

POLITICS AS USUAL: Ford Was Right

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

I doubt many of you caught it but CP24 provided live coverage of the debate of the special Toronto City Council meeting held early last week to deliberate the motion to hold a by-election.

The motion was necessary in order to deal with the vacancy on council due to Deputy Mayor Holyday's move to the Provincial legislature.

I took a few minutes for an early lunch and managed to catch about 10 ? 15 minutes of it. Though the ?debate? went on quite a bit longer than that, 10 minutes was all one really needed to see in order to get the gist of what the Councillors were ?debating? and what the ultimate outcome would be.

Appointment.

By an outstanding majority.

No surprise there (I was surprised at the margin of failure, but not the loss itself). The motion to hold the by-election was put forward by Ford himself and was heavily promoted as the ?right thing to do? by the beleaguered Mayor, so it was sure to fail.

Sorry if that seems harsh, but judging by the acrimony amongst the Council members in Toronto and naked hostility towards Ford that a number of Councillors exhibit, it really isn't a stretch to say any motion put forward by Ford, let alone one that would see him out and about campaigning for weeks on end, would be rather forcefully rebuffed.

And it most certainly was.

Trotting out the usual, ?we're saving the taxpayers money? claptrap, Councillor after Councillor blithely ignored the wishes of the very group of people for whom they were allegedly speaking ? the residents of Ward 3.

I wish just one of the Councillors would say what they were really thinking instead of monotonously parroting the same tired lines. Why not say, ?we want to control who gets that spot rather than risk getting what the people want.?

It's the truth, isn't it?

An appointment to fill a void created by a by-election. Can they not see the irony of the situation?

Alas, politicians are generally irony-challenged.

But they sure are petty.

The Toronto papers reported, ?Council overrules Ford?. And truly, that does seem to be what the decision was all about. Disagree with the man. Disagree with his politics, his antics, his beer-imbibing stroll down the Danforth, but don't disagree with him for the sake of disagreement, or worse - spite.

I am no fan of Rob Ford, or his brother, Councillor Doug Ford. But in this case, the Fords are right. The decision was wrong. The Council's vote in favour of appointment is a slap in the face to the residents of Etobicoke.

Rather than turn this into a rant, I will end the column here. Frankly there isn't much more to say, is there? If depriving some residents the right to vote is what passes for democracy at the Municipal level, then it is no small wonder why no one bothers to ?engage? in the political process - or vote at all.

Until next week, stay informed, stay involved because this is, after all, Our Town.