

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We refer to the letter dated October 7, 2018 from the outgoing Mayor of Cobourg, Gil Brocanier.

Upon reflection, and with a commensurate degree of introspection, we have chosen to confine our response to (1) a statement of values, which we believe **ALL** of us should embrace, and (2) to a statement of documented and verifiable facts concerning the points made by Mayor Brocanier about three of the campaigns conducted by the Cobourg Taxpayers Association.

This is not a case of “you said-we said.” It is about the Office of Mayor and the Office of the Councillors of Cobourg. It is about the integrity and standing of these esteemed offices and of their incumbents, as elected by the people of Cobourg to speak for and represent with unbiased enthusiasm, **ALL** the people of Cobourg. It is also about the conduct, respect and dignity with which the incumbents of these offices should always conduct themselves. These values and responsibilities apply equally to the citizens of Cobourg and to the various institutions that are democratically engaged in the civic process - as are we, the Cobourg Taxpayers Association. Accordingly, we, the undersigned, hereby affirm that we hold ourselves individually, and collectively as an incorporated not-for-profit civic association, to these standards and values.

Turning to the three comments made by Mayor Brocanier about the civic campaigns conducted by the Cobourg Taxpayers Association, we note the following:

1. Mayor Brocanier wrote:

*After Council set the 2016 budget you distributed pamphlets to all the households in Cobourg advising them 2017 would see a 20% tax increase. You were well aware that was (sic) outright lie. However, you did succeed in frightening some of the more gullible seniors in Cobourg who came to our tax department to see if it was true. Is frightening people with false information your method of gaining traction?*

CTA Response:

The Cobourg Taxpayers Association did not “distribute pamphlets to all the households in Cobourg”. We issued a press release that said, “... taxpayers should brace themselves for next year because the Town’s approved Budget shows it plans to grow property taxes by a staggering \$4.4 Million or 19.9% in 2017”. The Town subsequently admitted that their approved budget documentation was incorrect and corrected their error.

2. Mayor Brocanier wrote:

*When Lakefront Utilities applied to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) for their rate application the CTA sent two directors in as interveners. Intervener status is granted automatically by the OEB. After the rate was approved, the CTA publicly stated they saved the customers of Lakefront*

*Utilities more than \$400,000. Another outright lie. The OEB made a ruling that gave a financial break to all electrical distributors and their customers in Ontario and it had nothing to do with the intervention by the CTA. In fact the CTA cost our customers money in extra legal fee costs and the reimbursement of the expenses submitted by the two members of the CTA. Even with the new rates, Lakefront Utilities continued to be the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest in cost of 70 electrical distributors in Ontario.*

CTA Response:

In 2016 Lakefront Utilities, Inc. (LUI) applied to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) for a rate increase which, if approved, would have resulted in Cobourg consumers being charged \$4,415,540 per year for delivery services over the ensuing five years. Submissions by the Cobourg Taxpayers Association (CTA) and two independent intervenors resulted in the OEB approving a reduced charge of \$4,260,112 – a saving of \$154,428 per year or \$772,140 over five years. LUI engaged a team of paid external consultants to defend their requested rate increase, whereas the CTA initiative relied entirely on unpaid volunteers. If needed, the CTA will provide comprehensive documentation supporting these facts.

3. Mayor Brocanier wrote:

*The third relates to the Ombudsman fee in which the CTA brought the \$25.00 fee to our attention. Given that this fee was only one of a list of 100 we did recognize we made a mistake and agreed to correct it. However, Dennis Nabieszko still insisted on coming to Council as a delegate to lobby for something that had already been corrected. It is now one of your “claims to fame” on your website.*

CTA Response:

At the Committee of the Whole Meeting on November 13, 2017, Council received a staff report that stated: “...no fees are charged for Municipal Ombudsman or Integrity Commissioner Investigations.” However, a Fee for Municipal Ombudsman or Integrity Commissioner Investigations did exist and was shown in the Fees and Charges Bylaw 063-2016. The CTA sent a delegation to Council and was successful in having this fee rescinded.

In closing, we reiterate our commitment to the statement of values and responsibilities set out above. We look forward to continuing our valued civic relationship with each of you in the months and years ahead.

Yours truly,

Lydia Smith – President  
Dennis Nabieszko – Secretary  
Bryan Lambert – Treasurer  
Ken Strauss – Director  
Ted Williams – Director