Committee of the Whole
MINUTES

1:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.
February 22, 2007
Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West, Hamilton

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Present: Mayor F. Eisenberger

Councillors B. Bratina, B. Clark, C. Collins, S. Duvall,
L. Ferguson, T. Jackson, M. McCarthy, B. McHattie,
S. Merulla, D. Mitchell, B. Morelli, R. Pasuta, M.
Pearson, R. Powers and T. Whitehead

Also Present: G. Peace, City Manager
S. Stewart, General Manager, Public Works
J.A. Priel, General Manager, Community Services
L.A. Coveyduck, General Manager, Planning and
Economic Development
Dr. E. Richardson, MOH
M. Gallagher, Coordinator, COW

Mayor Eisenberger assumed the chair.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COMMITTEE:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

The Clerk circulated a written submission by Judy Robertson

The agenda was approved as amended. CARRIED.
(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

(c) PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Committee entertained members of the public on the 2007 Budget.

1:00 p.m. Andy Cranbury

Mr. Cranbury, a Dundas resident address the multi residential tax rate. (Written Submission received)

Highlights – address issue of fairness for citizens
Mr. Cranbury challenged the Council to implement a plan for the progressive reduction of the ratio of multi-residential-to-residential property taxes to more closely reflect the ranges of fairness as listed in Ontario Regulation 282.98 prior to July 1, 2006.

Mr. Cranbury expressed his concerns with respect to a ratepayer losing their home because they can’t afford to pay the taxes due to the inequities that currently exist. (i.e. paying $1200 more for his property taxes than someone who has the same type of property/home.

Staff from the Finance Department were directed to provide Mr. Cranbury with a copy of the presentation which was received by council in 2006 on the residential tax

1:15 p.m. Tom Cooper, McQuesten Legal and Community Services

Mr. Cooper provided a power point presentation and recommended the following:
- Return the municipal portion of the NCB in 2007
- Ensure public transit remains accessible and affordable
- Continue progress towards a Living Wage policy
- Work towards fair municipal tax rates for tenants
- Continue towards the low income tenant tax rebate previously discussed by council
1:30 p.m.  Sam Shapiro

Mr. Shapiro addressed tenants association member. Mr. Shapiro addressed the multi-residential issue. 125,000 renters who have been unable to get the monies back.

Mr. Shapiro addressed the 2005 Reserve Report

Mr. Shapiro also asked why Council would you lend monies in the millions to building companies such as (i.e. Spencer Creek in Dundas and Chateau Royale in Hamilton

Staff provided an update that the loan by Chateau Royale was paid back and staff would need to check into the Spencer Creek in Dundas project. (Erase Program) Staff will provide the information to Mr. Shapiro.

1:45 p.m.  HABIA

The delegation provided a power point presentation highlighting the following:
-  Annual levies injected back into the economy
-  Commercial property tax
-  What is the business improvement area, how they are governed
-  Activities/Highlights of the BIA’s (i.e. Mustard Festival, Westitalia, Christmas celebrations, photo contests, chess tables in the parks, Buskerfest, Winterfest, Scavenger Hunt)

2:00 p.m.  Len Falco, Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Falco provided a written presentation which addressed the following:
-  Business Tax Reduction Program
-  Bringing Economic Development funding in line with neighbouring jurisdictions
-  Shovel Ready Land
-  Growth of the Airport
-  Brownfields – Mr. Falco was requested to provide statistical data on the brownfield issue raised in his statements
-  Creating sustainable opportunities for employment growth in Hamilton by creating business friendly policies that encourage organization to move to Hamilton
2:15 p.m. Steve Varey, Poverty Roundtable

Mr. Varey presented to Committee and provided an overview of the membership of the Roundtable, the work of the Roundtable to date and issues they wish to have council address including:
Youth Advisory Council
Living Wage

Starting Point Strategy will be unveiled on March 7th; at 8:30 a.m. at the Sheraton Hotel.

2:30 p.m. Peter Llewellyn, Neighbourhood Action Group

Not in attendance

2:45 p.m. Madhavi Reddy, Hamilton Tenant Education Project

Role that the City can play in Tenant Education – consider funding a multi layered system, a reduction in property tax, tax rebate and a tenant education strategy
Ms. Reddy addressed the importance of tenants knowing what is available to them with respect to information and what their rights are as tenants

Keys to the Home – recommendation #14 re: Tenant education strategy – staff to review and bring a report back to Emergency and Community Services on the status of this item.

3:00 p.m. Teresa Kaulback on behalf of Social Action Committee of the Ontario Association of Social Workers, Hamilton and District Branch.

Ms. Kaulback addressed giving back all or in part the National Child Benefit Clawback.

A written submission was received.

