

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Matthew Trennum
City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk
The Corporation of the City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
L8P 4Y5

Attn: City Council

Re: Continued Ongoing Service Issues and Lack of Transparency with the City of Hamilton

I have written to this council back in August updating council that as a taxpayer wanted to write to you as a general member of the public to continue that I continue to face a lack of transparency and accountability with departments and staff within this Municipality. It's now October 2024 and some of my issues that I have addressed to this council and to senior members of staff have not been addressed. It shouldn't take approx. 19 months for a matter to be resolved with this Municipality.

The City Manager Office, its staff and some members of the senior leadership continue to let me down accessing city services and ensuring that customer service, transparency and accountability is at the forefront of an open and transparent government.

I've to ask this council one question, what is the value of our family residential taxpayer bill is when we received a final tax bill for \$3,100 and don't see any value of money of where these funds are being spent on?

As our family is a taxpayer in this Municipality, we are used to transparent and effective local government. Once in which is available at City Hall and is ready to meet member of the public in which it serves. I have continued to let this council know that it's not easy to get access to updates on matters affecting the city, and that when you request for information or ask your senior leadership to be accountable for their department action, nothing is ever done.

As we're all faced with increase inflation and limited tax dollars, I continue to ask this Council What is the value of money as taxpayers when this Council passes an operating budget, asked for an increase, and taxpayers don't know where their tax dollars are going?

Why does Hamilton continue to have one of the highest residential tax mill rates amongst all Municipalities in the GTHA?

As a former resident of the City of Mississauga and Peel Region, I would like to congratulate both Municipalities for their transparency and excellent delivery of public services for the residents of Peel Region. As both Municipalities are celebrating their 50th Anniversaries this year, both Municipalities have the same motto and vision which I wanted to share with members of this council and show examples of how these municipalities put taxpayers at the centre of everything they do.

City Of Mississauga

The City of Mississauga's values serve as the guiding principles for the City's corporate decision-making process. (Source – City of Mississauga Website)

Trust

Upholding the public's trust in the City and promoting a climate of trust across the organization and with Council. With trust we can achieve anything.

Quality

Continuing to provide valuable services and programs that enhance the quality of life for residents and businesses.

Excellence

Ensuring the citizens of Mississauga receive value for money; and delivering excellence internally through innovation and the services we provide.

Region of Peel (Source – Peel Region Website)

Vision: Community for Life

Community for Life is based on our residents' priorities. It's a place where everyone feels they belong and can access the services they need to thrive throughout each stage of life.

Mission: Working with you

We're *Working with you* to create a healthy, safe, and connected community. Peel Region's residents are at the centre of who we are and what we do.

I wanted to share to this council of as example of a Municipality that I think is gold standards with you their vision and Mission, as they both have one vision and one theme. Upholding the public trust, continue to provide valuable services and programs, and ensuring that taxpayers of the Municipalities receive value for money. I really love Peel Region mission of "Working with You", by putting residents at the centre of everything we do.

I have nothing but excellent experience with both Municipalities under a two-tier form of Government. The City of Hamilton is a single-tier Municipality and should be easier for members of the public to engaged in transparency, accountability and trust. It's not.

The question for this council is where in your strategic vision you put the taxpayer at the centre of everything you do and ensure taxpayers received the value of money for the services the property tax roll funds?

This Municipality continues to waste taxpayer's dollars and when us as taxpayers ask for data and transparency on how departments work, and whether fraud and waste is at the forefront of the department performance measures, especially from Community Services department.

What is the vision of this council term? This council and the City of Hamilton continues to fail in this category and staff continue to not report to the community and council on transparency and accountability.

I have notified time and time again that am notifying this council there are serious concerns with your Community Services department that needs to be addressed by either the Office of the Auditor through a value for money audit or a forensic investigation by the Province. Many residents have provided proof and reported fraud and waste when it comes to resources supporting community services.

The Community Services department doesn't take fraud and waste seriously and is not being transparent to the community on key performance measurements, how processes and procedures work, and what the value of money when it comes to our property tax dollars supporting the administration of the City being "service manager".

Why does our property tax dollars support fraud and waste? I continue to have this question and the City Auditor should be sharing its findings to the public.

I look forward meeting with the City Manager and share my concerns about transparency and accountability and what is the value of my property tax roll supporting?

If City Staff do not remain committed to putting taxpayers at the centre of everything they do, and be transparent, you will continue to lose investments and tax dollars to other neighbouring cities. What value of my tax dollars am I getting from a single-tier Municipality when I continue to provide example that City Hall continues to not show value for money on our tax dollars and the transparency and accountability that goes with our limited resources.

Sincerely

Hafeez Hussain