
Carolyn Jill McClary

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January 4th, 2016

Ms. Irina Kuznetsova
Advisor,
Licensing and Performance Reporting
Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
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boardsec@ontarioenergyboard.ca

Dear Ms Kuznetsova,

I am writing to convey my concerns about Northern Ridge Utilities which supplies hydro to the residents of Sunpark, Beaver Ridge Estates, at 1007 Racoon Road, Gravenhurst, P1P 1R1.

I have leased the land here at Unit 48 for a little over a year making me a tenant of Firm Capital, and I am confused and dubious about a lot of the business transactions I have with the park management. Firstly, I was concerned about my supply of propane. I had no way to determine how much I was using as the automatic delivery of new tanks to my property was nothing short of capricious. I would use a tank of propane over a three week period, then the next tank would run out after only four days under similar weather and use. Upon enquiry, the park management told me I must have a leak, which I knew was not true as I had a professional re-run the lines only a few months before. However, I could prove nothing so I contracted with another supplier and my use of propane is now more constant, varying as expected with weather conditions and my use of the stove. I no longer have unusually large and sudden billing surprises.

My use of, and billing for electricity is another area over which I seem to have no control, but in this case I am unable to contract a competitor. I receive a monthly invoice from Northern Ridge Utilities Corporation at 163 Cartwright Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6A 1V5. I am unable to find this company on the internet. The bill shows the total number of kWh used by the entire park, followed by the total dollar amount on a line entitled "Gravenhurst Hydro Charges." I am assuming this means Gravenhurst Hydro Electric Inc., which I was able to identify on the internet. They appear to be a subsidiary of Veridian Corporation. However, I saw a bill from Superior Propane on the manager's desk, and the large holding propane tank in the park has "Superior Propane" written on the side. In any event, my invoice has no copy of, or further reference to the actual bill. I am simply given kWh and dollar amounts which I am supposed to take on faith. I can not dispute the veracity of these numbers, but I consider it in the least, bad business practice to create an invoice which can not be verified.

The invoice further shows me the kWh on the meter going into my unit for the period specified. I am not advised of this reading at the time it is taken. I simply get an invoice two weeks later when the reading on my meter is different. The number of kWh I purportedly have used is taken as a

percentage of the kWh of the entire park, and this percentage applied to the total park bill to come up with the amount I owe. I have checked the mathematics which is accurate. However, the “entire park” consists not just the meters of the tenants, but the electricity used by the laundry huts, the recreational centre, and the manager’s large 2-storey house. There is nothing to indicate if my rate is subsidizing these other buildings. While I am amenable to paying my share of power for the recreation centre and laundry rooms, I’m quite sure I should not be subsidizing the manager’s personal use.

Subsequent to my percentage use for the month, I am then charged a \$10.00 fee for “Monthly Administration Charge,” and yet another \$10.00 for “Monthly Equipment and Maintenance Charge.” Given the appalling condition of my woe begotten little meter on its little stick leaning under the weight of the snow, I can’t imagine any equipment maintenance has been done in a long time. I don’t know if the dial is spinning at the right tempo. Does it speed up in the summer and slow down in the winter according to the varying expansion and contraction of its metal parts? Is my dial spinning at the same tempo as all the other units in the park? Again, I simply do not know, can not find out, and I am being asked for blind faith.

On top of this I am charged HST. Is it legal to charge HST on the portion of my bill that goes to “Monthly Equipment and Maintenance Charge”? I do not own the hydro lines nor the meter so it begs the question as to why I am ... 1. Charged for their maintenance, and 2. Taxed for the “privilege” of maintaining things I do not own.

Last winter I closed down my house as I spent some months working in Nigeria. For eight months my energy consumption was zero, but I paid the “administration” fee which was levied despite management having to do nothing, and again the “Monthly Equipment and Maintenance Charge” for equipment that was not being used.

I am also concerned by the number of times the power goes out. In the last couple of weeks it has gone out four times from just a few minutes, for half an hour, up to four hours. We hear nothing from management. Is it just our park? Gravenhurst? All of Muskoka? From time to time with high wind and storms power may be interrupted, but this evening it was dead calm and clear.

Like most people here I am a pensioner on a fixed income. Last week I tried to apply online for an energy rebate with the Ontario government. I qualify for a \$30.00 rebate, but I was unable to complete the application because Northern Ridge Utilities was not on their pull down list of energy suppliers.

I am also concerned with the means of water testing. I pay approximately \$27.00 per month for this service. Everyone else pays the same amount monthly. There are approximately 135 units here, which means Sunpark Beaver Ridge Estates is receiving approximately \$3,645.00 per month to test water. This seems more than a little excessive. I don't know how the water is collected, from where, or when, who tests it, for what – just blind faith that my drinking water is pure.

I have, of course, spoken to friends and neighbours about these things, but the almost invariable response I get is "Don't complain. They will bully you and add more money to your next bill." A friend has refused to let me use his internet to send this letter because he was told that Firm Capital could find his IP address and cut off his power. Other people report tire slashing any other acts of vandalism on the behalf of management. This is all here say and I rather doubt the incidents as described are accurate. But some things have happened and these people truly believe they are being intimidated. Notwithstanding the truth of reported incidents, the truth is that there is a severe atmosphere of fear and distrust among the park tenants

I wish to make it very clear that I am making no allegations of wrong doing on the part of any person or institution. I have no proof to make any allegation. I am, however, concerned and frustrated by my inability to get a handle on my expenses and power use. I am even more frustrated by the perceptions of other park tenants.

Apparently Northern Ridge Utilities is applying for a permit or licence to sell energy. This is also confusing to me. How can they apply for a licence to do what they have been doing for heaven knows how long? I would be very much opposed to any licence being granted without 1. All equipment being serviced and checked by an electrical engineer, 2. Billing practices and all charges are legal, transparent, and conform to best business practice, and 3. All billing for the park be analyzed by a forensic accountant and any irregularities are corrected. I would also be very much opposed to Northern Ridge Utilities carrying on business as they have been doing, and I am asking for help. I would be most pleased to discover that there has been no wrong doing by anyone, that this is all a matter of miscommunication, and the tenants can be reassured about management practices, and a new and pleasant atmosphere established.

Yours very truly,

C. J. McClary B.Sc. (Hon) B. Ed.

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