

CBC's requests of Ed Houghton in 2018**May 31, 2018 - phone call to Ed Houghton (mid afternoon)**

Ed Houghton: Hello?

Dave Seglins: Hi, is this Ed?

Ed Houghton: Yes it is.

Dave Seglins: It's Dave Seglins. CBC reporter. We met a couple of years back when you were working for the Town.

Ed Houghton: Oh yes, okay.

Dave Seglins: I'm doing a bit of a follow-up story and I'm wondering if you might have a few minutes to chat?

Ed Houghton: Well I'm actually out on the golf course.

Dave Seglins: Lucky you.

Ed Houghton: Yeah! So...

Dave Seglins: Not thunder and raining on you?

Ed Houghton: Not yet. No.

Dave Seglins: Well what about later this aft.?

Ed Houghton: Well I've got.... it's literally Men's Day. It starts at one o'clock and we're 7...or 7B. By the time I get out of here it's going to be 8 or 8:30. So.

Dave Seglins: Yikes. Okay. What about tomorrow?

Ed Houghton: Yeah. Give me give me a holler tomorrow. Tomorrow's Friday.

Dave Seglins: Are you in town tomorrow?

Ed Houghton: I'm in Collingwood tomorrow, yes. Yep.

Dave Seglins: Okay great. I'll text you. You've got my number and maybe we can connect in the morning.

Ed Houghton: Okay thanks.

June 1, 2018 - phone call to Ed Houghton

Dave Seglins: Ed?

Ed Houghton: Yes.

Dave Seglins: Dave Seglins, CBC guy.

Ed Houghton: How are you?

Dave Seglins: Good, you?

Ed Houghton: Good, thank you.

Dave Seglins: Sorry I'm peppering you ...did you get a text message?

Ed Houghton: I did. Yes. Sorry. I did this last night, yep.

Dave Seglins: I tried to send another one this morning and it told me it didn't go through so I didn't know if you were getting it or not.

Ed Houghton: Okay.

Dave Seglins: Do you have some time to chat?

Ed Houghton: I, honestly I don't today. I've got two or three conference calls and my wife's got me doing Honey-Do projects this morning. So I really don't.

Dave Seglins: Uh...how about next week?

Ed Houghton: Well you can give me a call and see. I'm not sure what I can add to anything. But you can give me a call and see.

Dave Seglins: Well, can I ask you one question. When when we met... we met in the CAO office. You were kind of into the thick of it but at that time when you were working for the Town you weren't getting paid.

Ed Houghton: That's correct.

Dave Seglins: But in the end you did get some compensation, right?

Ed Houghton: Um, I, I. Not from the Town. No.

Dave Seglins: The Town never gave you...

Ed Houghton: No I was compensated by MY employer.

Dave Seglins: So you weren't compensated...

Ed Houghton: The only thing I ever got from the Town was mileage and things like that.

Dave Seglins: So but for your for your labours as the CAO ...

Ed Houghton: I was doing it as an in-kind service from my real job.

Dave Seglins: So did you get paid additionally for that in-kind service?

Ed Houghton: Um, at that time no. I was being, looking after water and electricity and public works. And I just they added those on. And that was one of the conditions I said was that I would do it as an in-kind service and that was it.

Dave Seglins: Did you ever get any compensation after you served the role?

Ed Houghton: From from the Town of Collingwood? No.

Dave Seglins: But from Collus, for your role at the Town?

Ed Houghton: Well I only got... again, all I got was a compensation from my normal bonus plan.

Dave Seglins: Okay. But my understanding is that in relation to your duties and the labours that you expended at the Town...

Ed Houghton: Yes.

Dave Seglins: ...you were paid an additional hundred thousand dollars?

Ed Houghton: Oh! I wish! (laughs) No.

Dave Seglins: No. Never happened?

Ed Houghton: Never happened.

Dave Seglins: And there was no - was there a bonus anywhere in that neighborhood tied to...?

Ed Houghton: A bonus of a hundred thousand dollars? No.

Dave Seglins: Was there a bonus ever from Collus in relation...?

Ed Houghton: There was it...I... we had a bonus plan and I was given a bonus. And I would expect that my bonus was reflective on my duties as a whole. Because we consider ourselves a part of the municipality.

Dave Seglins: Right. So can you...

Ed Houghton: Okay?

Dave Seglins: Yeah yeah. Okay so that's nothing one small detail. I'm, I'm working on a story about, about the Sprung deal.

Ed Houghton: Sprung? Okay.

Dave Seglins: The Sprung, the building of the recreational facilities.

Ed Houghton: Yes. Okay.

Dave Seglins: Was there ever a consultant involved?

