From: Hamilton Civic League [mailto:hamiltoncivicleague@gmail.com]
Sent: February-18-14 1:34 PM
To: Robicheau, Vanessa
Cc: Howard Elliott; Paul Berton
Subject: Phase 3 AEGD Planning Meeting

I am unable to attend today's meeting but would appreciate having the following comments and attached file included with related minutes or reports.

The City of Hamilton has opened the door to residential development within the AEGD as that decision is now the sole responsibility of the OMB. I am assuming a long list of residential developers consumed meeting time today to argue that their lands within the AEGD are better suited for residential or commercial development as this is precisely what the City had agreed to during Phase 1. This is exactly what we had predicted to be the end game and that the City's exaggerated need for additional industrial employments lands provided the necessary cover.

Provincial rules combined with City incentives force taxpayers to subsidize all growth allowing residential developers to generate their profits on the backs of existing taxpayers. The perverse system of subsidizing (not collecting Development Charges to cover all infrastructure related, staff related and ongoing maintenance costs) new development must end. Please tell the province that Hamiltonians reject any growth plan that involves subsidies, as we cannot even cover the current costs of maintaining our existing infrastructure, reported to be $2 billion short and growing by $200 million per year.

Even the industrially zoned Maple Leaf plant came at a cost to taxpayers in the form of lower than market value revenue for the sale of the lands and additional costs to provide transportation services. A phased approach to the AEGD represents a phased approach to subsidizing the AEGD and taxpayers still lose.

The Hamilton Civic League visited 350 residents within the AEGD to survey their opinions on the project. 42% responded and over 85% rejected the project, with most claiming to want to retain their rural lifestyles. The City does not own these lands and cannot force the owners to use them for industrial purposes.

The Hamilton Civic League posted an online petition against the AEGD and received over 1000 signatures from residents across the city.

Hamilton Civic League volunteers spent an entire week at City Hall examining all 35,000 pages of MPAC data to extract all records for vacant and underutilized industrial properties. We also reviewed City files detailing landowner requests for industrial vacancy rebates. These properties combined with those available for sale or lease amounted to 1300 available acres throughout the city. This number...
was calculated prior to the US Steel announcement of the cessation of their operations. Today there would be upwards of 2000 acres available.

City staff used a VERY narrow definition of brownfields to eliminate most of the available lands that sit idle today. The available serviced lands have the capacity to provide MORE JOBS, for LESS COST than the proposed AEGD.

Allow the number of industrial developers and businesses that appeared before the planning committee today to be an accurate measurement of the level of interest in the AEGD. Businesses need to be located in areas that are conveniently accessible for employees and to customers. The AEGD fails on location, location, location alone. Who will pay for the public transit to allow $11/hour car-free employees to get to their AEGD warehousing jobs?

It is mind-boggling to learn that the City does not have a comprehensive brownfields strategy in place. At the very least, the AEGD should be put on hold until a detailed Harbourtropolis plan can be established.

Councillor Clark had recently proposed a referendum on the issue of water fluoridation and then withdrew the request. Why not consider a referendum for the AEGD? Let’s allow eligible voters to have a say in the long-term economic development plan for their City. Let’s put the AEGD to the true test of taxpayer approval.

With respect to Phase 3 and the drawing of the borders for the AEGD, please circle the existing and mostly vacant Airport Business Park and review the annual growth rate before considering expanding. With respect to AEGD options 1 and 1a, one option adds additional lands that are not permitted by the recent OMB decision and therefore must be considered invalid.

Best regards,
Larry Pomerantz
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