



**General Issues Committee  
MINUTES  
7:00 p.m.  
Monday, February 28, 2011  
Council Chambers  
Hamilton City Hall  
71 Main Street West**

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**Present:** Deputy Mayor C. Collins (Chair)  
Mayor B. Bratina  
Councillors B. Clark, J. Farr, L. Ferguson, T. Jackson, B. Johnson,  
B. McHattie, S. Merulla, B. Morelli, J. Partridge, R. Pasuta,  
M. Pearson, T. Whitehead

**Absent with  
Regrets:** Councillor S. Duvall – Bereavement  
Councillor R. Powers – Illness

**Also Present:** C. Murray, City Manager  
R. Rossini, General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services  
G. Davis, General Manager, Public Works  
T. McCabe, General Manager, Economic Development & Planning  
J. A. Priel, General Manager, Community Services  
Dr. E. Richardson, Medical Officer of Health  
D. Cunliffe, Director, Fire Operations/Deputy Chief  
C. Biggs, Co-ordinator, Committee Services/Council/Budgets

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE REPORTED TO THE GENERAL ISSUES  
COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION:**

**1. Citizens' Forum Report on Area Rating (CM11004) (City Wide) (Item 7.1)**

**(McHattie/Farr)**

- (a) That the Citizens' Forum Report on Area Rating, presented by the Members of the Citizens' Forum, be received;
- (b) That staff be directed to analyze the implications of the recommendations of the Citizens' Forum Report and report back, during budget deliberations, to the appropriate General Issues Committee.

- (c) That staff be directed to assess the feasibility of introducing a geographic service zone model pursuant to the Chamber of Commerce report, including a review, of administrative authority of legal and fiscal advantages.
- (d) That members of the Citizens' Forum be thanked for their work.

**CARRIED as amended**

#### **FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE:**

##### **(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

The Clerk advised of the following changes:

##### **ADDED DELEGATION REQUESTS RESPECTING AREA RATING:**

- (i) Stan Haworth and Roman Sarachman (Added as Item 4.3)
- (ii) John McGreal (Added as Item 4.4)
- (iii) David Braden (Added as Item 4.5)

##### **WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:**

- (i) Written text from the Flamborough, Hamilton and Stoney Creek Chambers of Commerce, together with the Chambers' response to the Citizens' Forum recommendations.

##### **(Farr/Pearson)**

That the agenda be approved, as amended.

**CARRIED**

##### **(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

##### **(c) DELEGATION REQUESTS**

##### **(Pearson/Johnson)**

That the following delegations be permitted to address the Committee:

- (i) John Knechtel on behalf of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce respecting the Citizens' Forum Report (Item 4.1)
- (ii) Stan Haworth and Roman Sarachman (Added as Item 4.3)
- (iii) John McGreal (Added as Item 4.4)

(iv) David Braden (Added as Item 4.5)

**(d) CONSENT ITEMS**

None

**(e) STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

**(i) Citizens' Forum Report on Area Rating (CM11004) (City Wide)  
(Item 7.1)**

Chris Murray provided a brief introduction to topic and stated that this issue has been one of the most contentious and difficult topics to wrestle with and will continue to be the source of discussion.

The purpose of this meeting is for the citizens' forum to present their findings; worth pointing out that citizens of Hamilton have had a chance to review the information requested. In terms of vision, citizen engagement is one of the principles that the City is striving to do better with. The concept is not necessarily new in terms of citizen engagement, but it is a new idea tried here and completed quite successfully. The process approved by Council was executed to best of their abilities and the individuals who worked toward this made sacrifice and commitment to City and should be applauded. They will be introduced later on. The citizens achieved consensus on this topic. Mr. Murray also extended thanks to the members of the Steering Committee.

Mr. Murray pointed out that there is no decision in staff report except to receive and forward it on to staff; no financial analysis provided; would be put back to staff to assess; not looking at financial information.

