



rose – which looks, smells, and even tastes as a rose might – has still possibly been grown in a substance of differing viscosity. Indeed, one's first glance might not be quite as insightful as a deeper examination might discover. The problem is not specific to the west coast; I have found it so for many councils. They, too, would follow the example cited: react first, then decide; then (much later) research. Ready, fire, aim. The presence of several administrators in the audience should give cause to pause. Why are they here? Don't we have all the insights and information and wisdom needed on our side of the table? Just as you are reaching for that button to signal a motion or raising that hand, look carefully at these managerial types and ask: I wonder what they might say if I gave them the opportunity?

I no longer begin any engagement thinking that I will likely recommend a standing committee system. I might have years ago, after I had consulted with the council members to see what was working thus far and what might work better. It has been my experience that standing committees (unless very carefully guided by sound terms of reference) often result in individual

councillors thinking that their job is to manage a department. Rather, I might suggest a committee of the whole model or some variant of that system. Why? Because management does not need council members leaning over their shoulders on a department-by-department basis. Instead, council needs a forum for discussion, thought, reflection, questions, more discussion, and perhaps even presentations by outsiders. There is great merit in the Cuffism "first heard, deferred." Often, what one hears with respect to an issue when it is first surfaced is but a foretaste of what is to come. Like the game show, only one door has been opened; three more remain.

### The Value of Sober Second Thought What's Missing?

This fundamental need for a chamber of sober second thought runs counter to the trendy push to eliminate the Canadian Senate and falls rather readily into line with the texting age wherein every good choice is based on messages received only three or four seconds ago. An elected council is not a high school or the local bar – where pick-up lines are texted and tweeted to the impressionable crowd. Councils serving our communities are paid (albeit rather

poorly) to think and then act. This cannot be easily accomplished when the issue and decision are mere minutes apart.

It might be a series of standing committees in your community; it may be task forces and *ad hoc* committees in another; and, in yet another, it might be a "governance and priorities committee" that serves as that point on the road where the brakes are applied, even if just for the moment, giving all the opportunity to look at the issues on a somewhat broader and in-depth scale. The idea that is presented at the end of a meeting in a council roundtable and is suggested for approval immediately because it is a "no brainer" is right. It was.

A time of thought is what is often missing. When do we hear from both sides – or is there only one? How can a rush to judgment be successful when all the relevant information has yet to be researched and crafted, and thus is days away from any decision table? Could this one wait? Sure. The flood waters are not rising; Rome is not burning; the voices of all need to be heard and respected. **MW**

**Nelson Granite**  
*Mausoleums & Columbariums*

Karl Lang  
 Sales | Service | Support

Office: 1-807-227-2650  
 karl.lang@nelsongranite.com

[www.nelsongranite.com](http://www.nelsongranite.com)



*All Granite Design Columbarium | Canadian Built*

**Ainley GROUP**  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS & PLANNERS

*Delivering Proven Infrastructure Solutions...*

...to satisfied clients for over 50 years

Barrie (705) 726-3371  
 Belleville (613) 966-4243  
 Collingwood (705) 445-3451  
 Ottawa (613) 822-1052

[www.ainleygroup.com](http://www.ainleygroup.com)

MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION WATER STRUCTURAL PLANNING

**BluePlan ENGINEERING** people engineering environments

Guelph Owen Sound Listowel  
 Kitchener Exeter Hamilton GTA

[www.gblueplan.ca](http://www.gblueplan.ca)

Land Development & Site Servicing	Water & Wastewater Treatment
Materials Testing & Inspection	Water Resources & Stormwater Management
Infrastructure Planning & Asset Management	Structural Design of Buildings, Bridges & Buried Structures
Engineering Surveys	Environmental Management
Construction Layout	Municipal Infrastructure

**CJDL**  
 Consulting Engineers

MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING

Phone (519)688-1000 (866)302-9886  
 Fax (519)842-3235 [cjdl@cjdleng.com](mailto:cjdl@cjdleng.com)  
[www.cjdleng.com](http://www.cjdleng.com)

Cyril J. Demeyere Limited  
 Box 460, 261 Broadway, Tillsonburg, Ontario. N4G 4H8