July 24, 2009

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
and Members of Council
City of Hamilton
77 James St. N.
Hamilton, ON
L8R 2K3

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

Re:  Airport Employment Study

I recently received a copy of correspondence from Hamiltonians for Progressive Development, dated July 21, 2009. I read with great surprise the comment that,

"It remains our position that the City has not yet demonstrated a need to expand the Hamilton urban boundary into prime agricultural lands to accommodate industrial growth, has not taken reasonable account of the existing stock of employment lands including opportunities provided by brownfield properties and has not prepared intensification strategies to accommodate employment growth within existing built-up areas."

Contrary to this assertion, the City and its consulting team, through the Airport Growth District Study program, have very meticulously examined these issues in great detail, and have carefully documented all of their findings in a number of technical studies. It is understood that the reports may not have produced the findings that certain parties would have liked to have been brought forward to support their own positions, however, it is somewhat surprising that any party who has been involved in this process over the past twenty months would not acknowledge the fact that indeed the work has been completed.

There are others on the steering committee who disagree with the findings of the reports. For example, the Chamber of Commerce concurs a peer review undertaken by MKI Consultants on behalf of the City which suggested that the density targets adopted by the study as a result of input from the Province are incorrect. By utilizing the more realistic yardstick in the MKI report, the proposed Airport Growth District is too small by approximately 762 hectares (1880 acres).

Notwithstanding that the study is not adopting the results of the findings of its consultants and is using numbers which are both untested and inappropriate for Hamilton, the Chamber and others on the steering committee have elected to move forward on the basis of the recommendations arising from the study. Therefore, while there may not be agreement on the final outcome, there has been agreement from the Community Liaison Committee to move ahead with the implementation of the plan and clearly there can be no question about the fact that the work has been completed.
In my opinion, the process has carried on in a very clear predictable and open fashion. There is no need to slow down the process because one party is uncertain about the position of the Province. Clearly, if any party wants to contact and/or meet with the Province, that opportunity is open to them. Further, the Province has been invited to provide input and even attend Steering Committee meetings. The opportunity for dialogue in both directions has been put forth in a clear manner and on a regular and consistent basis.

The study process has been extremely fair, and has included input from all participants who have provided countless hours of their time on a volunteer basis to contribute to the enhancement of their community. In fact, I would suggest that more time has been spent at Committee meetings dealing with issues from Mr. Desnoyers and his representatives than any other group who are participating in this process. Refusing to accept recommendations which are different than one’s expected outcomes is not justification for trying to undermine or turn back the progress which has been accomplished to date.

I would also take exception to the personal attacks on City staff generally and specifically on Mr. Paparella. At all times through the process, Mr. Paparella and staff at the City have acted in a very open, accommodating and professional manner. Mr. Paparella has patiently taken into account input from a variety of parties, and has conducted this process in manner which is conducive to inviting input from all sectors of the community. He has properly utilized the outside expertise of both the facilitator and the professional consultants to undertake this work. All of these professionals have undertaken their responsibilities in an open, and respectable manner.

Mr. Desnoyers suggested that there may be those in the community who remain in the dark. With the number of Open Houses, the widespread public notice and distribution of information, the community has been well informed and actively involved in the process. While it is unclear as to how Mr. Desnoyers has managed his efforts to inform his colleagues, this process undertaken by the City and the study team has been diligent in keeping the entire community up to date with not only the outcomes, but also the process involved in this exercise. It is my submission that the only people in the dark are those who insist on keeping their eyes closed.

Any party can disagree with the findings of the reports that have been completed, and even deny the existence of information after it has been documented and distributed through the public realm, however, the personal attacks on City staff and Mr. Paparella are totally uncalled for and unacceptable from any source, particularly a local group purporting to represent the interests of citizens of the City of Hamilton. These comments are totally without foundation and not at all helpful to an exercise that is geared toward moving our community forward in a progressive manner. Upon reflection, it is hoped that Mr. Desnoyers would find it appropriate to express a heartfelt and very public apology to Mr. Paparella and staff.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

E. J. Fothergill, MCCP, RPP
Representative on Community Liaison Committee
for Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

c. c. Hon. Jim Watson, MMAH, Hon. George Smitherman, MEI, Mr. Victor Doyle, M.S.O., Mr. Tim McCabe,
Mr. Chris Murray, Mr. John Dolbec, Ms. Ruth Liebersbach, Mr. Guy Paparella,
Mr. Ray Lee, Mr. Neil Everson, Mr. Michael Desnoyers

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