

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, March 9, 2012				Report Date	Tuesday, March 5, 2012			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction	X	Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed

REPORT TITLE
NRT article and Media Accuracy Report #09/03/12/1201

Subject: The lack of accuracy in media reports and the need for Council to take a proactive stance.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve the following resolution concerning local media accuracy.

WHEREAS it is apparent that the local media are not always accurate in their reporting;

AND WHEREAS inaccurate articles may be damaging to the reputations of individuals, Council members, staff and the Municipality as a whole;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria does hereby direct staff to prepare a formal document detailing the use of press releases to ensure that accurate information is provided to the media concerning Municipal issues and to bring that document back for Council approval at a later meeting.

Background/Executive Summary:

Letter from Councillor Gibson to the Deep River Community Association – the board responsible for the NRT.

“February 23, 2012 Dear Mr. Cleland, Today I read the NRT’s article in the February 22nd edition regarding issues in Head, Clara and Maria.

In her letter to the NRT, Reeve Stewart makes unfounded allegations of “numerous violations of the Municipal Code of Conduct, the Harassment and Workplace policy and even the Criminal Code did occur”

I consider these allegations printed in your paper to be libelous and request that you proceed with an appropriate amount of caution the next time you choose to print material that can reasonably be considered libelous.

On May 6th of last year, I read an on line article by Vance Gutzman and suggested in a friendly manor to Mr. Gutzman, via email and subsequent discussion, that he change, prior to print, the wording of his article regarding the issue of quorum and legal opinion about quorum as it was not correct. He chose to “take my suggestion under advisement” and his original version went to print uncorrected.

Subsequently, the NRT was forced to print a retraction.

Under the article headline ‘when will this stop?’ are the words “By Terry Myers” Subscribers can not be faulted for believing that Mr. Myers was in attendance at the meeting in question when in fact he was not.

I request that when publishing articles about Head, Clara and Maria Council business, you clearly identify the source of the article. I am speaking as a Councillor of The United Townships of Head, Clara, and Maria and not as someone representing Council’s opinion.

Respectfully, Jim Gibson, Councillor – The United Townships of Head, Clara, and Maria

c. Denise Walker, Hilary Angell”

Copy of sections of the NRT article dated, February 29, 2012 by Terry Myers.

“Gibson said he had written to the president of the Deep River Community Association, which owns the North Renfrew Times, to request a retraction of the “unfounded allegations” contained in the reeve’s letter.

“You can’t control the press, but you can object to what’s in print,” he said.”

Financial Implications/Budget Impact: Not applicable.

Policy Impact: Not applicable.

Others Consulted: At the request of Councillor Gibson.

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,
Municipal Clerk

Melinda Reith