

Lawyer on board for tax battle

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A Flamborough councillor is turning to her lawyer neighbour to help fight the suburb's tax battle.

Margaret McCarthy took out a newspaper ad yesterday to announce she's partnering with Toronto lawyer Benjamin Levinter to find "short- and long-term solutions" to the controversy.

"If Flamborough was feeling muscled after Hamilton council's last-minute decision to take the slot revenue out of the budget ... we have just received a heavyweight in the fight for fairness and equity," the ad states.

Yesterday, Levinter said his involvement doesn't signal a lawsuit is in the works, but he isn't ruling it out.

"We're pursuing every route possible," he said, noting the goal is to ensure that the wishes of Flamborough residents are addressed. He is offering his advice for free.

Council recently voted 8-7 to share slot revenue from Flamboro Downs across the whole city. The decision raised taxes by nearly 10 per cent in parts of Flamborough.

McCarthy said the ad speaks for itself.

Although she wouldn't speculate on exactly where they're going at this time, she did say, "It's a work in progress."

Mayor Fred Eisenberger said he's concerned the ad continues to spread misinformation to Flamborough residents about the tax debate.

"It's divisive. It's threatening," he said, noting he would prefer to see council work together. "I just don't see it as helpful."

The ad states in an "incredible twist of fate" Levinter, a civil lawyer for more than 50 years, is McCarthy's neighbour. It also heralds that Levine's name is "synonymous with tenacity and success in the courtrooms of Ontario."

"So when Councillor McCarthy knocked on his door hoping for advice on how to proceed," the ad reads, "little did she expect that the man himself would be gracious enough to provide his own professional expertise to the cause."

Levinter said he and McCarthy plan to announce their plan of action soon.

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