

Maggie Preston-Coles
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Monday, June 17, 2019

East Ferris Council
East Ferris Township Office
390 Hwy 94
Corbeil ON P0H 1K0

RE: Council Meeting Tuesday, June 11, 2019

To the East Ferris Council:

After much consideration and deliberation, I would like to address a concern I have regarding last week's Council meeting on Tuesday, June 11, 2019. Councillor Lougheed brought forth a motion to declare East Ferris in a state of Climate Change Emergency. I addressed Council as well in support of this motion. As we both noted in the meeting, several other municipalities in Ontario, including Sudbury and West Nipissing, have passed this motion and have declared their municipalities in states of a Climate Change Emergency. Along with my verbal statement, Ms. Lougheed also had a stack of letters from residents, including youth; from the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit; and from Dianne Saxe, former Environmental Commissioner. At the end of Ms. Lougheed's very factual and well-informed presentation, she received a round of applause from the residents who were in attendance at the meeting. This very clearly demonstrates a strong degree of support from our local taxpayers and voters.

In response to Ms. Lougheed's presentation, the following comments were made by her fellow Councillors:

- Mayor Rochefort: "You have brought up a very important topic". This is an understatement. We are reaching the point of irreversible damage that is being imposed on our planet. This is fact, not opinion; experts from a wide variety of disciplines have engaged in relentless attempts to "convince" people of the dire situation that we are in. This is not a point I wish to argue given that highly educated individuals in the field of climate change and environmental issues have scientifically proven that climate change is not just "very important", it is priority.
- Deputy Mayor Voyer: "I believe in climate change" (but not that it's an emergency)
- Councillor Kelly: Mr. Kelly listed many actions that the township has undertaken and is continuing to undertake for the environment. As Ms. Lougheed mentioned, this was not meant to be an insult to members with regards to what is being done or not being done.

Mr. Kelly stated as an example that residents are under septic pump requirements. I have been a resident of Corbeil for 10 years and have never been told, verbally or in written form, by the township to have my septic system pumped.

- Councillor Trahan: "We can only do what we can do in our own backyard, and we're doing pretty good". To this I respond with the following familiar story:

Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can't return to the sea by themselves," the youth replied. "When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water."

The old man replied, "But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference."



The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, "It made a difference to that one!"

adapted from The Star Thrower, by Loren Eiseley (1907 – 1977)

Despite an outpouring of public opinion, Council voted against passing this motion. As Council members, you have stated that climate change is a concern for you; however, you have demonstrated the opposite in your words and actions. An amendment to the motion brought forth by Ms. Loughheed was presented, which had already been planned out prior to the Council meeting. This clearly demonstrates that the decision to reject this motion was made ahead of time, regardless of Ms. Loughheed's presentation and of public opinion.

It was evident that the public in attendance at this meeting was disturbed by the decision. One couple walked out, visibly upset, and my daughter, a York University Honours Undergraduate

student, left in tears out of frustration. She is currently taking courses that are addressing the desperate need for action on the climate change issue.

At a Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 14, 2019, a letter from a resident was presented by Ms. Loughheed, requesting that Council cease the use of plastic water bottles at Council meetings. Plastic water bottles continue to adorn the tables at bi-weekly Council meetings.

Council of East Ferris, you are not listening to us. I know that I can speak for many residents when I say this. You have most likely become aware of increased attendance at regular Council meetings. There is a reason for this. We want you to know that we are watching and we are listening. We need you to be accountable. We voted for you to represent us, your residents. You have been elected to support and to protect the public interest.

As Ms. Loughheed noted, this declaration would not affect the municipality's budget and would only benefit its' citizens, environment, and infrastructure.

On behalf of numerous East Ferris residents, I strongly encourage you to reconsider your decision and declare East Ferris in a state of Climate Change Emergency.

Yours very sincerely,

Mrs. Maggie Preston-Coles
East Ferris Resident, Taxpayer and Voter