

Written by Editorial
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Here are three names we'd like to offer for consideration in the next municipal election: David Copperfield, Penn Gillette and Criss Angel.

They're magicians. They can disappear, much the way Penticton City Council and the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen do whenever there's something they find uncomfortable on the agenda.

Municipal councils and school boards hide behind the three Ls far too often- land, labour and legal.

While we respect that many items should be discussed in camera (job promotions, employee discipline, significant contracts, employee firings), elected officials with the help of their staff are far too often finding obscure reasons to link a controversial item on the agenda with one of the three Ls.

There are two cases in one week that we know of.

At Penticton City Council last week, reconsideration for the downtown garden was on the agenda. Two nice ladies came before council to plead their case offering an explanation as to why there were so many weeds. They also reiterated the fine work their society does.

Mayor Garry Litke then decided because it's a land issue, the final decision has to be made behind closed doors.

The original decision was made in camera so that's where the motion to reconsider has to be discussed, Litke rationalized.

This makes no sense considering the downtown garden group was probably paying only \$1 per year.

Why can't the taxpayers and citizens of our community sit in on the debate if they wish to?

We'd like to know specifically where everybody stands on an issue.

More obscene was the RDOS. The threat of having Crime Stoppers, the DARE program and community policing services reduced is a concern. Inspector Kevin Hewco met with the board to discuss these issues... in camera. (In fairness, Hewco was extremely cordial and helpful with the media afterward.)

From what we gather, part of his talk had to do with restructuring duties for one employee. We're unable to report more back to you on this because we weren't allowed in the meeting.

It's doubtful that 100 per cent of Hewco's talk was about labour. Why couldn't the media be excused for five minutes and then be allowed to hear the remainder of his presentation?

Policing is important... at least we think so.

RDOS directors said it was at Hewco's request to go in camera.

Again we'll ask the same question posed to Mayor Litke last week.

Who is the employee and who are the elected officials?