

Feb 3, 2025

Re: PAC/HAC Community Members Dismissed

Councillors,

My Name is Mark Kehoe and I'm a resident of Upper Vaughan. I recently received a short, unexpected email from the municipality that my citizen position on the PAC/HAC committee was terminated. I had applied and been accepted for this position for the 2025 fiscal year. I took on this role with gratitude, pride and the feeling of inclusion. Our community of Upper Vaughan has never had a citizen voice at the planning review table, and it was an honor to participate on the committee. I felt the community member team was very well balanced and all did a great job with recommendations and opinions of the public.

I'm very disappointed that the mayor felt our contributions were inadequate and somehow not up to his approval or inline with his agendas. His motion to remove all the citizens from the committee and replace them with all council members is not only disappointing, but a blow to our democratic system. I'm equally disappointed in the councillor's that supported the mayor's motion without giving it adequate thought. No notice was given to the committee or the public regarding this policy change and it was quickly done with no rational discussion.

So basically, West Hants now has a PAC/HAC Committee that is Councillors advising Staff on how to advise the Council to direct Staff.

Community participation should be encouraged in all committees and should never be considered less valuable because the discussion is coming from a citizen. Is it really that concerning that a Glass Maker, a Nursery Grower, an Actor, etc. make recommendations to council that don't even have to be followed. Our mayor is a shop keeper and is making economical and environmental decisions that will change our communities and their way of life for generations. I'd also question conflict of interest issues because the mayor and deputy mayor are both land developers in Windsor. Should they have the ability to mold a Planning Committee to suit their criteria?

It makes no sense to make a policy to create less democratic procedure.

I strongly recommend council reinstate all citizen committee members to complete their appointed term for 2025. If changes to this committee member policy are to be made, they should go to proper debate and discussion with council and the public and if approved, begin in 2026.

Please consider this request.

Sincerely,

Mark Kehoe

Upper Vaughan