

Millroy: Will New Council Fix This Mistake?

By **Doug Millroy** - November 24, 2018

dougMILLROY

In my column last week I excoriated the city's Public Works and Traffic officials for allowing line-painters from Guelph to screw up the configuration at the intersection of Albert and East Streets and council for sitting idly by in acceptance.

I said I was bringing up this problem intersection again now in the hope that the new council will step up and do something about it, indicating that the previous council didn't seem to have the will to go up against a city department, even when the mistake that had been made was so obvious.

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It was pointed out to me that the previous council had gone against Public Works and Traffic previously.

It did so in regard to the traffic lights at the intersection of Wallace Terrace and Goulais Avenue.

PWT recommended taking out the lights and going with a four-way stop as traffic studies showed there was no longer enough traffic at the intersection to warrant lights.

Council voted to go along with then Ward 6 representatives Joe Krmpotich and Ross Romano to keep the lights.

There was no offer of a badge of honour for council's move from the person who pointed out the discrepancy in my column.

It was simply to point how differently the two intersections, Albert and East as opposed to Wallace Terrace and Goulais, were viewed.

Neither PWT nor council saw any safety problem with the screw-up at Albert and East where there is a lot of traffic; PWT saw no danger at Wallace Terrace and Goulais in recommending the lights be taken out whereas council somehow apparently did.

Frank Fata, who in a few days will be former councillor Fata, spoke out about the change at Albert and East last week in a way I wish he had when he was in office.

"Say Albert Street continued towards Wellington Street East in a straight line direction, the two lanes would simply continue in an easterly direction. But because there's a bend in the road with an option to merge on to Wellington Street West, we suddenly have all this unnecessary commotion.

"This is not rocket science, folks. If you're travelling north on East Street you safely merge (there is a yield sign on East) into the right lane. If you're in the left lane heading east on Albert St., you can ease off and head West on Wellington Street or continue on to Wellington East – simple, safe and the right way to do this.

"As it is now, it is wrong and should be put back to the way it was before this mess was created by the "so-called" experts."

One person who commented on the column suggested that if Coun. Matthew Shoemaker doesn't want to support a motion for it to be changed back there is no chance of putting attention on the problem.

I was quoting Shoemaker as saying that although he supported changing the configuration back to the way it was, from the feedback he had gotten from his colleagues he believed it would be futile to bring forward such a motion.

His quote was in regard to his colleagues from the previous council, at the time in 2016 when this was an issue. It might be a different story with this council with five being newbies and possibly coming in with fresh perspectives.

We can only hope..

A story in Sault This Week has left me with the thought that more has to be done to impress upon people that discarded needles used for administering drugs should not be ignored when they come upon them..

Sara McCleary wrote about a child who got a needle stuck in his foot when he was kicking leaves on a lawn while walking with his mother.

The mother said her two-year-old son stopped and started saying "feet" and then lifted his foot. She saw a needle sticking out of the front of his shoe. She took the shoe off to check his foot and when she didn't see any blood she threw the needle away from them.

She should have taken it with her for disposal.

With the needle being left there, someone else could now stumble onto it.

When the mother got home, she discovered the needle had gotten him between his toes. She took her son to Sault Area Hospital where he was given a prescription for 10 days of penicillin and instructions to have blood tests done in six weeks to see if any blood-borne illnesses surfaced.

Not really knowing any protocol for disposal, I called the police department.

Badge No. 1007 (that's what I got when I asked to whom I was speaking) told me that if the needle is found on city property, the city's public works people (705-759-5201) will come and get it.

If it is found on private property, it is up to the owner to dispose of it.

In something like the case at hand, I suppose it would be up to the person who found it to dispose of it or at least alert the owner of its presence.

"Sharps (needles) may pose a risk of physical harm or serious blood-borne infections if handled inappropriately," Jon Bouma, manager of Infectious Diseases at Algoma Public Health, said in a release last spring. "It is important to pick up and dispose of them properly.

"If you find a needle on your property, use a pair of tongs, pliers or tweezers to pick up the needle with the needle pointing down and away from you. Place the needle in a hard plastic container, like a coffee container or water bottle that you can close tightly."

These containers can be dropped off at the Household Hazardous Waste Depot located at the landfill site on Fifth Line, Algoma Public Health, 294 Willow Ave., and The John Howard Society, 27 King St..Badge No. 1007 said there also is a disposal box at the Neighbourhood Resource Centre on Gore Street.

Bouma pointed out the bins help with safe needle disposal, divert sharps away from the city landfill site and help protect public works staff who collect garbage.

With the snow covering we now have, discarded needles aren't going to be as evident. But I think any time is the right to detail how to handle them.

Doug Millroy

After 61 years in the news business, 41 of them associated with The Sault Star as editor, Doug continues to share his passion for writing as a columnist since retirement.