Kevin C. Christenson, City Clerk

March 15, 2006

71 Main Street West
City Hall, 2nd Floor
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8P 4Y5

To the Mayor and Members of Council
City of Hamilton

Dear Mayor Di Ianni and Members of City Council:

We write to again express our deep concern and disappointment with the city’s failure to respond to the issues we have raised about the plans for an Aerotropolis. It is especially unfortunate that this failure has occurred despite repeated promises to the contrary.

On the day that we submitted our letter to the Mayor and council last August, we were promised a response. When that didn’t arrive, we re-submitted the letter. That resulted in a public promise by Mayor Di Ianni and city council in late October to meet with Hamiltonians for Progressive Development. That promise too, remains unfulfilled.

As the chronology attached illustrates, we have made repeated attempts to engage the city in a meaningful dialogue about the Aerotropolis plans, all to no avail.

Instead, we note that the city is pushing ahead to allocate $5.4 million to the project in the 2006 budget with a further projected $7.4 million in subsequent years. In addition, final decisions are pending early next month in the city’s Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS) to formalize the approval of the Aerotropolis.

Both of these decisions are being put before city council prior to council receiving the report on the implications of peak oil – despite the fact that report was commissioned last June and city staff received a draft in October.

All of this is a continuation of the kind of planning and process that we have expressed concern about, a process that proceeds with minimum public notice and without real public input. This is exactly what happened in June of last year when council decided to establish a special policy area on 3100 acres of prime agricultural and natural lands in Mount Hope.
Once again, we call on council to open up the approach to planning, and to engage in meaningful dialogue with both Hamiltonians for Progressive Development and the public at large. The decisions being made here will fundamentally affect our community for decades to come. These decisions are far too important to be rushed through without a full public airing and consideration of all relevant information, more specifically, the Peak Oil report.

Respectfully,

Michael Desnoyers
Chair
Hamiltonians for Progressive Development

Jack Santa-Barbara
Co-chair

Cc
Mayor Larry Di Ianni
Councilors McHattie, Bratina, Morelli, Merulla, Collins, Jackson, Kelly, Whitehead, Bruckler, Pearson, Mitchell, Ferguson, Sampson, Braden and McCarthy

Media

CATCH
CHRONOLOGY

August 23 – HPD held a press conference at city hall to release our letter to the council. The letter was hand delivered to the Mayors office and council.

August 24 – The Hamilton Spectator reports: “Councilor Terry Whitehead, who chairs council’s planning and economic development committee, said after the news conference: “It’s good to have a conscience of government and we need to ensure some of the legitimate questions they raise we respond to.”

August 26 – Column by Andrew Dreschel in The Hamilton Spectator discusses HPD letter. “They’re challenging council to do things differently. They have deep concerns about the planning process that created the issue, a process they say fell short of addressing all the environmental, economic and social aspects of the plan, didn’t have enough public input, and led to a decision being made without a proper business case. (Mayor Larry Di Ianni, who strongly disputes many of the claims, says council will respond to the group’s letter.)”

September 28 – Having received no response from the Mayor or City Council, HPD hand delivered our letter to members of council at the beginning of their regular council meeting.

September 30 – HPD’s letter is published in the Ancaster News and other community papers.

October 17 – HPD delivers to the city clerk a letter to council, enclosing the letter of August 23rd, and noting that HPD “has not received a response to our letter nor any indication of when a response will be forthcoming. HPD is serious about making a positive contribution to the future prosperity of Hamilton and believes that it is possible through constructive dialogue. We sincerely hope that you agree.”

October 26 – The HPD letter appears on the city council agenda and a discussion takes place. The minutes of that meeting report the disposition of the letter: “Recommendation: Be received and Mayor DiIanni and Councillors McHattie, Mitchell, and Whitehead will meet with the writers to discuss process.” The meeting discussion included the following promises to hold such a meeting: Brian McHattie: “…So, rather than just receiving it, I’d like to provide that direction that we meet with the group. And, I’d certainly like to be part of that - Mayor DiIanni: "Sure." McHattie: " - if we were to be able to arrange that meeting." Mayor DiIanni : "Certainly. We can certainly arrange that." ... Later in the same discussion: Mayor DiIanni : "We can certainly meet about process. That’s not a problem. I’ll undertake to arrange that." ... Later in the same discussion: Mayor DiIanni: "I think that, let’s meet and talk about process. And, Councilor McHattie will be there. And, we’ll see where we go from there. Okay?"

To date, HPD has not been contacted or heard any news of the promised meeting.