



## Lack of Information

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by Jay Henry

Attend any village board or committee meeting and there's a recurring theme:

- Get it over with fast – and provide as little real information as possible.
- Pass an ordinance – no one in attendance needs to see the actual text of the ordinance.
- Approve bills for payment – here again, no one can inspect a listing of who is getting paid out of the village coffers.
- Oft-repeated response from Mayor Kitching, "Submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the clerk's office."

I've got a revolutionary idea! How about having truly open meetings – that share the information with citizens and others interested in attending the meetings?

OK – I'll admit that maybe these kind of meetings may last a little longer than the usual 10 to 15 minutes. Generally, I have more travel time in the round trip from home than the actual duration of some meetings – meetings lasting a little longer would at least SEEM like it was a worthwhile trip.

The current administration has turned using the FOI as a shield to keep information from the public. Add the inconvenience and built-in delay associated with submitting an FOI request – and most people will simply not bother. I'm sure this has been factored into the administration's thinking when deciding to limit the free-flow of information available at public meetings.

It wouldn't take much to have ONE copy of relevant supporting information and documents for items on the agenda available at the front of the room for inspection by the public. No – it wouldn't take much ... but then again it would create an environment where information was actually available. Something I'm not sure this administration will ever be willing to see through.