Denise O'Connor – Laying the Groundwork

- Introduced the members who participated on the Citizens' Forum
- Laying groundwork
- Outlined process for selecting forum members
- Part of task was to understand area rating from the citizens' perspective
- Public education and input - developed issue book, developed website and media
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Tim Dobbie – Work of the Forum

- Overview of process in terms of meetings held, follow up through e-mail as report was developed; 40+ hours of volunteer time
- Set objective of how much could be asked of people in terms of volunteer time
- Mandate and process

- Meeting 1: Orientation; Meeting 2: Bus Tour; Meeting 3: First Public Meeting; Meeting 4: Second Public Meeting; Meeting 5: Fire Department provided detailed presentation on how fire services work; Meeting 6: presentation from Chambers of Commerce on their position on area rating and subsequently, forum worked together to develop seven principles; Meeting 7: discussion on recommendations was initiated
- Generating the Report: consultants prepared the report with detailed and explicit input from forum members
- Forum members signed off on final report
- First draft of report prepared by Denise O'Connor

#### Joanna Mobach and Alex Lolua – Recommendations of the Citizens' Forum

- Ms. Mobach provided the history of how she came to be involved in the Citizens' Forum and showed the volume of information each forum member was provided with to perform their task
- Outlined guiding principles

#### Alex Lolua

- These recommendations are made in the context of those parameters and principles laid out; important to understand this before hearing recommendations
- Every single member of forum acted in utmost good faith, engaged in intelligent and reasonable consultation and debate
- Recommendations made in good conscience; focussed on job asked to be done by community
- Each member of forum has demonstrated good citizenship and put interests of community before own interests
- Extended appreciation to Fire personnel for their assistance

#### Joanna Mobach – Closing Remarks

- Thank you for including citizens in this debate which is at the heart of many people; new and appreciated as citizens to be able to speak out and actually play a part in shaping the city; proud to be part of this committee, proud of fellow team members; a lot of great discussions; took into account words that were received from people outside of the community; how is this going to affect people and selves; appreciate co-operation from city staff; had a lot of questions; Tim had to go to City staff to get responses; talked extensively with Transit Manager, Deputy Fire Chief and Culture and Recreation liaison; questions sometimes put them on the spot and staff came through with information required; in closing, would recommend to do this again; great way for everyone to be involved in the City; messages to Council process very satisfying way to participate in public consultation encourage to do this again; encourage

**(Pearson/Johnson)**

That the presentation of the Citizens' Forum on Area Rating be received.

**CARRIED**

Following the presentation, Chair Collins provided an opportunity for Committee members ask questions of the presenters.

Issues expressed by members of Committee included the following:

- Number and locations of public meetings
- Duration of bus tour conducted for Forum members was not extensive enough
- How recommendations can be made without any financial analysis
- Rating for fire services i.e., hydrant – career or composite station primary response, hydrant – volunteer stations primary response; no hydrant service
- Transit services
- Representatives from each of the 15 Wards on the Forum
- Expectation that citizens forum would be a vehicle/opportunity to see the fact that area rating should be maintained and sustained because impact might be too large of area rating is eliminated on behalf of suburban tax payers
- Agriculture rural area is underserved

Prior to entertaining the delegations, the Mayor and Council extended their thanks to the volunteers for their commitment and efforts.

**(e) PUBLIC HEARINGS/DELEGATIONS****(i) John Dolbec on behalf of the Flamborough, Hamilton and Stoney Creek Chambers of Commerce respecting the Citizens' Forum Report**

- Introduced Arend Kersten, Flamborough Chamber of Commerce and Dave Cage, Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce
- Outlined the Chamber's process with respect to reviewing area rating
- Thanked members of the Citizens' Forum
- Submission has been endorsed by all three Chambers of Commerce
- Key area rating issues
- Concerns with the Citizens' Forum recommendations
- Recommendations of the three Hamilton Chambers; proposals are more complex than urban/rural split
- Chambers are politically non-partisan organizations; genuine will in paying fair taxes for services received
- Recommending more complex way of paying taxes which is fair
- Taxes should be based on level of services available; geographic service zone model
- Believe in broader community councils

- Think outside the box toward recommendations that are fair and serve the broader community

A copy of the Chambers' comments was submitted to the Clerk for the public record.

