

The Orono Weekly Times

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Orono residents support Richards

To the Editor,

We, the undersigned Orono residents, are vehemently opposed to Mayor Abernethy cutting Jim Richards' delegation short on April 26th because he said that in his opinion our Regional Chair (Roger Anderson) was a bully. Mr. Richards has a right to his opinion and in a democracy, he has the right to express that opinion.

Whether we agree with Richards or not is not the question. What is at stake here is our highly cherished fundamental rights as stated in the Canadian Charter of Rights. The Mayor or Council have no legal right to curtail freedom of speech in this case.

We understand that council has a by-law to govern how people make delegations to Council. Among other things, that bylaw states that people cannot make derogatory remarks about others. Who gets to decide what is/isn't derogatory? If the Mayor decides, then that is just his opinion, just like Richards has an opinion about the Chair. Is it only elected officials who get to inflict their opinion on others?

Mr. Richards appeared before Council again on May 3rd to ask the Mayor for an apology, but was denied. This is not the kind of democracy or community we subscribe to. Is our Mayor now acting like a bully?

This whole affair smacks of censorship and the Mayor and Council owe Mr. Richards an immediate apology.

Signed,

*Orv Holland,
Barb Holland,
Andy Borremans,
Gord Lowery,
Vance Allen,
D.E Steward
Majorie Lowery,
Gerald Robinson,
S. Block,
B. Charland,
Dorothy Kelly
and Stewart Wood.*