

Mayor White's Inaugural Speech

Good morning and thank you all for coming this morning to the inauguration of the 107th Council for the Township of Melancthon. I am excited to get started as the 44th Mayor for this great Township.

Tradition dictates that it is the prerogative of a new Mayor to have present a special guest at his/her inauguration should he/she wish. The special guest often will say a few words and may present the chain of office. I have invited such a guest today although I will not be asking him to speak. He does giggle occasionally and drools a lot but he does not know yet any great words of wisdom. My first grandchild, Ryan is my special guest today because even though he is only 5 months old, he has done more to change the way I see the world, and to change my perception of it than any other single person.

I want to first thank all past members of the councils for the Township of Melancthon and in particular, the members of the two councils I have served with. Their experience and dedication to the municipality is a testament to their characters. That brings up a great topic, the past. The past is very important in our Municipality. Remembering the heritage and the roots of the Township has always been important and will continue to be important because a place without a

history is like a tree without roots. With that in mind I would like to share something with you.

“First meeting of the Municipal Council of the Township of Melancthon met at the house of James Corbett on Monday the 10th day of January, 1860. The new elected Council after subscribing the Declaration of Office as Councilmen took their seats at the board at 12 O’clock noon. Mssrs Charles McDowell, Jarvis, Harrison, Baillie, and Elias B. Grey.

Moved by Mr Grey seconded by Mr McDowell that Mr Jarvis be Reeve for the current Municipal year. Carried unanimously.

Moved by Mr McDowell, seconded by Mr Harrison that Kenneth McAulay be clerk for the year 1860 and his salary be the same as last year.

Yeas Msrs McDowell, Harrison, Baillie

Nays E B Grey

Moved by Mr McDowell, seconded by Mr. Baillie that each councilman do receive the sum of one dollar and fifty cents for each day attending Township Council. Carried

Yeas Msrs. McDowell, Harrison, Baillie

Neas Elias B Grey

Moved by Mr McDowell, seconded by Mr Harrison that this Council do now adjourn until further notice from the clerk. Carried

Paul Jarvis Reeve

Kenneth McAuley Clerk

Seal affixed. “

Many of those names still ring true in Melancthon, in fact if you read through the list of all council members from 1860 to now, it reads like a who's who of current family names. Oldfield, Jelly, Atkinson, Bailey, Fawcett, Dynes, Prentice, Rutledge, Noble, Ferris, Funston, Doney, just to name a few.

I would like to thank the residents of our municipality for casting their ballots and having their say in the recent election. Voter turnout was lower this election than last, and as such I would like to strongly urge all residents of the municipality to register to vote and to exercise your franchise to participate in your democracy. It is important to have your say, and it is important to the Township as a whole as evidenced by recent events.

It has been said that if you don't vote, you don't have a right to complain. I think that could not be farther from the truth. Many people have fought, been injured or given their lives so that among other things, we can enjoy democracy. Democracy isn't easy. Democracy is hard work. It demands your attention, it demands your devotion. Democracy acknowledges those that have their say, but the part of Democracy that most of us don't get is that part that demands we acknowledge those that choose not to speak whether as a form of protest or just out of apathy or even because of a cultural or religious belief. Those people deserve our advocacy as well. They deserve equal representation. They deserve a say.

That is where we come in. We are here to speak for the people of this Municipality. We carry their needs and wants with us and should strive to make the best decisions possible. We are here to speak to the greater good, so to my fellow councilors I say this.

This job is not easy, it is hard work. It is often thankless, sometimes merciless, it takes you from your family time, interrupts your vacation, and devours your free time. But as I have come to know over my years here, most of all it can be very rewarding.

Being a councilor is not about you, your road, your ditch or your tree. If you think that it is, you have made a horrible mistake. It is about every tree, ditch and road

and every person and corner of this municipality. It demands your attention and it asks for more than it will give back. It is not about personal power plays or petty differences. Its about respect, and values. Its about decency, its about fairness and hope for the future. Its about representing the people, all of the people.

Our council is a mix of veterans who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience and new Councilors who bring a fresh perspective. To all of you, including staff, I say never be afraid to bring forth a new idea or a new vision. We are all important parts of this operation, and our ideas and knowledge have value.

Democracy works best with knowledgeable discourse and debate and I know that we will strive to make effective and responsible decisions. Once the decision is made, Council will speak with one voice.

Former Prime Minister The Right Honorable Brian Mulroney once said,

“Leaders are not chosen as part of a popularity contest. They are chosen to provide leadership. Leadership is the process, not only of foreseeing the need for change, but of making the case for change. Leadership does not consist of imposing unpopular ideas on the public but rather of finding ways of making unpopular ideas acceptable to the public.”

This often happens through collaboration and consultation. That is leadership.

During the debate, I was asked about my leadership style to which I responded “I like to build consensus.” I have thought about that a lot in the lead up to the election and since, while waiting to take over as Mayor, and what I realize is that that is not entirely accurate. I do like to work through collaboration, and consultation, but only so much as to try to pass along why I think a particular ideal or a plan is a good idea. I like to explain my thinking on an idea, and why I think it is important, why I think it is right and if I am convinced a course of action is the right one, I will fight for it.

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher spoke about consensus and said:

“It is the process of abandoning all beliefs, principles, values and policies in search of something in which no one believes, but to which no one objects; the process of avoiding the very issues that have to be solved, merely because you cannot get agreement on the way ahead. What great cause would have been fought and won under the banner: I stand for consensus?”

I will stand for what is right every time.

As your leader, I will advocate for Melancthon at all levels of government. I will promote sustainable fiscal management, openness and transparency. I will work

to further protect our water and groundwater resources as well as our agricultural land.

I will continue to advocate for more health care options in the north of Dufferin County, and locally based planning. I will also continue to champion the Food and Water First initiative. I will work every day to further the goals of Melancthon locally and at the County level.

I believe that strategic planning is important, and as such, I will ask Council to embark on that process of laying out a road map for the future. A plan that will leave a positive mark on our community moving forward, a plan that will leave our Municipality better off than when we found it. That is the aim of every new council.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to thank the wonderful staff of the Municipality. They are a very dedicated bunch who work very hard and do a great job. Over the past years that I have been here, they have played a supporting role to all of us who have served, and I know that they will continue to in the days and years to come. I certainly appreciate their efforts and hard work, and I am sure all who have gone before me do as well.

I would also like to thank my wife Teresa for her support. This job often takes you away from family time and events and can add an element of stress. There

always seems to be a meeting to attend or an event to go to, and a wife who understands how much I love this job, and how much it means to me is important. I don't say it often enough but I do appreciate your support. Thanks

I will end with a quote from Franklin Delano Roosevelt that I think is particularly appropriate.

“Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and Senators and Congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this Country”.

Thank you