3:15 p.m. Renee Wetselaar, Workers Arts and Heritage Centre

Ms. Wetselaar provided an update on the work to date of the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre, including its programming.
Consider increasing funding of Workers Arts and Heritage Centre from $15,900 to $50,000 per year.

3:30 p.m. Sharon Croan, on behalf of the legal clinics
Ms. Croan requested that the city increase funding for city inspectors for residential units.

Ms. Croan provided committee with various examples of tenants living in residential units without heat or hydro. Examples of inspectors not enforcing against the landlord or not coming to inspect upon complaint or taking too long to come to inspect.

Ms. Croan was requested how many of the no response incidents she may have documented. Ms. Croan advised that she will endeavour to obtain the information.

However, in January, she noted two no responses and one where the inspector attended but no follow up was done.

3:45 p.m. Lenore Lukasik-Foss and Pauline Cajura – Sexual Assault Centre

The delegation addressed the Community Partnership program funding received. The monies served over 5,000 citizens last year. Ms. Lukasik-Foss provided an overview of how the community partnership program impacts the women and children the centre serve.

The Sexual Assault Centre will be requesting $28,000 this year.

4:00 p.m. Hamilton Police Services Board (Budget Presentation)

Police Chief Brian Mullan presented the 2007 Police Services Budget

Highlights of the presentation included the following:
- Business Plan, Annual Budget/Capital Budget
- Challenges
- Strategies
- Performance
- Commitments
The Chief advised that he has budgeted for 24 additional officers which will be presented to the Police Services Board for approval.

(Jackson/Pearson)

That the presentations from the afternoon session be received. CARRIED.

Committee recessed at 5:45 p.m.

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.  Sonja MacDonald, Durand Neighbourhood

Ms. MacDonald provided an overview of what make up the Durand Neighbourhood. Four budget priorities:
- Property standards
- Police
- Parks
- Progress

Property Standards: Thistle Club Property – commit to increasing licensing and property standards officers

Police: Calls to police – concern with how calls to the call centres are being managed. Having complaints recorded.

Durand would like to see this addressed before additional funding is provided to the Police budget.

Parks: Ensure that as the city develops greenspace that they don’t overlook the greenspace in the core – need to reinvest in urban parks

Progress: Commend Council on one way to two way – calming of traffic and increase in pedestrian traffic, glad to see the re-use of St. Marks.

7:15 p.m.  Bruce Cookson

Mr. Cookson addressed Committee and expressed the following concerns:

Police Budget – increases in budget. Salary costs – 85% of budget,
Revenue stream – tickets goes to the City, why isn’t this given to the police
Unclaimed items – where is it outlined in budget
Proceeds of crime turned over to the Federal Government-why? i.e. grow – ops – why don’t we demand our fair share of these monies and proceeds kept in the jurisdiction to which they are collected? They are not shown in the police accounting.
EAP – 18.2% for police in Hamilton for accessing this program
Wants effective, open and transparent Police Service

Councillor Morelli agreed to meet with Mr. Cookson to review the budget and concerns

7:30 p.m. Dr. Tom Nugent

Dr. Nugent addressed the following:
- Need for increased funding for infrastructure
- Importance of the Glanbrook Industrial park and Hamilton Airport
- Need a new image – Hamilton open for business
- The creation of jobs would reduce poverty and have positive impact on budget
- Job creations will have students/youth stay in Hamilton and not leave
- Comprehensive employment study – commend Council for having the study done.
- GRIDS Plan

7:45 p.m. Peter Hutton – withdrew due to illness

8:00 p.m. Roy Adams, Executive Director, Hamilton Civic Coalition

Mr. Adams addressed the following the increase to bus fares:
A fare increase seen as a tax on the poor.
There has been no staff report outlining the increase as was submitted to council in previous budgets.
Increase to bus fare will lead to more reliance on cars, increase air quality problem, add to the global warming issue, gridlock, pressure for reduced service, contrary to Vision 2020 and master transit plan, deterioration on the quality of life in Hamilton.
8:15 p.m. Judy Lee, Clawback Committee

Ms. Lee addressed the National Child Benefit clawback and the positive impact it would make for those families within the community. Would like Council to return the clawback monies to families.

8:30 p.m. Flabiano Stanc

Mr. Stanc addressed student boarding houses. Landlord owners for these properties should be paying higher taxes as they are making monies on these properties.

8:45 P.M. Will Rosart

Mr. Rosart addressed the following issues:
- Transit – new buses are not all accessible
- discount pass for odsp recipients in Ottawa
- Heritage – we should have a museum of Hamilton’s history – perhaps use Auchmar – 60 bed dormitory
- police budget – EAP is keeping those families together

Written presentation by Judy Robertson

(Pearson/Morelli)
That the presentations including the by Judy Robertson be received. CARRIED.

(Powers/McCarthy)
Meeting adjourned at 8:40 a.m. CARRIED.

4. ADJOURNMENT