

Disputes that escalate, in the municipality of Pontiac

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At the council meeting on 10 May 2016 in Breckenridge, David Birt reported that shots were fired through his bedroom window (four feet from his head), and a neighbour's house (fortunately empty) during the Saturday night of April 30 to May 1. He linked this shooting with an escalation of tension between neighbours in the Pontiac Bay area following requests by him, starting in 2007, for the municipality to enforce the nuisance bylaw and deal with problems of sewage, garbage and abandoned vehicles on a neighbour's lot. "Instead of coming in with suggestions on how to correct the situation, the municipality issued an infraction. This turned into a serious situation, neighbour versus neighbour, with the temperature rising. This was not just name-calling but tire-slashing and property damage. This all started with trying to clean up the neighbourhood."

Mr Birt could not understand why the MRC Police had not contacted Mayor Roger Larose until ten days after the shooting incident. He accused the mayor of having threatened to close the file (on his complaints), because it was too big. The mayor retorted that Mr Birt had blocked access to the river with his vehicle, implying that was why the tires were slashed. Mr Birt continued: "The tempos have been there for 5 years, campers have been parked for three years, and one is 'party central' for the son of the owner."

Mr Larose didn't mention the permanent "temporary shelters" but explained that as long as campers are not connected to power, water or sewer, they can be parked on a lot and used for occasional overnights. He himself has a camper stored on his lot. He said, "The inspector cannot be at your place all the time", to which Mr Birt replied, "Are you kidding? We never see the inspector."

Later in the meeting Mayor Larose announced that councillors McCann and Amyotte would be fined \$300 each for "walking away without voting" during the special meeting on April 19, causing the adjournment of the meeting for lack of quorum (the mayor having withdrawn from the table). Councillor Amyotte later explained that the vote occurred during the "huis clos" or closed (to the public) part of the meeting when the legal action brought by Alain Larose, the mayor's brother, was discussed, and that a vote cannot take place during a closed meeting.

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