

The November Municipal Elections are two weeks from tomorrow, so it's time for the citizens of Berlin to make well thought out decisions regarding the future of our City. While some have been quoted as saying that this Council has been "very shortsighted", I would certainly contend that, on the contrary, the present Council has been working on implementing a long range vision and plan for the City. Take, for example, Councilor Goudreau's plan for funding the City's capital improvement projects for the next six years. Prior to his plan, past administrations had attempted to limp through the capital improvements, accomplishing virtually nothing toward substantive improvements to the City's infrastructure. As another example, look at the wholehearted endorsement by this Mayor and Council of the first major step in generations towards a new economic direction for the City, that of the new outdoor recreation initiative 21121. This substantive undertaking is the first step for Berlin in establishing a new mixed base economy for the City. Look also at this Mayor and Council's desire to see a mixed use development for the former Fraser mill property, something that could benefit the people of the City for generations to come, creating hundreds of jobs in the foreseeable future. This property has enormous potential, and this Mayor and Council has the long range vision to understand that we need not jump at the first proposal to be put forth for the property.

Shortsighted? I think not. It seems to me that this body, over the last two years, has taken the long term approach to the issues, an approach that hasn't been seen in this City for a long time.

Further to our long term view, let me make one thing perfectly clear. Neither this Mayor nor this Council have done anything that could be construed as writing off the jobs that currently exist at the Fraser Paper Mill in Gorham. Some may contend that by not embracing the Laidlaw proposal, this Mayor and Council have no concern for the people who are employed at Fraser. Nothing could be further from the truth. Both proposed biomass facilities can offer benefits to Fraser. I contend that Clean Power, in fact, is the better of the two when it comes to benefits for the existing paper mill because of its proximity to Fraser. I will do all that I can, and I believe the current Council will also, to insure that the jobs at Fraser are preserved.

Without a doubt the most prevalent issue facing the City and the voters this election is the pros and cons of the two biomass proposals for Berlin. I have clearly shown I am in full support of the Clean Power

Development proposal for the southern portion of the City, and that I feel the Laidlaw proposal is not the best use for the former Fraser mill property. The other candidate for Mayor has recently indicated he supports both proposals, but his actions clearly show otherwise. As County Commissioner, he and the other commissioners have indicated that they will me as interveners on behalf of Laidlaw. If, in fact, he is supportive of the Clean Power Proposal as well, I challenge Mr. Grenier to show his support for Clean Power and ask the Public Utilities Commission to expeditiously act on PUC Docket item DE09-067.

Furthermore, if Mr. Grenier is in fact supportive of the Clean Power proposal, I would ask him to explain why he has clearly rebuffed attempts by Clean Power to meet with the County Commissioners to allow Clean Power to provide information about their project and its potential benefits for the county as a whole.

I challenge the citizens of Berlin to do their own research on the issues, especially regarding the two biomass facilities proposed for the City. Should one or both of these projects come to fruition (and I don't think both can coexist), they will have impact the City for generations to come. And don't rely simply on the local newspapers for your body of information. There is so much more to these projects and the companies that are behind them. Search the internet for information. Research the history of both companies and their principal owners. And don't be afraid to contact the companies themselves and ask them some hard questions. Ask Clean Power why Public Service of NH is giving them the cold shoulder. Ask Public Service the same question. Ask Laidlaw why they have a lawsuit against Ellicottville, NY. Ask the people of Ellicottville the same question. Ask Laidlaw why their press release of September 21 announcing a partnership with Homeland Renewable Energy, who specializes in power from poultry litter, wasn't published locally. Research what biomass facilities pay in property taxes throughout the state of NH. I think you'll find that they don't pay as much as some people would lead you to believe. If either of these come to fruition, even the larger of the two won't make up 25 to 30 percent of our tax as some have stated.

There is more to these two projects than just what you read in the newspapers. For the sake of your children and your grandchildren, enable yourself to make educated decisions about this all important issue.

And please, speak to your candidates to see where they truly stand on this issue. Thank you.

David Bertrand

Mayor, City of Berlin