

2022 09 05

Mayor and Members of North Kawartha Council

## **Re Report to Council Dated Sept 1 2022 Request for Disaster Recovery Assistance ( MDRA & DRAO)**

I feel compelled to share my views on this report for the benefit of Council Members

### **Background**

Property owners on Jack Lake were all summer anxiously awaiting a decision from the Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding whether financial assistance would be forthcoming to deal with uninsured storm debris. There was no organized collective request advanced from affected property owners to the Province although various communications took place with MMAH staff and the office of MPP David Smith. Mayor Amyotte who through her initial assigned role under declared state of emergency... on FB post claimed to be hopeful that financial assistance would be available from the Province but we saw no formal communications of a request for assistance from North Kawartha Council....just assurances from the Mayor that she was in regular contact with MPP David Smith.

It came to my attention that the Mayor and Council of Ottawa formally through a Council motion on June 8, requested that City of Ottawa be designated for Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians ( DRAO) . This was of interest to me as the Mayor of Ottawa is Jim Watson ...previously Minister of Municipal Affairs ....so he would be very familiar with the strategy for getting assistance through DRAO.

So , on July 7 about a month after Ottawa formally requested assistance, I requested that North Kawartha Council pass a prepared provided Council motion formally requesting our area be activated for DRAO. I do not believe this communication was received by Council. (Included at end of Letter)

On July 15 I was advised by the CAO that "Please be advised that myself and Mayor Amyotte discussed your letter during our agenda setting process and determined that your request is redundant and we have already been working closely with MMAH the Ministry responsible for Disaster Relief and therefore, have not added it to the Council agenda for July 21. (my emphasis added)

### **Discussion about Disaster recovery Assistance for Ontarians (DRAO)**

Now 2 months later, the CAO Solman recommends in her Report to Council dated Sept 1 that Council request MMAH activate disaster recovery assistance.

I and other I have discussed this matter with have serious concern about the administrative protocol that I as a ratepayer, can submit a request to for Council consideration ..and then the Mayor can intercept it denying Council being aware of my request be instructing that my letter not be placed on the Council agenda. Regardless of the township procedural bylaw and whatever statutory obligation exist related to the Clerk advancing correspondence to Council, I sense that it is inappropriate for the Mayor to interfere with my communications with Council. Until I further clarify this procedural irregularity, I will need to both communicate directly with the Clerk and Members of Council directly to avoid risk of by communication being censored by the Mayor..

**Was my request on July 7 redundant as allegedly determined by Mayor Amyotte?** I have given the Mayor's ruling of redundancy a lot of thought. I have been given Mayor Amyotte benefit of the possibility that through MPP David Smith directly or his office... that it was redundant to advance my prepared motion request to Council..... as she possibly had already been made aware that the Province had made a decision not to declare our area eligible for disaster relief funding. It is my conclusion that my request in July was not redundant as if fact the Township had not formally requested to be eligible for relief and no Provincial decision on our area had been made.

**The requested in report from CAO Solman dated Sept 1 for Council to now activated the disaster relief funding is redundant. Why????** The Province has now complete their assessment of our area and determined North Kawartha did not meet the criteria for activation of the relief funding. I have been advised of this decision and would expect that based on previous claims that township staff is working closely with MMAH that Township staff and Mayor would also be aware. Since the Province has completed their assessments and determined that North Kawartha area is not eligible, there is no need to formally request assistance after the decision is made so that request now before Council is definitely redundant.

## **Discussion about Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance (MDRA)**

On the evening of May 21, following the storm, I was in the Apsley and area, and it was apparent to me that no damages were evident. Subsequently it was learned that significant area damages were concentrated on the North Shores of Stoney lake and Jack Lake . Street chat in the following days indicated that the only damages incurred by the North Kawartha Township was two missing light fixtures near Mount Julian but no structural damages to any infrastructure. The Mayor's FB video reports, possibly to justify the declaration of state emergency, claimed widespread damage affecting the township from Lasswade to Stoney Lake and need to rebuild infrastructure. Without knowing better it sounded like the NKCC was likely flattened. In fact the significant infrastructure damages was Hydro One lines mostly servicing waterfront properties and as this is not a municipal utility it did not directly impact NK storm damage operational responsibilities.

CAO Solman gave Council a Storm Update dated July 16 which was mainly a repeat of already posted information on the North Kawartha web sites. The most significant part of the report was one line under Financial implications ---- **currently estimated at approximately \$300,000 in recovery cost and storm damage**. I found this to be confusing as previously I understood from street talk that despite FB Mayor embellished damage reports... the only damage to township infrastructure was the two light

fixtures at Julian Wharf. So I requested and received from the Township the Preliminary Assessment Questions About Municipal and Recovery Cost submitted to the Province which included **\$249,312.00** for damages to two roads which had been refurbished in 2021. When questioned by Council on this item the CAO claimed she had a quotation for this work which I requested but have not yet received. When I learned that the impacted roads were Napier Cres and Chebouteion Dr , I immediately drove to see the damage and could not see any! I made a second trip and walked part of the roads and I did observe limited very minor scuffing but nothing that looked like it would trigger any needed repairs. Despite a claim that these roads require \$249, 312.00 in repairs they are by far the best quality roads in the township.

Can the Province be that incompetent that they would actually approve a fabricated claim which is based on either incompetence or alternatively deliberate or accidental fraud. **Surely each Council member is obligated to go view these roads to comprehend the scale of deception in this scheme to extort provincial funds from a program based on false documentation** and ....also as I did request a copy of the quotation for road repairs in the possession of the CAO. The credibility of the Recovery Cost estimate discredits the integrity of the North Kawartha Township and **my recommendation would be for Council to have staff withdraw that exaggerated cost recovery submission to the Province.**

Allegedly Hydro One damaged the roads with their equipment ... which was discussed at the Council meeting and it was indicated that Twp would be having discussions with Hydro. Sounded like by mid July... many weeks after the damage was done no one had discussed the issue with Hydro One. I had discussed this issue with many cottagers ..... and one person was so fascinated by the story that he called Hydro One Customer service Manager who was not aware of the alleged damage. Apparently, and this is not based on firsthand information ..he took the position that he would meet the township Road superintendent at the site and if Hydro one was responsible they would take care of repairs and definitely this alleged cost was not eligible under Provincial disaster relief funding.

As you can appreciate, if the Township rightly removed the claimed road repairs of \$249,312.00 the total North Kawartha cost would be closer to say \$50,000 which easily could be absorbed in the existing applicable department operational budgets without fabricating a questionable claims to MMAH for cost recovery.



**Ambrose Moran**

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2022 07 07

Municipality of North Kawartha

Att; Clerk Connie Parent via e mail C.Parent@northkawartha.ca

**Re Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians (DRAO)**

As far as I and others are aware, North Kawartha has not requested that Minister Clark activate DRAO for our township to provide financial assistance for the storm clean up for eligible properties.

This is a request that Council introduce and pass the following or similar motion at their next Council meeting.

*WHEREAS: The Municipality of North Kawartha experience a Derecho windstorm resulting in a natural disaster on May 21, 2022 resulting in extensive property damage to area property owners within certain portion of the township*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: the Council of North Kawarthas hereby request the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to immediately activate the Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians (DRAO)*

*And FURTHER THAT: the Clerk provide a copy of this motion to Premier Ford and MPP David Smith*



**Ambrose Moran**

Acting the Independently

