The meeting was called to order.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Chair Clark welcomed everyone and advised that this is a relatively informal meeting to provide information to the new Members of Provincial Parliament and to encourage some dialogue. He asked that the MPP’s and the Sub-Committee members introduce themselves.

2. PRESENTATIONS

(a) Tom Cooper, the Downloaded Dilemma Report (Item 2.1)

Tom Cooper provided copies of the Downloaded Dilemma Report and PowerPoint presentation hand-outs. He provided an overview of the report to the Committee and invitees.

His statements included, but were not limited to the following:

- Why the City of Hamilton has difficulty in providing the services it is responsible for;
- Hamilton has the highest poverty rate in Ontario (tied with Toronto according to Stats Canada);
- Hamilton has more Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program case loads than the Ontario average;
• Hamilton’s limited tax and assessment base;
• Hamiltonians pay higher taxes relative to household income;
• The history of the Social Service Pooling in the GTA (1999 – 2007);
• The results of the elimination of the Social Service Pooling in 2007;
• Between 2002 and 2007, there has been a net increase of more than 1,000 Ontario Works caseloads into Hamilton;
• Suggested the best alternative would be to remove the social services from the property tax base;
• A short term solution would be to continue one time funding arrangements – although this is not predictable and stable funding;
• Update on the Province’s, the City’s and the Chamber of Commerce’s responses to date;
• Uploading of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)/Drug Benefit Costs.

Tom Cooper responded to questions posed by the MPP’s.

(b) Staff report respecting Financial Impact of Provincial Downloading (Item 2.2)

Mike Zegarac provided copies of the staff report and PowerPoint presentation handouts entitled Financial Impact of Provincially Mandated Programs (Report No. FCS07086) which highlighted the key messages in the report.

His comments included but were not limited to the following:

• The City’s financial burden created by changes in the delivery and funding of social assistance, child care, land ambulance, social housing, public health and court security;
• The City’s net cost in 2007 is $97 million or $425.00 property tax per typical household;
• 2008 Funding Shortfall – Total of $101,525 Million;
• Social housing is under funded;
• Cumulative infrastructure deficit in Social Housing exceeds $160 Million;
• Percentage of MOH grant for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) should be 50% of the budget but it is decreasing and will cover only 35% of the budget in 2008;
• Provincial Initiatives include a service delivery review and uploading of ODB/ODSP over next four years;
• Uncertainty exists with long term funding (beyond 2008);
• The Province is cutting Business Education Taxes (BET) over the next 7 years but it is not uniform across all the municipalities;
• The prescribed rate for Heads and Beds (Payments-in-Lieu) hasn’t been adjusted since 1987 – as Hamilton has a large number of institutions, it is losing property tax revenues.
Chair Clark explained that although the uploading of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) by the Province is a positive step, the fact that the Province has eliminated the GTA pooling and fazed out the pooling equation for which Hamilton had been compensated to make up the difference will cause the GTA municipalities and Hamilton all to compete for the limited funds.

Mike Zegarac responded to questions posed by the MPP’s and members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mike Zegarac was requested to provided the following information:

To Andrea Horwath, M.P.P. - How the formula change to subsidies to child care has affected Hamilton?

To Paul Miller, M.P.P. - A copy of the City’s 10 year capital plan budget.

3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Brad Clark, Chair
Fairness to Hamilton Campaign Sub-Committee

Ida Bedioui
Legislative Assistant
Fairness to Hamilton Campaign Sub-Committee
November 9, 2007