



MINUTES OF THE DELEGATES' MEETING
February 25, 2009
OWN CO-OP, 115 The Esplanade

Executive Members in Attendance:

Secretary: Matthew Raizenne, Longboat Residents Assoc
 Treasurer: Bruno Leps, Market Square
 VP Internal: Jacquie Williams, Old York Tower
 VP External: Lumumba Wolde-Gabriel, 140 The Esplanade
 At Large: Dan O'Leary, 15 Scadding
 At Large: Wallace Simpson, Crombie Park
 At Large: Ronny Yaron, Woodsworth Co-op

Executive Member Regrets:

President: Suzanne Kavanagh, 65 Scadding

Voting Delegates in Attendance:

Loretta Allen, Cathedral Court
 Dell Brown, Marketview Housing Coop
 Joan Campbell, 80 Front Street E.
 Debra Corey, Kingscourt
 David Crawford, 135 George Street
 Michelle Dickson, Liberty Lofts
 Terry Eitel, Old York Tower
 Karl Froehr, Windmill Line
 Edith Ginsburg, OWN
 Mohammed Hoque, New Hibret Coop Homes
 Lawrence Hughes, Liberty Lofts
 Abdi Nur, Muriel Collins Coop
 Hawaa Kabbashy, New Hibred Coop Homes
 Arlene Markow, Woodsworth Coop

Doug Maybank, 331 Longboat
 Margaret McQuade, David B. Archer
 George Millbrandt, Longboard Residents Assoc.
 Ijaz Qureshi, Old York Tower
 Alan Seymour, 85 The Esplanade
 Farriel Sharma, Marketview Housing Coop
 Farhan Syed, King St. E. – The Metropole
 Lois Thomson, David B. Archer

Regrets:

Elisabeth Ecker, 65 Scadding
 Cherril Baker, David B. Archer
 Marc Piccinato, Windmill Line Coop

Associate Members & Guests:

Deborah Field, SLCRC
 Mark Fernandez, SmartLiving St. Lawrence

Regrets:

Sherril Russell
 Marc Piccinato, Windmill Line

Darek Fiedukiewicz, Recording Secretary

1. REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS

2. OPENING OF MEETING

2.1 Opening Remarks

Matthew Raizenne (Secretary) stated that due to the President's absence, he would be chairing the meeting. He called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2.2 Approval of Agenda

It was resolved to accept the agenda as presented. All were in favour and the **motion was CARRIED.**

MOTIONED BY: A. Seymour
 SECONDED BY: J. Williams

2.3 Approval of Minutes

The delegates reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on January 28, 2009. The following was discussed and clarified:

Attendance: Lumumba Wolde-Gabriel, 140 The Esplanade should be listed as having been in attendance

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the Delegates' meetings held on January 28, 2009 as amended. All were in favour and the **motion was CARRIED.**

MOTIONED BY: H. Kabbashy
SECONDED BY: B. Leps

Minutes are posted after approval but delegates may provide their email address if they wish to receive the prior meeting's minutes and the current agenda prior to each session.

3. CITY OF TORONTO BUDGET PRESENTATION (Judy Skinner)

Judy Skinner distributed copies of a City of Toronto Budget presentation. It summarizes a balanced budget proposal as was the case in the previous fiscal year. The Budget Committee is now in the process of reviewing the recommendation and it is also posted to the City's website.

Many City services listed in the budget are funded in partnership with the province. The Mayor and Council have expressed concern over the current economic situation so they had provided guidelines to balance the budget and keep residential tax increases to a maximum range between 2% and 4%. Such an inflationary increase is intended to help protect residents against the effects of the recession.

Budget Overview

A balanced budget is recommended with a tax increase of 2.5% on the total tax base (blended business/residential rate). The residential portion is 4%.

Net "Continuous Improvement Savings" totalling \$102Mil have been identified by suggesting efficiencies and other improvements. Priority expenditure increases were put forth to protect existing services and focus on transit, climate change, as well as community health & wellness.

