

Mayor and Council,

November 16, 2021

At just under \$2.7 million per year, the cost of policing in Elliot Lake is a major cost to the city budget. Yet we seem to have little or no control over how many officers are on duty in our community versus other municipalities in the East Algoma detachment, what resources are used and what resources are needed for better policing. There has been no update to Council by the local detachment commander on the state of safety or the major concerns that the OPP have with regards to drugs, gangs, violence or problems with mentally unstable people, nor an accounting of why our costs are what they are.

At the same time, we have seen an invasion of illicit drugs and attendant overdoses, the arrival of gangs that are increasingly violent and threatening to the local population and an increase in the number of violent acts.

In the last two to three weeks there was an attempted abduction of a young girl on her way to school. She managed to escape and the man fled but the police did not see fit to issue a warning to parents or other schools. A man assaulted his neighbour with a hammer and was arrested then released on recognisance and has since threatened an 85 year old man and his family who have been pillars of this community for over 65 years, who now live in fear after receiving numerous telephone threats from the same man. I have listened to one of these threats and it is genuinely scary. Yet the local OPP have seen fit to do nothing to protect these people or the community at large.

There seems to be an attitude by the OPP that we are not entitled to know what they do and we should be grateful for their work in Elliot Lake. Yet few of them live in our town, preferring the bright lights of Blind River and Thessalon. When they go home after a shift they don't patronize the businesses in our community, nor are they readily available in the event of a potential problem.

I am not anti-police. In fact, members of my family have served proudly as police officers. I am, however, pro accountability and I ask that the Council undertake a detailed and formal review of our contract with the OPP to determine what levels of policing we require and what the potential costs would be.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ed Pearce

Councillor