**(Clark/Pearson)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

**(ii) Stan Haworth and Roman Sarachman (Added as Item 4.3)**

**Stan Haworth**

- Area rating implications for Flamborough (Fairness for Flamborough)
- Public have not have had engagement with forum; need a lot more public engagement and more public meetings for people to hear one another, hear views and get clear understanding
- No. 1 recommendation is to have public meetings where issue can be aired
- Recommendations without any financial analysis and/or what is involved
- Bottom line is people want to know what tax impact is going to be
- How can faith, fairness and taxes be separated
- Recommendations are not particularly useful
- Commented on recommendations respecting sidewalk snow removal in Ancaster; similar to putting parking meters in Waterdown
- Was invited to attend focus group and was disappointed; reviewed recommendations put out by staff line by line; no fresh ideas; no ideas put forward on recreation; no stats given for what services provided, where located and how accessible
- Recreation services should be seriously looked at and reviewed
- Important that public know that figures based on community or city-wide average
- Only way to avoid large tax increase is to have area rating stay as it is now and review in four years

**(Pearson/Johnson)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

**Roman Sarachman**

- Commended members of Citizens' Forum
- Problem in Hamilton and suburbs is that taxes in downtown Hamilton are too high; should reduce those levels in the City down to levels in suburbs
- Forum is Phase One; should not be making a decision right now, but require more deliberations

Mr. Sarachman provided a power point presentation to the Committee which was also submitted to the Clerk for the public record.

**(Clark/Pearson)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

**(iii) John McGreal, (Added as Item 4.4)**

- Family reside in Flamborough, Stoney Creek
- Taxation fairness has been rural/urban split for last 10 years
- Should be looking at population growth
- Addressed recreation services, fire services, transit services
- Think outside the box
- Taxpayers will pay if efficiency, sustainability and affordability is there
- Hamilton needs building blocks for prosperity, jobs and production
- Think beyond the four-year term of office; what is required in Hamilton
- Shift tax base from residents to commercial; create jobs

A copy of the comments provided by Mr. McGreal were submitted to the Clerk for the public record.

**(McHattie/Farr)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

**(iv) David Braden (Added as Item 4.5)**

- Terms of Reference that includes revenue-neutral creates winners and losers
- Invited to focus group and gratifying to hear that city people saying that need standards to be fair
- If you have varying standards, you create alternatives to look at, think about and debate
- Thinking about different levels if service is mature idea to move ahead
- Got to this point because of amalgamation
- Assurance from Finance Department that any level of taxation can be added
- Huge numbers are coming, like it or not
- Cannot limit to revenue-neutral or same kind of services as always existed
- Cannot deal with issues in isolation
- Encourage other people to be responsible
- Issue is so divisive

**(McHattie/Farr)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

(f) **CITIZENS' FORUM REPORT ON AREA RATING (CM11004) (City Wide)**  
**(Item 7.1)**

**(Clark/Ferguson)**

That the following be added as sub-section (c) and the balance sub-sections be renumbered accordingly:

- (c) That staff be directed to assess the feasibility of introducing a geographic service zone model pursuant to the Chamber of Commerce report, including a review, of administrative authority of legal and fiscal advantages.

The Amendment **CARRIED** on the following Standing Recorded Vote:

Yeas:	Clark, Pearson, Johnson, Ferguson, Pasuta, Partridge, Bratina, Jackson
Total Yeas:	8
Nays:	McHattie, Farr, Merulla, Morelli, Whitehead, Collins
Total Nays	6
Absent:	Duvall, Powers
Total Absent:	2

The Main Motion, as amended, **CARRIED** on the following Standing Recorded Vote:

Yeas:	Clark, Pearson, Johnson, Ferguson, Pasuta, Partridge, Bratina, Jackson, McHattie, Farr, Merulla, Morelli, Whitehead, Collins
Total Yeas:	14
Nays:	
Total Nays	0
Absent:	Duvall, Powers
Total Absent:	2

There being no further business, the Committee adjourn at 11:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Councillor C. Collins, Deputy Mayor  
General Issues Committee

Carolyn Biggs, Co-ordinator  
Committee Services/Council/Budgets  
February 28, 2011