Q. B. Leps questioned why the residential portion of the increase was 4% whereas the business amount was only 2.5%.

A. J. Skinner explained that Council was concerned about the City's competitiveness as compared to surrounding regions. She explained that making the City more attractive to businesses will also help preserve employment.

Q. K. Froehr observed that the City expects to hire 1000 new staff versus imposing a hiring freeze.

A. J. Skinner gave assurance that the matter had been considered during budget reviews but explained that some of the hires relate to additional services to be provided by the City such as the City taking over maintenance of Union Station. Other increases were designated for improvements in court services to address the backlog, increases to police positions (funded by other levels of government), implementing a ridership growth initiative for the TTC, etc. The Mayor and the Committee were very specific that the City would not lay people off but a hiring freeze may yet be imposed.

Q. It was suggested that increases to residential/business taxes and user fees conflict with the mandate to protect business and residents against the effects of the recession.

A. J. Skinner explained that the increases are required to avoid lay-offs.

Q. A member enquired why the "operating" budget was being used to reduce debt financing through contributions to the "capital" budget.

A. J. Skinner clarified that the capital budget is financed through debt service payments (in order to retire the debt over ten years) as well as contributions via the operating budget.

Toronto Helps People/Business

The city has several programs to assist people including: rental assistance, employment assistance, a TTC fare freeze for 2009, help for seniors & others via long-term care homes & services, tax help for seniors and persons with disabilities, and development & jobs.

Business initiatives include reductions in business property taxes, rebates for vacant commercial and industrial properties, financial incentives for new developments, better buildings partnership, energy reduction loans, heritage incentives, etc.

Those interested in more information may visit the City's website (Toronto.ca) and search for Toronto Helps. Residents may also contact Pam McConnell's office directly.

Priority Investments

Priority investments identified in the budget include:

- Public Transit
- Climate Change
- Public Spaces
- Community Health & Wellness
- Creative City (including celebrations for Toronto's 175th anniversary)
- Public Access & Accountability

Measuring Performance

Measurements were done by benchmarking against other municipalities. Delegates were encouraged to visit the website which also shows year-over-year comparisons. The City is considering global city indicators for future analysis.

2009 Staff Recommended Operating Budget

Thirty-two percent of the budget is required to cover provincially mandated programs and, of the total budget, 39% is funded by property taxes. There was a \$679Mil shortfall which was balanced using 2008 surpluses, user fees, reserve draws, a non-recurring provincial investment for transit operations, the property tax increase and assessment growth, as well as the continuous improvements and cost reductions to be implemented.

Q. It was noted that only about \$3Bil of \$8.7Bil in expenditures were accounted for in presentation. B. Leps insisted on better transparency and suggested that the website be made much easier to follow so tax-payers may understand where spending is allocated.

A. J. Skinner offered to email more details and noted that gross values were indicated on the pie charts in the presentation.

Q. J. Skinner was asked to clarify whether the City has carefully considered priorities, which get less than 2% of the budget, versus maintaining thousands of other programs. An example of parking ticket revenues was raised.

A. J. Skinner noted that specific questions regarding various revenues/expenditures may be posed to the councillor's office directly. Also, the Auditor General has a work plan and carefully reviews divisions/departments to seek out efficiencies and provide recommendations for existing programs. Toronto is a large City and does well to adopt 90% of these. It is impossible for the Auditor General to review all programs annually but \$120Mil was identified in efficiencies in the current year. Finally, the City's mandate includes the provision of services and not simply to generate revenues. For example, it must ensure cars are not parked illegally, do not block handicapped access, etc.

Q. A member asked what the overall percentage of expenditures was assigned to salaries, pensions, and benefits.

A. J. Skinner estimated that this was approximately 75-80%. The City provides services so staff is required to do this.

Q. A member asked for a clarification of merit pay increases that City staff receive.

A. J. Skinner explained that unionized employees follow a series of defined 'steps' for performance increases and also receive cost of living increases as per their collective bargaining agreement. Non-unionized employees below the division head level follow a performance pay system in lieu of the step system. This includes a 3% amount versus about 4% that unionized workers get. Those above the division head level, including council, have received inflation equivalent increases of only about 1.9%. The entire policy for management is also currently under review.

