

# PRESS RELEASE

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11<sup>th</sup> September, 2024

## **Joint Press Release by Andy Kuczynski and Mark Miller**

**Public Engagement on critical Issues is a priority and the 3<sup>rd</sup> in a series of events is happening in Springfield, Thursday, Sept 12, 2024.**

**Politicians should never isolate themselves or violate the public's trust.**

On Thursday, September 12, councillors Andy Kuczynski and Mark Miller will be hosting their 3<sup>rd</sup> public engagement session to share information, hear concerns and meet residents, all intended to elicit input on a variety of current community challenges. The public meeting will be held at Dugald Community Centre in Dugald beginning at 6:30 pm.

Miller and Kuczynski strongly believe meeting with the public in a community setting on a routine basis between elections is a key responsibility to effectively representing people. There are many examples where politicians escape the public arena, only to alienate or serve a special interest or issue. If an elected official is not willing to engage and be transparent and accountable with the public often, one may assume they have their own agenda or have become beholden to a special interest, person or may have turned a deaf ear to the public at large. Politicians are elected to respect and respond to public concerns, not just attempt to espouse or claim they are acting somehow in the public's best interest.

The issues of key concern on the 12<sup>th</sup> will include guest speakers on the proposed Springfield Recreation Centre, Silica mining update, Plan 20-50, Bylaw 21-25 and others. A main element of the session will allow the public to raise concerns among any topic of relevance or importance. While the councillors may not have all the answers, they are eager to hear the diversity of concerns and issues that the public will share. Open dialogue is welcomed.

## **Relative Background Information:**

***“Encouraging the public to share concerns in an open dialogue allows others to learn, debate and seek practical solutions. Being an elected official is much more than bringing ones’ own point of view to our seat in the council chamber. It is our goal to raise the bar of public engagement and to listen intently and often to those who depend on us for positive strides forward on many critical decisions.”*** stated councillors Miller and Kuczynski.

Prior to first being elected in October 2022, Andy and Mark, independent of each other, made a commitment to raise the bar of public engagement, transparency and accountability. They encourage all elected officials to improve public dialogue, limit secretive and in-camera discussions and divulge perks and become more financial efficient. History has shown, some elected officials become alienated and despondent with the public over time and have a disdain for public dialogue. There are many factors for this, but Andy and Mark are willing to take on the tough questions, the ridicule of being unique because upholding the public trust is paramount. They will not coast between election to election warming the seat and going along with the status quo. Our aim and responsibility is to reach out to residents, be proactive, open, honest and transparent.

As an example, fighting Sio Silica’s proposal in our community was a cooperative success. So many came together to share concerns and everyone’s efforts made a difference. Andy and Mark stood tall against all odds faced with an aggressive political and corporate team. They did it because people asked them to do so and because it was the right thing to do -- to protect our water resources now and well into the future.

September 12 is the third in a series of on-going public forums. The first two were held in Cooks Creek and Oakbank back in January 2024. It is anticipated more will be held to ensure residents get access and a voice to them as councillors in our community.

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