



# • • • Memo

**To:** Chair and Members of Budget and Corporate Services Committee

**From:** Mayor Rick Goldring

**Date:** January 24, 2012

**Re:** Blue Community Resolution

Further to correspondence received in November 2011 from Kingston resident Robyn Hamlyn, I would like to indicate my support to Council to consider the following resolution for the City of Burlington to become a "Blue Community."

A "blue community" is one that adopts a water commons framework which treats water as belonging to no one, and as the responsibility of all. The Blue Communities Project is a joint initiative of the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees to call on municipalities to adopt a common framework by passing resolutions to:

- recognize water as a human right,
- ban the sale of bottled water in public facilities, and
- promote publicly owned and operated water and sanitation services.

Other Blue Communities in Ontario include Ajax, Kingston and Tiny, and Victoria and Burnaby in British Columbia.

The City of Burlington has taken several steps towards becoming a blue community through the Towards Zero Waste Strategy, which aims to reduce waste from disposable plastic water bottles and eliminate bottled water from city events. The "*Thirsty? Try the Tap*" campaign also promotes publicly owned and operated water services with water bottle filling stations at city-owned facilities and parks. The final step towards becoming a Blue Community is to recognize water as a human right.

Therefore, I put forward the proposed resolution for consideration by Council:



WHEREAS Canada is rich in fresh water resources; and,

WHEREAS the City of Burlington is situated along the shores of Lake Ontario; and

WHEREAS over a quarter of Canadian municipalities have faced water shortages; and

WHEREAS one in six people around the world does not have access to clean drinking water; and

WHEREAS in 2010, the United Nations passed two resolutions that recognized the human right to water and sanitation. The resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Council notes that the human right to water and sanitation is already entrenched in international law and is therefore legally binding on countries; and

WHEREAS a “blue community” is one that adopts water as a natural resource belonging to no one, and the responsibility of all. Because water is central to human activity, it must be governed by the principles that allow for reasonable use, equal distribution and reasonable treatment in order to preserve water for nature and for future generations; and

WHEREAS the criteria for a city to become a “blue community” includes:

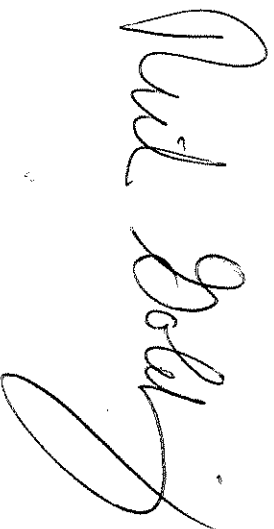
- 1) Banning the sale of bottled water in public facilities and at municipal events;
- 2) Recognizing water as a human right; and
- 3) Committing to publically financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Burlington recognizes and affirms that access to clean water is a fundamental human right; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council will call on the federal and provincial governments to enshrine water as a human right in federal and provincial law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities call upon the federal government to support the recognition of water as a human right in international law;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor send a copy of this motion to the Rt. Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada; the Honourable Peter Kent, the Federal Minister of the Environment; Mike Wallace, M.P. for Burlington; the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable Jim Bradley, Provincial Minister of the Environment; Gary Carr, Chair, Region of Halton; the Halton Regional Conservation Authority and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.



November 4, 2011

NOV 10 2011

Mayor Rick Goldring  
The City of Burlington  
P.O. Box 5013  
426 Brant Street  
Burlington, Ontario, L7R 3Z6

Dear Mayor Goldring,

My name is Robyn Hamlyn. I live in Kingston, Ontario and I'm 13 years old.

In August I met with my mayor, Mark Gerretsen, to discuss a letter I wrote to him earlier. This letter told him about my worries about our fresh water supply and that we had to do something now to help.

In June, my teacher showed us a documentary called Blue Gold: World Water Wars and it shocked me. It showed us that:

- 1) Our earth holds 97% salt water and 3% fresh water. Almost all of that 3% is polluted.
- 2) We use up water faster than it can be replenished. Just around the Great Lakes, we pump almost 3.2 trillion litres of water a day. 7.6 billion litres do not get returned.
- 3) Canada is a water rich country and as water becomes polluted, the rest of the world will look to us for water. The Great Lakes are a main target. What is really scary is that they are saying this will probably happen within 10 to 20 years from now when I'm a young adult.

This information changed my life. It made me realize the bigger picture, that there's going to be a huge water collapse and possibly a war, in ten to twenty years. We're all going to be apart of it.

My mayor listened to me and agreed that something had to be done. I told him that I wanted to make Kingston a Blue Community. In order for this to happen, three resolutions needed to be passed. They are:

- 1) Ban the sale of bottled water in public facilities.
- 2) Recognize water as a human right.
- 3) Promote publicly owned and operated water and sanitation services.

He invited me to speak on September 20, 2011 to Kingston's City Council. I did and Kingston was declared a Blue Community that night.

**COUNCIL  
INFORMATION  
PACKAGE**

cc.



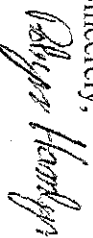
I have a goal and that is to make all municipalities in Ontario Blue Communities. After that, I want to approach other provinces.

I know that I can do this, but I need your support.

Can I come and meet with you to discuss these resolutions?

I can be reached at [REDACTED] or by e-mail at my mother's e-mail address

Sincerely,



Robyn Hamlyn

GSTONWHIG-STANDARD

PAGE 7

## localNEWS

00 days in jail

■ COUNCIL

# not too fun Kingston declared 'blue community'

g his pro-nunciated  
saw Ireland coming toward them  
on his dirt bike, but before they  
could apprehend him, she said, he  
headed into the fields behind the  
er, Foxton  
has taken  
the beating  
act infor-  
nages and  
1 supervi-  
him.

marked cruiser on Wilson Street  
where they lost him a second time.  
He surfaced once more, with  
the same result, according to  
Foxton, before police eventually  
located the yellow dirt bike he'd  
been riding parked outside a res-

FROM PAGE 1  
Councilors declared Kingston  
a "blue community" Tuesday  
night based on United Nations  
resolutions recognizing that all  
people have the right to clean  
water and sanitation.  
Criteria for the blue designa-  
tion include having banned the  
sale of bottled water in public fa-  
cilities and at municipal events,  
recognizing water as a human  
right and committing to publicly

financed, owned and operated  
water and wastewater services.  
The concept of becoming a  
blue community was introduced  
to council by Robyn Hamlyn, a  
12-year-old student from Lan-  
caster Drive Public School.

At deadline Tuesday night  
councilors were debating a plan  
to invest \$13.6 million into af-  
fordable housing, a top priority  
of the current council.

The city has a waiting list of  
[pschlemann@hewhig.com](mailto:pschlemann@hewhig.com)

people in need of 1,173 units  
ranging from one to five bed-  
rooms and including seniors  
apartments.

The average wait time in  
Kingston for a one-bedroom  
apartment is five to eight years.  
Seniors can wait up to four  
years for rental accommoda-  
tion.

The vacancy rate for rental  
units in Kingston is just 1%.