Moving Toward Fiscal Sustainability

The City is moving toward fiscal sustainability and has started to implement various continuous improvement and cost control programs, new taxation measures, and undertaken to upload social service programs. Other initiatives will also be pursued.

4. ENVIRONMENT DAY (Dan O'Leary)

Mr. O'Leary announced that the next Environment Day (hosted by the City and our councillor, Pam McConnell) will take place on May 2nd. Residents will be able to obtain recycling bins, have bicycles tuned, and can drop off various items such as batteries, paint, propane tanks, and tires.

The event will take place in Crombie Park and Pam McConnell will also participate with a tree planting in the park. Volunteers are also sought to assist with the setup.

Additional details will follow and posters will be made available.

5. OTHER BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION

St. Lawrence Community Recreation Centre

Deborah Field introduced herself and stated that she was part of the operation's committee when the St. Lawrence Community Recreation Centre (SLCRC) was being built. She was also the first chair and served between 1992 and 1994. She has again worked with the centre's advisory committee over the last two years.

The advisory committee works with the City's Parks and Recreation Department with representation from several interest areas. The committee has been involved with:

- the winter holiday party as well as fund-raising at the event
- sponsored the Halloween party
- helped with the Toronto Waterfront Marathon

- facilitated some senior events
- assisted with setting up a special needs committee to make the center even more accessible and is now working toward a multi-phase approach to obtain funding from the private sector and the City to make the centre totally accessible
- supporting the soccer program

In the past, much of the centre's funds came from the film industry but now it relies more on donations from businesses as well as patrons, and the SLNA.

Doug Maybank added that the advisory council also provides direction from the community to the centre's employees so it plays a very mixed role. It seeks input from all members of the community from children to seniors, etc. The advisory council also provides advice on running numerous well received programs and facilities such as summer camps, drop-in sports, general interest/preschool/aquatics programs, weight-room memberships, etc.

D. Maybank stated that the centre appreciates the donations and support of the SLNA!

Food Drive

Karl Froehr distributed a bulletin reminding the delegates of Windmill Line Co-operative's St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Food Drive Challenge. He once again encouraged others to take up the challenge in March or April.

Seniors Centre

Connie Yang announced that a community workshop, organized by the Old Town Toronto Seniors Centre, was scheduled for March 19th at the Old Town Toronto Seniors Centre. Registration is limited so interested individuals are encouraged to register quickly. Notices were distributed so that these may be posted in the delegates' respective buildings.

Annual General Meeting

Bruno Leps announced that the SLNA AGM would take place in March. Three of the eight executives' terms are expiring including D. O'Leary, W. Simpson, and B. Leps but all three are standing for re-election. Nominations will also be accepted and others are encouraged to come forward.

Those who are interested may contact J. Williams, B. Leps, or M. Raizenne or send an email to slna@bellnet.ca.

Meeting Minutes/Agendas

Terri Eitel stated that it has been very helpful to have copies of meeting minutes and agendas available at the meetings so she volunteered to print twenty copies each month.

B. Leps noted that attempts were made to limit paper waste by using a laptop and projector during meetings to display the agenda and various presentations. He encouraged continuing this approach.

It was suggested that unapproved minutes marked as "draft" may also be posted to the website but objections were raised as these will not have been corrected or approved.

Ontario Green Future

Ronny Yaron reminded of Ontario Green Future's presentation to the SLNA a few months earlier in opposition to imminent projects planned to build two nuclear plants in Ontario. She appealed to the delegates to review their website (www.ontariosgreenfuture.com) for more information.

Skateboard Arena

Ronny Yaron stated that the North Market is being used as a skateboarding arena each Wednesday evening.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

The next Delegates meeting will be held on March 25 at 7:00 pm.

Corporate Secretary

President



LIST OF MOTIONS

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SECONDED BY: J. Williams

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