystery story I do not turn to the back of the book to read how it ends. I like the suspense. So I want to start with the premise that I think I have the ability and this is why I got into the race as mayor, I have the skills and the ability and the experience to bring people together. That's where I'm coming from. I'm not starting off by saying let's break up the marriage right now. Because then I would not have run. I'm running because I think I have those skills experience and the ability to bring people together. To return the community to the people who live in the community.

You are not answering the question.

I am answering the question, said John.

You asked me if I was elected in three months and I had a council that was for de-amalgamation would I be in favor of putting that motion before council. I'm saying that's not where I want to start.

Question. If that motion came before council in three months after elections than you did have the support of the Council and the vote went through we would not see the

referendum for another three years. But the leave it for another three or four years were looking at eight years.

John answered if you elect a physicist and seems very Council and they're totally for de-amalgamation there's nothing to stop them from putting it on the floor. But you're asking me a question that at this point don't even know will pass.

Question well know we get screwed by our federal provincial and local politicians. If the referendum said to de-amalgamate how much power does that give you?

Someone on the committee answered it will take two years before it ever comes to vote, then the voters will have to decide if they are in favor of the de-amalgamation. If they want out the problems will have to look at it. None of the amalgamated municipalities have de-amalgamated. There are 24 applications for de-amalgamation. Every community that was forced into it is asking to de-amalgamate. The City of Ottawa just requested it at the end of July.

Before de-amalgamation it was easy to go council meetings and see where decisions were made and have input in our local communities. The community is filled with volunteers. There is no feeling for a greater Sudbury. Each community has its own direction of where they want to go.

This is a scandal. You don't need 10 people sitting on the Sudbury Hydro board. They used to do it with five people. They ran the Hydro. It's really nothing to sit on the board. Meetings don't last that long. Councillor's can almost double their salary by sitting on those commissions. That takes people off. It ticks me off. Because our hard-earned tax dollars are being spent in this reckless fashion. I have made it my mission to rein in these expenditures at City Hall. I'll go back to shrinking the Hydro board to five. The mayor doesn't take any salary for sitting there. There should be no Councillor taking any salary for it. They are paid to be a Councillor in the recent report, they paid a citizens committee to look into salaries of the Councillor's came back and said our Councillor's are overpaid. So they froze salaries for four years. Maybe we should roll it back. If they are overpaid we should roll back.

Question. We don't even have Sudbury Hydro in our outlying districts. We have Ontario Hydro.

Your right, said John Rodriguez. It's a good point. The mayor, said on the eve of the election they set up the Laughren report to take the heat off of de-amalgamation. Then after the sharks were having a feeding frenzy he set up a committee to set up the finding of the committee. It's called staking a claim. I recommend it for your reading. It really is a very good document. It documents the lack of leadership at City Hall over the last three years. In their points out that we in the Sudbury area have not gotten our fair share of taxes from the mining giants who are now earning billions of dollars in profit. Nickel now at \$13 a pound I remember when I was MP it was a \$1.50 per pound and if I dropped below that they had to close the operation down. Do you remember those days.

I remember them well. And then Inco and Falconbridge chose what to do with the men that were laid off because they close down and left them out of work. We decided we would grow grass, so the taxpayers and the professors at the University developed a plan and we re-greened the Sudbury basin. Remember that. That's what the guys did. Many of you in this room remember being up in a helicopter dropping lime on the hills, and then seed. I remember it well because I was MP at the time.

While the city can only assess buildings above ground. The city has no power to assess what is under the ground. And Inco and Falconbridge are like moles now. They live underground. The garage is our underground. Their laboratories are underground. The offices are underground. These are buildings we cannot access any more. They are bringing onto the property trailers. We cannot assess trailers. So they've been busy knocking down buildings and going underground. The only people that can tax what is underground is the provincial government. Yet this council has been silent. The leadership at this council has been silent in demanding the provincial government have a new regime for taxation. So that we can have relief. The bulk of every infrastructure improvement falls on the backs of homeowners. It does not matter whether you're in Rayside Belfour or in the city proper or out east and falls on the backs of the homeowners. We cannot be doing that. We can't do it. We don't have a small businesses, the array of industrial development that Southern Ontario has. All we have are those very wealthy companies. That's all we've got. And they are not paying their fair share. The other day I was in the city at Tim Horton's. My wife says it's my second church. While I may I get my sustenance there and I don't have to listen to a sermon.. So anyway I'm sitting there on South Boulevard on Berry Down and I've got my coffee and suddenly this shaking. I grab my coffee because I didn't want to have one drop of that golden elixir fall to the ground. I holding onto my cup. It's the Inco trucks. This trucks of beaten up the road to hell. I thought there was a bylaw that they are not supposed to be in the curb lane. We paid down that road resurfaced. The resurfaced Berrydown three years ago but it's gone now. We've just done a little stretched in front of Wal-Mart and its gone. These trucks are going 24/7. Down the road and we are paying to upgrade those roads and services. I think they are running through your highway here too. They don't pay a penny to keep the road. They used to haul there or on the rails from Levack. But CN and CP thought they had Inco and Falconbridge by the throat and they put up the freight rates. Into one Falconbridge decided to go by road. So they got Day and Savard to haul their stuff. Now we the taxpayers have to take responsibility for the roads. This is not fair. We need the voice of leadership. We have a lot of reasons to feel alienation. We do not have the leadership we deserve. That's why I'm running.

Question all of us pay taxes on those roads.