Present: Mayor F. Eisenberger


Also Present: Members of Provincial Parliament
The Honorable Minister Marie Bountrogianni
Andrea Horwath, MPP
Judy Marsales, MPP
Wayne Marsden, MPP
Ted McMeekin, MPP
J. Mossop, MPP (regrets)
M. Gallagher, Coordinator, COW

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PRESENTS REPORT 07-015 FOR INFORMATION:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as circulated.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None
(c) WELCOME AND REMARKS BY MAYOR EISENBERGER

Mayor Eisenberger welcomed the Provincial Members of Parliament in attendance.

Ministers Greg Sorbara and Marie Bountrogianni met with the Mayor and addressed the current challenges faced by the City of Hamilton at a meeting prior to May 11th.

Issues including Lister Block Randal Reef and Social Services shortfall were among the issues addressed.

(d) REMARKS BY MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

Minister Boutrogianni addressed members of council and noted that she recognizes the challenges that the city faces and reiterated the importance of improving the quality of life for all residents and finding solutions to the challenges together. The minister noted the need to protect the legacy of the steel industry, promoting Hamilton, renewing the downtown. The Minister recognizes that Hamilton’s cost is amongst the highest in the Province.

The Goals are the same: a stronger, safe community with balanced priorities. The Minister urged the council and the members of provincial parliament to work together to serve the citizens of Hamilton.

Andrea Horwath, MPP addressed members of council and hopes the city will continue to bring to light specific challenges and systemic issues to the government’s attention.

Judy Marsales, MPP addressed members of council and noted that members have the best interests of Hamilton at heart and together with council we can build the best community.

Ted McMeekin, MPP addressed the Federal shortfalls. Important to work together to find solutions and look forward to dialogue specific to downloading.

(e) DIALOGUE WITH MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

Members of Council and Members of Parliament addressed the following issues:
- fiscal imbalance
- equalization payments – providing funding for those in need

Council – May 16, 2007
- Heritage funding in Northern Ontario
- challenges facing older cities like Hamilton
- social services downloading committee’s report to the Province
- alleviate of tax pressures in other communities (i.e. Halton) when Hamilton has the highest poverty, highest taxes
- measure of success for lobbying for Hamilton
- Social services should not have been downloaded. Former government uploaded education tax – to the benefit of municipalities
- Other components: - who does what commission? – genesis of difficult issues
- All MPPs are pushing for a comprehensive review of fiscal relationship between levels of government.
- Focus our discussions on having meetings prior to the budgets both provincial and municipal.
- 25 million shortfall – important to look at all the downloading
- making the city sustainable
- Hamilton has issues that others do not. Peel having meetings to address what to do with their surplus.
- Make funding formula sustainable.
- Tangible end result that uploads the download and provides a sustainable formula, people will be leaving the City Of Hamilton
- Shift and unfairness of the formula
- Homecare and NCB
- Address those issues and rather than victimizing those individuals we ensure those programs continue
- Homecare – waiting for 4 years for uploading of this service.
- Other mandated programs that we must provide with lack of funding resources.
- National commission on fiscal imbalance – municipalities should be an equal partner at that table.
- Do recognize that Hamilton is a City in need and have provided - hundred of thousands of dollars to Hamilton
- assessment and growth – struggling to compete with all our neighbours you can see the state of Hamilton – 0% assessment growth number – cries for additional resources from other levels of government – clearly shows Hamilton is struggling with business retention, manufacturing base, new assessment growth
- Detail today on what are the plans to assist in Hamilton in particular for 2008 and beyond – assist us with the 0% number.
- Infrastructure dollars for business parks, Randal reef for 2008 and beyond
- Appreciated brownfield dollars, but Brantford received more resources than Hamilton for brownfields. – will cause problems for us to effectively compete.

Council – May 16, 2007
- Waterfront funding and Randal Reef issue – change the image in Hamilton
- Highest poverty rate in province and seniors as well
- About fairness – Halton – reduced their costs by 6 million in 2007 and they didn’t need the money so they returned it to the lower municipalities
- Give credit for gas tax and brownfield monies
- Remind you that one allocation in a budget doesn’t offset another allocation in the budget.
- Government has recognized shortfall in social services pooling, and that Hamilton not being in the pooling is a detriment to the tax payers of Hamilton.
- Concern social services for Halton and GTA has been phased out.
- When we come to province looking for assistance for social services pooling, now the pooling doesn’t exist, so how will we get the financial assistance from the province now in the future. – making us uncompetitive, assessment growth is connected, concerned because we don’t know what’s coming.
- Confusing for Hamilton when social services pooling elimination hurt Hamilton
- Government is committed to working with partners because everything is connected, i.e. brownfields, gas tax, gst. – must look at these issues in a comprehensive way – want to work with municipal partners
- Council to develop a strategic list of priorities in advance of the 2008 budgets, and get back together again to discuss issues.
- Inequity in court security – on behalf of the police and community JP appointments are major lagging point.
- Do appreciate the discussion – realize that budget is a large document involves every ministry and every ministry is aware of Hamilton.
- Image of Hamilton – that’s the responsibility of all of us here in Hamilton. Historic city in transition.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

F. Eisenberger
Mayor

May 11, 2007