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Export date: Sat Oct 31 18:10:17 2026 / +0000 GMT

Amaranth Mayor under fire for ?all lives matter? comment

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Amaranth Mayor Bob Currie is again facing controversy, following comments made during a Dufferin County Council meeting.

The racially insensitive comments were made during County Council's meeting last Thursday (Feb. 11) following a presentation fromDufferin County Canadian Black Association (DCCBA) president, Alethia O'Hara Stephenson.

O'Hara Stephenson, in her delegation to councillors shared some accomplishments that have been made in the last year since Black History Month was proclaimed for the first time in Dufferin County. She included highlights such as the raising of the Pan-African flag in Dufferin, Shelburne, and Orangeville as well as other events such as the Museum of Dufferin (MOD) and DCCBA Solidarity event.

Currie's comment came when O'Hara Stephenson made reference to the Black Lives Matter marches that took place in Shelburne and Orangeville last year.

?As far as the Black History Month is concerned, I have no problem whatsoever recognizing those people, but the first lady that talks, she talks about Black Lives Matter, well to me you're discriminating against every other colour there is and all lives matter,? said Currie.

Dufferin County Warden Darren White following the comment said he was not going to dignify it with a remark. Warden White later apologized to Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson and O'Hara Stephenson on behalf of County Council for the comment.

?Those comments do not reflect the direction or the thought process of the County, does not direct the thought process of the staff with the county and they don't have a place in the current discussion,? said White. ?We as a society should be striving to create opportunities for all of us to be equal to walk the same path, at the same time, to have the same opportunities, not seeking to further segment or further disadvantage any community.?

Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson later spoke with the Free Press about the comments made at the meeting.

?I don't think that Bob is a racist, I don't believe that he was saying that from a place of hate. I think he could have better articulated what he was trying to say and what he was trying to communicate,? said Anderson.

Anderson noted in their positions of government and with the platform they have, representatives need to be mindful and careful of how their words are perceived.

?We have to be mindful that our words and how we say things matter to folks, and that they could have a negative impact on folks, whether you intended that or not,? said Anderson. ?I'm hoping that for him that was a point of education, to consider that moving forward.?

Anderson added that shortly after the meeting, Currie reached out to him to speak and that he was satisfied with what Currie had to say and ?left it at that.?

?Bob will move on, the community will move on. I could see why there's certainly a concern from members of the community, but I'm hoping that there won't be a repeat occurrence with this at either the County level or any other level.?