Ed Houghton: Was there consultants involved? Well, you mean from an engineering perspective? From what perspective?

Dave Seglins: No I think there was, I think it was clear in the contract with BLT that there was an engineering consultant...

Ed Houghton: Yes.

Dave Seglins: ...but was there a facilitator kind of person who helped facilitate the construction company's relationship with the Town?

Ed Houghton: No, not that I'm aware of no. We dealt directly with Sprung when we when we let the contract and our, our staff looked after that but...

Dave Seglins: What about BLT? Was there anybody that worked to help BLT land the deal?

Ed Houghton: BLT was a contractor that installed the Sprung stuff, yeah. No we just, again, we...under...it would be the same as a normal contract where we did oversight. And I can't remember if there was an engineer involved and who the engineer was at the time, but I don't, I actually don't recollect. I can't remember.

Dave Seglins: So what was Paul Bonwick's role?

Ed Houghton: In the Sprung?

Dave Seglins: Yeah.

Ed Houghton: Nothing with me.

Dave Seglins: Nothing?

Ed Houghton: No. I mean, I knew that...I knew that Mr. Bonwick is involved with a lot of things but certainly from Collingwood's perspective, Collingwood never paid him to do anything or anything like that.

Dave Seglins: What about Green Leaf Distribution?

Ed Houghton: Green Leaf Distribution? What about Green Leaf Distribution?

Dave Seglins: What role was it in the Sprung/BLT deal?

Ed Houghton: I don't know if Green Leaf's Distribution had anything to do with the Sprung deal ...from the Town's perspective. I don't know.

Dave Seglins: So why were you in communication with Paul Bonwick and Abby Stec of Green Leaf over facilitating the BLT contract?

Ed Houghton: Facilitating it?

Dave Seglins: Yeah.

Ed Houghton: I don't know if that's the correct term at all. I mean certainly one of the things that we were trying to do is make sure that these, these things were, what do they call it, gold leaf? Or...

Dave Seglins: Turnkey?

Ed Houghton: Pardon me?

Dave Seglins: Turnkey?

Ed Houghton: No, no I was thinking more from an environmental perspective. I think Abby Stec had...

Dave Seglins: LEED...

Ed Houghton: Pardon me?

Dave Seglins: LEED certified?

Ed Houghton: LEED certified, yes. But ...anyway...

Dave Seglins: So why...

Ed Houghton: Look it...

Dave Seglins: Why would the Town pay Paul Bonwick and Abby Stec to facilitate the BLT deal?

Ed Houghton: Why did the Town pay them?

Dave Seglins: Yeah.

Ed Houghton: I'm not aware that the Town paid them.

Dave Seglins: You're not aware that BLT built into the costs of its contract the services of Abby Stec and Paul Bonwick?

Ed Houghton: No I'm not because we wouldn't have any of that information.

Dave Seglins: Were you aware that Paul Bonwick was paid three quarters of a million dollars for his role of one month of facilitation for landing that deal for BLT?

Ed Houghton: Uh...no.

Dave Seglins: When the correspondence that I'm looking at shows that you were clearly communicating with Paul Bonwick and Abby Stec about the BLT deal -

Ed Houghton: Yes and from the....the...what do you call the what we just talked about? LEED certified.

Dave Seglins: Did you ever disclose that to members of council?

Ed Houghton: Um, I don't. I don't think that - was I required to let them know? That we were making sure this thing was LEED certified?

Dave Seglins: Were you ever in discussions with the Town to ensure that the first installment of the payment to BLT would be large enough to cover Mr. Bonwick's fees?

Ed Houghton: Umnot that I'm aware of (laughter). Look it. I think... I think honestly I think you're talking to me about something that is four years ago that I honestly can't recollect what you're talking about. And I think that you know...anyway...

Dave Seglins: Well here's, here's my situation. I'm a journalist. I covered it from afar. There were complaints to the OPP. The OPP opened an investigation.

Ed Houghton: Right.

Dave Seglins: The OPP found some things. They found evidence suggestive of the fact that in your duty as the CAO you rewrote the staff report, removing the competitive process of a request for proposal, to funnel the BLT thing through with a sole source contract. And that despite communication with Abby Stec and Paul Bonwick, that was never disclosed. Their involvement was never disclosed. And in the end built into the cost of the BLT contract was a three quarters of a million dollar payment.

Ed Houghton: Well I certainly never built that into anything like that. Certainly none of that was from my perspective.

Dave Seglins: So the OPP are investigating...

Ed Houghton: Right.

Dave Seglins: ...and in court documents they're laying out allegations that you and Mr. Bonwick were involved in a criminal enterprise.

