

Rick Burke - Presentation Speaking Points (Council Meeting January 8th, 2019)

- Historical details – from family purchase of land in 1961 until today
 - Impact of proposed by-law – families, properties, community, tax contributions
 - Working collaboratively – tax payers and townships can work together to solve this
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Good morning. My name is Rick Burke and I would like to thank you for allowing me to talk with you today on the proposed by-law regarding restricted access to seasonally maintained highways in Tudor and Cashel.

In 1961, my parents spotted an ad in the Toronto Telegram offering land for sale on Bass Lake (now called Steenburg Lake). Looking for a family place that was peaceful and enjoyable, they made the trek to Gilmour, Ontario. There was no road at that time so after a boat ride with the real estate rep, they purchased their piece of paradise with the promise that a road would be built within a year and hydro would be installed.

I was 5 years old. My brother and I watched our home being built, and the road being extended so that we could reach our home by vehicle. I also ran out each day to watch the hydro poles go in, waiting for it to reach our place. Who would have thought that 58 years later, the promised road would be in the same as-built condition, not fully maintained and we would be having this discussion?

For 58 years, this has been my second home. When my Father passed away and my Mothers health was failing my wife and I assumed this home. In 2008, in anticipation of our retirement we rebuilt the original structure, receiving all necessary permits and using only local people to build it and sourcing all supplies from Bancroft. We have purchased numerous vehicles, boats, ATVs and day-to-day supplies from local businesses. We have paid our taxes and have always been proud to be supporters of this community.

In return for our taxes, we have access to emergency services and to a township waste site that is a 25km plus round-trip drive.

During the early years, we hiked into our home when the roads were not plowed. However, this changed over 3 decades ago, when the residents joined together to privately plow this road. How can this now be taken away?

In October we were excited to see an ad in The Country Roads magazine from Mike Bossio. The ad read “Building long-term, sustainable rural communities is at the heart of my work as your Member of Parliament”. Imagine our surprise when shortly

thereafter we received notice of the pending by-law to restrict access to our home for 6 to 9 months of the year.

We are here today to ask you to reconsider this proposed by-law which will prevent access to the Steenburg Lake South Road between November 1st and April 30th. This is our family home. We are here every season and often spend weeks/months enjoying this beautiful land. This is our retirement. We have worked hard all our lives to ensure that we had a viable retirement home in a place that we love. Our children have grown up here; our grandchildren will as well. My brother married someone on the lake. My brother-in-law also purchased a home on this lake. We have a strong foundation and history here.

Diane and I, as well as our social network and family are strong supporters in this community. We have a capable and willing group of people ready to work with the township and county and know that our support could be an asset to all.

This proposed by-law has put our family and many other families in great jeopardy. Together with the legal letter provided by Limerick Township to Tudor and Cashel township, access to our home may be reduced to 3 months of the year. The impacted community (104 taxpayers on the Steenburg Lake South road alone plus many other impacted road residents) spends thousands of dollars in this area, outside of the taxes we pay. In good faith, we have worked with both the township and MPAC to get proper permits and meet all criteria to build permanent homes and other structures.

We have heard “hey, we are only putting up some signs”, “this is only for liability purposes”, however the proposed intent and Tudor and Cashel by-law as written will close the road for six months of the year. I am and always will be a law respecting member of society and if this is passed, it will prevent us from legally accessing our home. This will end our dream and cost us both economically and spiritually. Our retirement plans will end after us spending a large amount of money on taxes, permits and building our home. This is our special place. We have also been told that the cost to maintain this road is too high to consider now and, in the future, and we would be interested in the township sharing with us the quotes that have been solicited and received so that we can better understand this statement.

I believe that over the past 50 years this issue has become personal for council members and a thorn in their side, especially the previous council. Hearing terms like “suck it up“ from the previous reeve and hearing things said on the south road from road employees such as “ we hate you cottagers...why don't you all go home” has led me to believe this. All roads in Ontario started out as unmaintained roads and progress leads to this changing. Indeed, if Mr. Bossio and this council would like to see further economic development in this area, progress needs to be embraced not

stifled. The times indeed are changing and with on line voting eventually most tax payers will vote for a council that will embrace change not try to stop it.

My community of 104 taxpayers could be of an even more asset to this community if we could work together instead of always trying to get in each other's way.

We have also been put in the middle of a dispute between 2 townships that are using us as pawns to get what they want. None of us appreciate that.

I guess we are left with a few choices:

- Respect your new by-law and lose our investment and right to a peaceful coexistence with the township, OR
- Re-engage with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to get further insight and define next steps. We have previously corresponded with them, however, when they inquired directly with the township office, the clerk advised them that the intent of the by-law was a "simple misunderstanding". We will ensure that future communication is copied to our Reeve, Libby Clarke.
- Contact the Ombudsman for further discussion.
- Obtain a lawyer and fight this injustice on so many levels. It is interesting that if this is the way we are forced to go, our own tax money will be used to defend your position. A waste of money on both sides.
- Explore the possibility of petitioning the province to leave this township and join a township more sympathetic to our needs and respect the amount of tax money and other values we bring to a community.
- In four years, make a large attempt to vote all of you that are not willing to work with us out of office and replace you all with more forward thinking elected officials. There will indeed be more folks willing to get involved in this way as a result of your decision regarding this by-law.

We respectfully ask you to reconsider this by-law and work collaboratively with us, the taxpayers, to come to a mutually acceptable decision and solution regarding this ongoing issue. Thank you for your time.