

May 6, 2024

Township of Minto
5941 Highway 89
Harriston ON Canada N0G 1Z0

Minto Municipal Council Members:

This letter adds additional support to the petition being circulated among residents in the Township of Minto -- regarding the continued focus and promotion of special interest groups over the civic and governance requirements of all citizens resident within the Township boundaries.

“Liberal societies normatively should not recognize groups based on fixed identities like race, ethnicity or religious heritage ... Liberalism with its premise of universal human equality needs to be the framework within which identity groups should struggle for their rights.” (Francis Fukuyama)

Fukuyama's comments here are critical, primarily because he, like the founders and framers of this great nation believed that the state, even at the highest level is not above the law. Further, he rightly argues, the absence of public participation in any political processes means the support for such leaders is inherently volatile, liable to evaporate at any moment.

This brings me to the Canada Constitution, 1867, which is the highest law in Canada, and the Canadian Bill of Rights.

Founded upon the Supremacy of God and rule of law, Canada's Constitution (including the Charter) lays out the rights and freedoms of every citizen in Canada. The intent of a Constitution is to protect citizens from government, and this includes elected representatives at the municipal level. Section 2 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* specifically states:

Section 2: Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- (d) freedom of association.

Elaborating further, the Supreme Court of Canada has maintained that the connection between freedom of expression and the political process is “perhaps the linchpin” of section 2(b) protection (*R. v. Keegstra*, [\[1990\] 3 S.C.R. 697](#); *Thomson Newspapers Co.*

v. Canada (A.G.), [\[1998\] 1 S.C.R. 877](#); *Harper v. Canada (Attorney General)*, [\[2004\] 1 S.C.R. 827](#)).

This means free expression is valued above all as being instrumental to democratic governance. The two other rationales for protecting freedom of expression — includes encouraging the search for truth through the open exchange of ideas, and fostering individual self-actualization, thus directly engaging individual human dignity — also key values that animate section 2(b) analysis.

Section 7 states: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a **right to equal treatment before the law without discrimination**. It applies to the government of Canada and protects substantive equality, which means that the law should not have a negative impact on certain groups based on their characteristics, such as race, religion, sex, age, or disability.

For 150 years, Canada's constitutional construct and institutions has been both flexible and durable, ensuring peace, order, and good government (leading to good governance at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels) while protecting the absolute rights at the core of the rule of law. Founded upon the Supremacy of God and rule of law, the framers of this great nation diligently ensured that each and every citizen enjoyed equal rights within Canada's governance model.

For this reason, the nation was founded on two pillars. The first was not defined – the pillar extending to freedom of conscience, belief, religion, and faith. The second pillar – government – was clearly defined so that governments could not act outside of or above the law, or in the pursuit of personal agendas using public funds. Indeed, publicly funded institutions have an obligation to remain neutral.

This brings me to the point of this correspondence.

The municipality appears to be privileging certain groups of citizens and ideologies over the beliefs and opinions of other citizens within the same community. This has led to division, and residents feeling unrepresented within Minto Township. Also at issue, property ratepayers are not being consulted on decisions to paint sidewalks for example, or to hang street banners on ideological issues. Indeed, it seems these Township decisions are arbitrary, and wholly accepted by Council members as the norm.

However, the good people of the Minto community want Council members to know that we enjoy inclusivity and diversity within the Township, but we also want to celebrate the diversity of each and every citizen, and not a select few. We also want to be inclusive in the context of belonging – as in DEIB.

From a governance perspective, the premise herein is for the people to become more inclusive, and for municipal government to resume their rightful place in matters of municipal governance. This means attending to Township matters in relation to roads, water, parks, and financial budgeting and expenditures. In so doing, I and many others firmly believe we will see this community come together, both respecting and caring for one another.

Your role is to ensure that you have created the groundwork for all citizens to thrive.

Thank you for this opportunity to add my voice to the many residents who have stood firm on doing what is right, just, and true, and thus, would appreciate seeing their hard earned tax dollars devoted to the improvement of the Minto community.

Sincerely,

J. Kaikkonen

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