Ed Houghton: Well that's...(laughs) good for them. That's not true.

Dave Seglins: Did you ever get any compensation from Mr. Bonwick?

Ed Houghton: Zero. Absolutely nothing - ever!

Dave Seglins: So the allegation that the cops make in a document I'm looking at...

Ed Houghton: I'm sorry?

Dave Seglins: The allegation that, that's made by the cops in a document that I'm looking at, um, puts you at the centre of what they call a breach of trust and a fraud on the Town of Collingwood.

Ed Houghton: Me?

Dave Seglins: You and Mr. Bonwick, yup. And Abby Stec.

Ed Houghton: Oh my God.

Dave Seglins: So this is what I'm trying to get to the bottom of. The cops don't always get things right. And so this is why I want to meet and I want to show you what I'm looking at and give you an opportunity to look at it and respond.

Ed Houghton: Well I think ...I think what I have to do then is ... I have to speak to my lawyer and ... 'cause I can tell you right now that none of that is true. And so I'm going to have to speak to my lawyer...

Dave Seglins: Well, fair enough. I want to give you time to do that and I want to reflect properly your position because you know I don't want to splash this story out without ...

Ed Houghton: Neither do I.

Dave Seglins: Yeah, so. So I'm a fair guy. I work for a smart media organization. It's not a flash in the pan. I'm not going to air with it tonight. But I need a commitment from you that you'll proceed and not just brush me off. Right?

Ed Houghton: Well I haven't done it yet have I?

Dave Seglins: No. Some others have.

Ed Houghton: Pardon me?

Dave Seglins: Some others have. But ...

Ed Houghton: Well I haven't.

Dave Seglins: You have not. Could you. You've got my, at minimum my mobile number. Do you have an e-mail address?

Ed Houghton: Yes.

Dave Seglins: Shoot.

Ed Houghton: E [REDACTED] (Redacted)

DS: gmail dot com. Okay I'm going to send you an email to connect.

Ed Houghton: Okay.

DS: If you can be in touch with your lawyer and we'll figure out a way to proceed because I want to I want to present you with this material that I'm looking at and give you adequate time...

Ed Houghton: Right...

Dave Seglins: ...to time to think it through. Okay?

Ed Houghton: Okay.

Dave Seglins: All right.

Ed Houghton: Yep.

Dave Seglins: I appreciate that. You've got my number if you've got questions or concerns because I appreciate that this is a significant allegation I've put to you. It's not my allegation it's the cops in a document.

Ed Houghton: Thank you. Okay.

Dave Seglins: Okay. I'll be in touch via email. Thank you.

June 1, 2018, 9:28 AM - email to Ed Houghton

Ed,

Thanks for taking my call.

As I explained, the OPP have made some serious allegations against you in some court documents alleging you were involved in a breach of trust during your time as Acting-CAO at the Town of Collingwood.

I'd like a chance to explain in greater detail these allegations, and totally understand and respect your desire to consult with a lawyer.

Can you be in touch with me once you have counsel to arrange a time I can present in greater detail these serious allegations?

Thanks,

DS

June 5, 2018, 11:17 AM - email to Ed Houghton

Ed -

Have you retained legal counsel?

You told me on Friday you wanted a chance to speak to a lawyer.

I have further questions ... and can send them to you ...or legal counsel.

Please let me know what you'd prefer.

Thanks,

DS

June 6, 2018, 3:26 PM - email to Ed Houghton

Ed,

You've not got back to me - nor supplied me with a contact # for your lawyer.

So, attached are a list of questions.

I can see from my records you are opening and receiving my emails.

Please confirm you are able to open this attachment.

I am seeking a reply from you no later than 10 AM on Monday June 11.

Thank you,

ATTACHMENT TO EMAIL June 6, 2018, 3:26 PM

June 6, 2018

Ed Houghton
Via email

Mr. Houghton,

As I've explained in our telephone conversation on Friday June 1, 2018 I am a journalist with CBC News working on a story about the OPP investigation in Collingwood into corruption allegations involving Town Hall.

At that time, you said a number of things I'd like to ask you about. But you also indicated you wanted first talk to your lawyer. Since that time, you've not returned my emails.

So, I am sending you this email - to formally request a sit-down interview, on camera, to discuss your role as Acting-CAO in Collingwood back in 2012-2013. Have you retained legal counsel? If so, who are they?

In that alternative, I am sending you a list of additional questions to which I'd ask you for a reply no later than Monday June 11 at 10 AM.

By way of background, as of June 6, 2018, the OPP have said their investigation remains

ongoing.

