

Myers
15.12.17 RR

Gary Robbins
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PO Box 180
Cardigan, PE C0A 1G0

November 30, 2017

MLA Steven Myers
Office of the Official Opposition
PO Box 338
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7K7

Mr. Myers,

We are writing to you regarding the Three Rivers Region amalgamation project. Our understanding is that this project was undertaken by seven communities: Montague, Lower Montague, Brudenell, Valleyfield, Cardigan, Georgetown, and Lorne Valley. Georgetown has since pulled out of the project, leaving six communities. The six communities have been working to create one large community with one Council. This is a good idea and if those communities want to amalgamate and reduce their administrative costs, that is their own business.

Of concern to us is that this project is not confined to the six who want to amalgamate (about 4000 people). A decision was made to include people in the outlying areas that are not incorporated (about 3000 more people). This was not a matter of us wanting to be a part of it, but rather, of us finding out that we had been included without our knowledge or consent.

Benefits for the towns are obvious. They are provided with sewer, water, sidewalks, street lights, etc. We already pay for our own sewer and water, we pay fire dues to the Cardigan fire district, our provincial taxes pay for highway maintenance, garbage pickup, schools, hospitals, policing, etc. There is no benefit for the rural areas and we don't want to be a part of this. We have been hearing from seniors on fixed incomes who are worried about the cost of this new municipal tax on top of the new carbon tax that is coming. Most of us don't know how we are going to make ends meet as it is and can't take on any additional tax load.

The proposed budget for this municipality is over \$3 million. They are expecting to cover half of this through increased taxes and the rest through transfers and grants. As you know, grants and transfers cannot be counted on for long term sustainability, which means that the other 50% will eventually fall on the residents in the form of additional taxes. One example of the type of grant is the gas tax grant. It is based on population, so adding 3000 people to the community would make for a larger grant. However, the P. Wood & Associates report indicates that ***"The rules for the Gas Tax Program are currently changing and the availability of these funds in the next phase is not certain."*** They make it sound like the gas tax grant is free money, but it's just taxpayer dollars. Do you think it is a good use of taxpayer dollars to provide \$586,700 in transitional funding plus \$200,000 long term sustainability funding in the first year alone, to create something that most rural residents do not want. Would these taxpayer dollars not be better spent on hospitals and schools?

We have been studying the new Municipalities Act, and Section 12 in particular, dealing with annexation of unincorporated areas. These processes were not followed when the Committee decided to annex us. We are still unclear as to which specific properties are part of the proposal, what municipal services are to be provided (if any), what the new municipal tax rate would be, etc. We have surveyed our community (Martinvale) and found that no one in the community has been receiving notices of meetings, most people didn't know we were involved – they thought it was just an amalgamation of the six communities, and most important of all, they are totally against being part of this new municipality. We have circulated a petition in our community and would like this to be used as our vote to remove our community from the project. We believe that if the other unincorporated communities were surveyed and made aware that they are part of this plan, you would get the same answer from them.

It is our understanding that the Three Rivers Committee is pushing to have this completed by the end of the year. Since it is Christmas and people have other things on their mind, it is really not the best time for something like this to be moving forward.

We know that you presented a petition from 500 people to the Legislature last week. At that time Minister Mitchell indicated that the unincorporated people don't need to worry until the incorporated communities decide if they are going forward or not. This is not what the Three Rivers group is saying – they stated they are pushing this through before the end of the year. Whether they go forward or not does not matter. What matters is that they not take us with them. We suggest that the project be scaled back and the scope only encompass the six incorporated communities and leave the rest of us out of it. If they are not willing to scale this back to those that initiated and want this, then we must have a plebiscite so that we can have our say. We don't need Minister Mitchell to tell us when to be worried – we are worried now and want this ended so we can enjoy our Christmas without this hanging over our heads.

We would be more than happy to do some of the leg work on this project as this is vitally important to us and our community. Please advise us of what our options are in this matter.

Thank you,

Gary & Lucy Robbins
(902) 394-2751

Attachment: Petition from Martinvale

This is a petition signed by the residents of Martinvale, Prince Edward Island, requesting the community be removed from the Three Rivers Project.

Name	Signature	Date
Lucille Robbins	L Robbins	27 Nov 2017
GARY Robbins	G. Robbins	27 NOV 2017
Brody Campbell	B. Campbell	27 Nov 2017
Michelle Myers	Michelle Myers	27 Nov 2017
EDNA LEARD	Edna Leard	27 NOV. 2017
Lindberg Rowe	Lindberg Paul	27 Nov. 2017
Courtney Rowe	Courtney Paul	27 Nov. 2017
SANDRA MYERS	Sandra Myers	27, NOV. 2017
Mary Robbins	Mary Robbins	27, NOV, 2017
Jason Robbins	Jason Robbins	27 Nov, 2017
Paul Robbins	Paul Robbins	28 Nov 2017
Shelley Poyer	Shelley Poyer	28 Nov. 2017
Sabree MacEachern	Sabree MacEachern	28 Nov 2017
Doug MacEachern	Doug MacEachern	28 Nov 2017
George Poyer	George Poyer	28 " 2017
Mable Poyer	Mable Poyer	" " "
AL MYERS	Al Myers	" " "
Maggie MacEwen	Maggie MacEwen	" " "
ROBERT MacEwen	Robert MacEwen	" " "
ROBERT QUINN	Robert Quinn	29 Nov 2017
Elizabeth Weavers	[Signature]	Nov 29/2017
Geoffrey Weavers	[Signature]	Nov 29/2017

