

DATE: Dec. 10, 2018

PLACE: T of FF Council Chamber

Good evening Mayor Caul, Councilors & Staff

For those who don't know me, I am

~~As already mentioned, my name is~~ Merv Ahrens. I've been a resident-home owner living on Webster Ave. S for the past fifteen years.

(To some of your staff I'm known by the appellation "tree man" or "eagle man".)

Thank you for this invitation and opportunity to **HELP YOU** identify your 2019 **budget PRIORITIES**.

May I **begin** by saying:

**We must protect the SAFETY of our town's YOUTH
and our ENVIRONMENT**

My budget suggestions focus on **TWO** important concerns:

- 1) **ENSURING SAFER student pedestrian** movement &
- 2) a "**GREENER**" **FUTURE** for our town

Although FF was designated a “Safe Community” by the W-H-O and it received a provincial award for being an “Age-Friendly Community, ” I believe there is still PLENTY of **WORK** yet to be done.

Let me begin with my 5 BUDGET SUGGESTIONS

For improving Pedestrian Safety:

1. Install “ **COUNTDOWN**” pedestrian walk lights at Central Ave. & 2nd / 3rd St. W - This is a **very busy** intersection.

At present there are **NO** pedestrian lights whatsoever.

Secondly -

Install “countdown” walk lights at Keating Ave. & #11 & 17.

Although recent upgrades were completed to these lights, I believe “**Countdown**” walk lights are **more meaningful** to both pedestrians and vehicle drivers.

2. Install approx. 100 m of sidewalk along the north side of #11 & 71 West near the Husky station.

Pedestrians could then **avoid** having to cross the 4-laner or trespassing on adjacent private land.

3. Install a sidewalk on the west side of Keating Ave. going north from the J. W. Walker School to 2nd Street W.

Presently - because there is **NO** sidewalk - Elementary students using this route have to walk on the roadway while dodging cars and / or climbing over snow banks in winter.

There will be **DOUBLE** the number of **young students** using this route after the **NEW** Catholic school on Flinder's Ave. opens in 2019.

4. Increase the number of **well maintained crosswalks** with proper signage and lights:

e.g. 4-laner at McD's & Tim Hortons, Legion / municipal lot, etc.

My last budget SAFETY suggestion, before addressing our town's "Green Canopy" issue is:

5. **Erect a chain link safety fence** along the north edge of Legion Park to keep very young children from running out onto the 4-lane highway while chasing a playground ball, etc.

I personally have witnessed several near tragedies here.

My **SECOND** set of budget suggestions focus on the T of FF's **TREES** or **lack** thereof.

Budgeted money is needed for MAINTAINING & INCREASING our “GREEN CANOPY” to ensure we have quality TREES IN OUR FUTURE.

I understand several of your senior staff (Travis Rob - O & F, Tyson Dennis - Planner, etc.) are industriously drafting policies & by-laws to meet the Ontario government's Bill 68, Phase 2 implementation **deadline of March 1, 2019**. This bill modernizing the Municipal Act- including Schedule 1, Subsec. 270(1). This section will require the T of FF to identify and act upon,

-and I quote **Item 7-**

The manner in which the municipality will protect and enhance the **tree canopy and natural vegetation in the municipality.**

Might I ELABORATE a bit:

TREES are a **KNOWN** means of addressing **climate change** and reducing our **carbon footprint**.

From my home on Webster during the past season I have witnessed the loss of **6 mature park trees** and **zero** replacement stock. Over my 15 years of town residency I have observed a similar and

shocking decline in the health and total number of quality **TREES** in the Fort Frances Graveyard and Legion Park.

I ASK - What is our town, our parks & graveyards without TREES?

May I suggest the following:

- 1) Establish a budget for: i) consulting an arborist, ii) doing tree maintenance, & iii) re-planting to **revitalize** and **expand** our town's "**Green Canopy**."

MONEY is needed to replace these diseased trees, protect existing ones and **plant new** ones. With careful planning, planting & care, our existing and new trees will help **preserve, well into the future**, the natural beauty and atmospheric health of our public spaces. Tree cages (wickets), cabling, etc. will also be needed to protect against our ever-increasing white-tailed deer population and trespassing vehicle traffic that threatens the periphery of our "**green spaces**."

Let me **CONCLUDE** with "A Site-specific Start-Up **TREE** Project."

NEW trees should be planted along the lower hazard land and upper river bank in the FF Graveyard, Legion Park and the adjoining sports field. They would soon provide a barrier against the huge amounts of air-borne ash particles, dangerous chemicals and deafening noise pollution that drifts northward from the nearby American pulp and paper plant (PCA - Packaging Corporation of America) located immediately across Rainy River.

2. Additional **funds must also be allocated** to educate and encourage our town's residents to collectively help maintain and increase our protective "**green canopy**" and our **FUTURE**.

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I would be pleased to **clarify** any part of my presentation and answer any **QUESTIONS** you might have.

AGAIN THANK you for receiving my input and I diligently hope to see corresponding "action on the ground" in 2019.

I'm available to HELP!