

Legislation Text

File #: 21-A-020, **Version:** 1

DEPUTATION CONCERNING MOTION 21-G-040, I LOVE BARRIE SIGNAGE

The following Deputations were provided concerning motion 21-G-040, I Love Barrie Signage:

1. Aurelia Stec provided an overview of her background as a visual artist, an educator with the County of Simcoe. She provided her opinions associated to the public criticisms of the I Love Barrie Signage including claims not reflective of a larger public sentiment, that a handful of naysayers does not diminish the voice of citizens who elected a Councillor for his keen business sense and an ambitious vision for the City, and that the proposed sign announces Barrie on a world stage aligning us with other world class cities. She advised that she believes this is a passion project and is an effort towards inclusion and civic pride.

Ms. Stec questioned whether the sign is considered art. She noted that members of the community based on their expertise and superior notions of design believe that the sign would not fit their criteria for art as it is unoriginal, and does not belong in Meridian Place, a location key to delivering content and reaching an audience. Ms. Spec provided her opinion regarding the sign's possible location in Meridian Place noting that its not just a gallery for specific types of artworks. She advised that Meridian Place is a public space that should reflect the character of the larger community. Ms. Stec further advised that art should not be excluded, but that the approach should be inclusive, rather than exclusive, and different types of artwork can co-exist and aesthetics of everyday people that the I Love Barrie Signage would be about.

Ms. Stec commented on the financial criticisms by members of the community by advising that the money can be better spent, and suggestions that the funds should support their own endeavors or put towards other more beneficial projects. She noted that the funds were privately raised and if anyone wants to pursue a worthy project, they are encouraged to raise their own funds.

In closing, Ms. Stec commented that art is crucial to culture, that the timing is an issue given the pandemic, the opioid crisis, affordable housing, and the current state of the economy. She noted that it is important to look past the devastation towards rebuilding our businesses and the community. She expressed that signs point us to a better tomorrow and that it could serve as a manifestation of pride and commitment to our community.

2. Victoria Butler advised that she would be speaking to motion 21-G-040 and that the motion should not be approved or at least referred for further discussion. She advised of the overwhelming loud majority who are deeply against this project. Ms. Butler provided her opinion to the lack of community consultation as to whether the sign is something they want. She commented on the proposal being a massive piece of infrastructure for the public sphere and that they are not obligated to endorse. Ms. Butler discussed the appeal to create a landmark sign like those erected in other cities, however she noted that the Toronto and Ottawa signs are popular being strategically placed in spaces that are massive tourist attractions and enough foot traffic that it made sense to place a sign there for advertising purposes.

Ms. Butler acknowledged the growing artistic talent that is unique to the City of Barrie and suggested that possibility of tapping into to create a myriad of engaging brilliant pieces that would put money

directly into local artists and community groups pockets, rather than investing such a colossal amount of money into a stagnant, admittedly, and unoriginal idea.

Ms. Butler discussed the City as a community that comes together in times of need, the care, the compassion, and a feeling of closeness that makes her loyal to its people. She advised of her concern that these people have been left out of this discussion, that everyone seems to have this idea about how to fix the downtown, however, these ideologies have come from people outside of our downtown community who see our little neighborhood as a blank canvas. Ms. Butler advised that she struggles to understand why people are willing to donate upwards of \$50,000 to a project in the middle of a pandemic, when so many are struggling to pay rent and that survival is becoming more and more difficult. She commented that the City is a place of hardworking people trying to survive.

Pursuant to Section 6.4 of the Procedural By-law 2019-100, Councillor, M. McCann raised a point of order and requested that the nature of the Deputation remain confined to their remarks to the stated business. Mayor J. Lehman requested that any further remarks be stated succinctly, and not be used as a means of making statements or assertions.

In conclusion, Ms. Butler commented on the community's interest in leadership that listens, genuinely cares about the City's citizens, sees Barrie for all its glory, all its faults and loves the community anyway.