The OPP investigation is multi-faceted. What's more, a judicial inquiry has been called into some of the matters (the 50% sale of Collus to Powerstream in 2012, and the subsequent allocation of the proceeds into recreational facilities).

CBC News has learned details of a portion of the OPP investigation, specifically around the sole source contract the Town signed with BLT Construction to erect Sprung fabric structures over the community pool and an ice pad using the proceeds from the Collus sale..

The OPP, in an application made to the courts in 2014, level serious allegations involving you.

The OPP allege that a 6.5% fee hidden in the BLT contract (which was passed on by BLT to Green Leaf Distribution) amounts to a breach of trust and fraud on the Town of Collingwood, specifically naming you, Ed Houghton, as well as Paul Bonwick, Abby Stec and various companies.

Given the intense public interest in these matters, I intend to report on the OPP court materials. I would like to provide you an opportunity to comment and have the following questions for you:

1. In summer 2012, what was your role in selecting a plan for upgrading Collingwood's recreational facilities?
2. Who on council directed you to sole-source fabric structures from Sprung?
3. Why was this contract sole-sourced?
4. Why, on July 16 of 2012, did you and Mayor Cooper dis-invite Ameresco from making a scheduled deputation to council on their proposal for ideas for a multi-use recreational facility? (From an email, you explained: "we felt that we didn't believe if would be appropriate for them to come and provide you with an explanation of what they think they could do for us in the future. We thought that that it was only appropriate to hear from Parks Recreation and Culture and the committee that was involved with this and with Council... so um that was a decision that her worship and I made thinking that it wasn't appropriate um to do it at this point and time.")

5. Why did you rewrite the staff report from August 2012 that ultimately recommended building fabric structures to remove reference to Sprung?
6. Why did you rewrite the staff report from August 2012 to remove the "RFP" provision to allow a competitive bidding process?
7. What due diligence did you do in advance of the August 2017 council vote on the recreational facilities (beyond simple google searches) to determine the specs and prices of other providers of fabric structures similar to Sprung?
8. Why did you prepare a document comparing Sprung with other manufacturers of fabric building covers - weeks after council's approval of the sole source Sprung deal?
9. Why was this not done before the vote?
10. Why did you represent to council and the public that there were other competitors on the project - when WGD architects only presented design options (not construction proposals) and Ameresco was never told Collingwood wanted Sprung structures?
11. Why, in our conversation on June 1, did you initially say that you were unaware of any involvement by Paul Bonwick in the Sprung project?
12. Why did you confirm later in the same conversation that indeed you had conversations with him, shared town information, and explored with him, Abby Stec and Green Leaf distribution the prospect of building the Sprung structures to a LEEDS environmental certification standard?
13. What role did Green Leaf Distribution play in assisting BLT Construction to secure the contract with Town of Collingwood?
14. What is the basis for the 6.5% (\$756,740.42) payment BLT made to Green Leaf charged for their consulting role on the project?
15. Why, in the days before the August 27, 2012 council vote on the issue, were you exchanging emails and having telephone conversations with Paul Bonwick and Abby

Stec about the BLT construction proposal?

16. Why did you never make council or the public aware of Bonwick, Stec and Green Leaf's involvement in this proposal?

17. What do you say to OPP allegations that your actions as Acting-CAO to sole-source the Sprung deal amounted to a breach of trust?

-Including, curtailing additional bidders, restricting information from council, sharing Town of Collingwood information with Paul Bonwick, misrepresenting the role WGD Architects as being a 'competitor' to Sprung

18. What do you say to OPP allegations that the \$756,740.42 fee paid indirectly by the Town to Green Leaf amount to a fraud committed on the Town of Collingwood?

19. Did you receive any monies, directly or indirectly, related to the BLT/Sprung contract with the Town of Collingwood (either from Green Leaf Distribution, Compenso Communications, Paul Bonwick, Abby Stec or anyone else)?

20. Are you aware of anyone else who received any compensation related to BLT's contract with the Town?

21. Are you aware of whether Rick Lloyd received any compensation related to BLT's contract with the Town?

22. Why, according to the OPP, did you try to introduce Paul Bonwick into discussions around the sale of the Collingwood Grain Terminals?

23. How much of a bonus were you paid by Collus for your additional; "in-kind" duties serving as Collingwood's CAO?

I ask you to please confirm receipt of these questions and supply an answer via email no later than Monday June 11 at 10 AM. If you'd like any clarifications, I can be reached at 416-949-4083.
Many thanks in advance,

June 11, 2018, 12:04 PM -email to Ed Houghton

Ed,

Am I to assume you will not be responding?

Please advise, as we are past my deadline and I'd like to include any comments you have in my story.

Thanks,

DS