March 31, 2010

Mayor Eisenberger & Councillors
Committee of the Whole
City of Hamilton

RE: RECENT DECISION TO IMPLEMENT PAID PARKING IN ALL BIA COMMERCIAL ZONES

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Over the last thirty days, I have met with numerous business leaders and members of the charitable and not for profit services sector to discuss the impact of paid parking in lower Stoney Creek. To put everything in context, we are discussing 145 parking spots on a community lot behind the Royal Canadian Legion as well as on street paid parking. The extent and detail of these discussions have raised new information. It is important to reiterate that the BIA, business leaders and residents have unanimously opposed the concept of paid metered parking in Stoney Creek from the beginning of this debate 3 years ago.

We have learned that the Royal Canadian Legion has over 700 members, and host numerous charitable events over the course of a year. Actually, the ever popular Friday Night Fish Fry is held every other Friday. The Legion relies on volunteers to keep their costs down and they average 15 to 35 volunteers per day. The Legion also provides free meeting spaces to any community group which averages 10-15 meetings per week. They also average 2 funeral luncheons per week. The Legion Executive surveyed their members and they have advised us that their members and volunteers have overwhelmingly indicated that they will not pay for parking to attend legion events or to volunteer. As a result, they are now preparing themselves for the very real possibility that they will be forced to close their doors.

Seniors Outreach Services (SOS) provides free snow clearing to 165 seniors and they provide door to door transportation for 600 seniors for medical appointments etc. The executive have surveyed their 35 volunteers. All of their volunteers have indicated that they will not pay for parking just to volunteer their services to the community. Further, they have indicated that they will not raise funds from the community to pay for parking. As a result, the executive have advised us that if paid parking is implemented that they will be forced to close their doors. As a result Hamilton Snow Angels will pick-up 165 seniors who need snow clearing and Darts will pick-up 600 seniors who need transportation all at a cost to the city. They also asked me to inform you that SOS has not received any money from the City of Hamilton for snow clearing unlike the Hamilton Snow Angels which receives $100,000 per year.
The BIA has informed us that if businesses begin to leave downtown Stoney Creek then the City of Hamilton could quickly lose significant amounts of commercial property taxes. I can tell you that we have offered numerous options to mitigate the impact such as a limited number of parking permits per charity, reduced hours of operation, a maximum fee of $4.00 per day per meter and an area rating of the parking lot operational costs. All of these suggestions have been rejected. The BIA has requested 50 parking passes for their members. I am also concerned that if the local charities close their doors then Hamilton will be asked to pick up those additional social costs.

As you can see most of this information is new and it should be considered by Council. I fully believe that there is more than sufficient reason for the Council to discuss this matter, hear from the business owners, charities, and service groups then we may debate reconsideration.

Sincerely yours

[Signature]

Brad