

Bates, Tamara

Subject: FW: For AFA agenda Feb 22
Attachments: Development Charges 2024.docx

From: Marie Covert <>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 12:00 PM
To: Bates, Tamara <Tamara.Bates@hamilton.ca>
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Hello Ms. Bates,

Please find attached my letter regarding Development Charges, for the Audit, Finance, and Administration Committee meeting on February 22, 2024.

Thank you for your assistance in seeing that everyone has access to my submission.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Covert,
Dundas

To: the Audit, Finance, and Administration Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Development Charges By-law. Hamilton taxpayers are already on the hook for \$35 Million in 2024 due to lost Development Charges from Bill 23. If Industrial Developers don't pay their fair share of DCs, Hamilton taxpayers will be forced to cover the shortfall.

Increased taxes has been the topic of newspaper articles and television interviews for weeks. You all know that Hamiltonians are awash in taxes, increased costs of everything and yet developers are asking for continued discounts and exemptions as they plan to build on wetlands and farmlands, thereby increasing sprawl.

Please ask yourselves why taxpayers should continue to cover discounts granted to industrial developers so they can build costly sprawl infrastructure on unserviced farmland on the taxpayer's dime. Hamilton taxpayers should be fully consulted before the final vote in April since any discounts on industrial DCs will be transferred to taxpayers.

I support the proposed new DC rate of \$41.48 per square foot **for all industrial development on greenfields**. Going forward, growth must support growth. It is supposed to pay for itself. It has been a lack of vision and leadership for countless years, by previous Councils, that has landed us in this predicament where infrastructure is ancient, poorly coordinated, and needs to be replaced at every turn and STILL Developers expect preferential treatment. It is time for change!

I support a further Industrial DC increase for developers who build on unserviced farmland where there is no existing infrastructure, compared to those that build on brownfields within the urban area where infrastructure already exists. Note: the price tag for new roads in the Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD) has been estimated at \$500 Million and this excludes water and sewers. The costs are monumental and built on a wing and a prayer: "if you build it, they will come". And currently, the taxpayers will pay for it, except this isn't a ball diamond in a corn field. It's total destruction of wetlands, wildlife habitats, and whole ecosystems.

Any developer who is successful in having their lands added to the Urban Area by forcing the expansion of Hamilton's urban boundary must pay the full costs of urbanization, especially when there are so many other suitable and already serviced areas within the urban boundary,

e.g. the Portlands. There are programs to assist developers who will build on brown fields, e.g. the ERASE program, the Green Development Rebate.

Every Councillor on the committee has expressed their strong desire to reduce the tax burden on residents during the recent budget period. This is your chance to ensure that developers, not taxpayers pay for growth.

In April please vote for:

No Industrial Development Charges discounts for developers

An increase to Industrial Development Charges to the original recommendation of \$41 per square foot on unserviced farmland

Hamilton taxpayers should not have to subsidize Industrial Developers who, for years, have received hefty discounts on DCs at the taxpayer's expense. Let developers pay, not residents!

Lastly, if you are wondering why so few taxpayers have responded to the Development Charges Background Study and By-law Feedback, it's because we didn't know about the vote and the impending changes. Only one interested person attended the 2 Open Houses in January because this Report was not properly publicized. The Open Houses were only advertised on the DC website which explains why so many Developers were present at the Open Houses and why they dominate the agenda.

Clearly, the odds are stacked against the taxpayer when they are not even notified of tax increases which will impact them hugely. This smacks of extreme preferential treatment in favour of developers. Whoever is responsible should be ashamed. This is poorly, poorly done. Hamiltonians deserve better!