

Why is asking questions a bad thing in Rocky View? The bullies must be stopped!

The current council has proven itself to be the least tolerant in Rocky View' living memory. Six councillors refused to listen to criticism or to questions on proposals they wanted to push through. They held a clear majority; but simply dominating with their votes was not enough. They also silenced anyone who attempted to question them. The real question is – why?

The answer is that five of the councillors seeking re-election (Kim McKylor, Al Schule, Jerry Gautreau, Greg Boehlke, and Dan Henn) represent the “old boys’ club” that has controlled Rocky View politics for years. Interestingly, the “old boys” lobbyist, Bruce McAllister, is busy bad-mouthing critics of the majority as well. They must be worried that their gravy train might dry up.

Drawing attention to the fact that the majority panders to private, for-profit interests reveals who has controlled the puppet strings for far too long in Rocky View. Given this, it is no wonder that the majority has fought back against effective critics.

The majority weaponized the code of conduct when they imposed sanctions on Kevin Hanson, Crystal Kissel, and Samantha Wright. When the sanctions didn't silence them, the majority tried to have Wright disqualified. Both the sanctions and the disqualification charges were thrown out of court. The sanctions were tossed out by one judge because they were “ones that no reasonable decision-maker could impose”. For the disqualification allegations, a second judge went even further by concluding they were an attempt by the council majority to manipulate the judicial system to pursue a “political vendetta”.

As classic bullies, the majority also protected their own. While they took Wright to court on politically motivated allegations, they purposefully ignored pecuniary interest allegations against Mark Kamachi. The allegations against Kamachi disclosed he was working on the side for the County and voting on the budget that paid him for that work. A key difference between the allegations against Wright and Kamachi was that the complaint against Kamachi was raised by residents. Instead of dealing with both comparably, the residents were told it was their responsibility to take Kamachi to court. Worse, many in the council majority publicly portrayed those residents as “crazy” or “CAVE people” (Citizens Against Virtually Everything). Here's the biggest difference – Wright fought and won her case, while Kamachi signed an out of court settlement that legally barred him from running in the 2021 election.

It is also worth remembering that, before the 2017 election, Schule was the development consultant for the application in which the majority alleged Wright had a pecuniary interest. Schule said he would recuse himself from the application due to his

prior involvement. However, because the applicant had no concern with Schule's participation at the public hearing, Schule did not recuse himself. This raises the question of what motivation, other than bullying, explains the council majority's decision to bring charges against Wright but not against either Schule or Kamachi.

The council majority's bully tactics would be disgusting enough if they had stayed "in house" attacking their own colleagues; however, they were also frequently directed against residents. It should be totally unacceptable for councillors to insult residents who "dare" to defend their own interests.

The question you need to answer before the October 18th election is whether you want to reward the current bullies running for re-election. And, equally as importantly, do you want to elect alternatives who will maintain the "old boys" status quo. If the answer to either is "no", then the choices in each division are obvious. Don't forget to vote!

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