

NOTLRA Responds to CAO Statement on Media Inquiries

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association (NOTLRA) Board discussed the recent Lake Report article referencing the CAO's comments regarding media inquiries and the protection of Town staff at its meeting on Thursday.

In a perfect world we all want to see free, open, and constructive dialogue between our town's staff and the public because, on a day-to-day basis, residents rely so much on the services that the staff are empowered to provide us with. However, we do not live in a perfect world and " the Board recognizes that residents have established channels available to obtain information from the Town, including formal service request processes and Freedom of Information (FOI) applications. While responses are not always perceived as complete or satisfactory, FOI requests operate within a statutory framework and provide access to independent oversight through the Information and Privacy Commissioner. These processes, though sometimes involving time and cost, ensure that requests are reviewed through transparent and accountable mechanisms.

The Board also affirms that harassment or personal attacks directed at Town staff are unacceptable. Such conduct is inappropriate and counterproductive. Respectful, fact-based engagement, even when firm, is far more likely to contribute to constructive dialogue and improved outcomes.

Frustration can arise when residents feel concerns have not been fully addressed. In those circumstances, reliance on formal, reviewable processes is more effective than repeated informal exchanges. Clear procedures and independent review are essential components of good governance.

The NOTLRA remains committed to responsible civic engagement, balanced advocacy, and respectful discourse in the interest of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents.