

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 19-A-031, **Version:** 2

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### **DEPUTATION REGARDING MOTION 19-G-066, IMPLICATIONS OF DECLARING A LOCAL EMERGENCY RELATED TO THE OPIOID CRISIS**

Ms. Evelyn Pollock provided a deputation in opposition to motion 19-G-066 concerning the Implications of Declaring a Local Emergency Related to the Opioid Crisis.

Ms. Pollock advised that she was speaking on behalf herself and husband David, Melissa and Gary Hurst and was also representing "Moms Stop the Harm", a Canada-wide group of over 800 families who have either lost a family member to an opioid overdose or have a family member at risk of overdose.

Ms. Pollock advised that she is opposed to motion 19-G-066 as she believes that it implies that a committee would take over responsibility and accountability for providing direction on the most effective use of City resources to address the opioid crisis. She advised that she believes there is a better option for Council to consider and that she believes that City Council must be responsible for the effective use of City resources. Ms. Pollock also voiced her concern associated with the current workload before the Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy (SMOS) committee and it may not have the time or resources to do what needs to be done now.

Ms. Hurst and Ms. Pollock shared their stories of loss and how they are part of a growing network of mothers and fathers that are working to ensure their children's voices will continue to be heard by turning their grief into advocacy and action so others parents do not have to experience their kind of loss. Ms. Pollock provided statistics associated with opioid overdose deaths as well as the percentage associated to those resulting from fentanyl.

Ms. Pollock advised that she does not believe the motion to direct staff to work with the SMOS members is sufficient enough to make a difference as staff and the SMOS Committee do not have the authority to act. She suggested that when it comes to the safety of the community that Barrie City Council has the authority to act. Ms. Pollock advised that she feels that there needs to be a special advisor at a senior level in the Mayor's office to coordinate and provide advice to address the Opioid Crisis. She shared her belief that a special advisor could connect all of the agencies and organizations to coordinate their efforts to address the Opioid Crisis. She noted she felt that this would provide a sense of urgency to matter. Ms. Pollock suggested that Councillor Natalie Harris may be the right person based on her personal experience and knowledge on this subject.

Ms. Pollock encouraged Council to consider her request for a special advisor position and she suggested that other municipalities that are also struggling with the Opioid Crisis may look to emulate this approach.

Members of Council asked several questions of Ms. Pollock and Ms. Hurst and received responses.