



**General Issues Committee  
MINUTES  
2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
Thursday, February 24, 2011  
Council Chambers  
Hamilton City Hall  
71 Main Street West**

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**2:00 p.m.**

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

**Absent:** Councillor S. Duvall – Bereavement  
Councillor B. McHattie – Vacation

**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  
C. Biggs, Co-ordinator, Committee Services/Council/Budgets

**7:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Deputy Mayor C. Collins (Chair)  
Mayor B. Bratina  
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S. Merulla, B. Morelli, J. Partridge, R. Pasuta, M. Pearson, R. Powers,  
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**Absent:** Councillor S. Duvall – Bereavement  
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**Also Present:** C. Murray, City Manager  
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**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE REPORTED TO CITY COUNCIL FOR INFORMATION:**

**1. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

The Clerk advised of the following:

- (a) Additional Request to address the Committee from Mr. Larry Pomerantz of Rain Barrel at the evening session
- (b) Typographical error in Item 3.1. Dr. Ted Nugent should read Dr. Tom Nugent. The correction has been made on the City's website.

**(Farr/Merulla)**

That the agenda be approved, as amended.

**CARRIED**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**3. PUBLIC HEARINGS/DELEGATIONS**

**2:00 p.m. Session**

3.1 Dr. Tom Nugent

Dr. Nugent's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Petition the Mayor and Councillors to allot funding from the Capital budget to provide the infrastructure necessary to attract and keep private sector business in Hamilton
- Must return to non-partisan status if Hamilton is to attract business
- Hope Councillors have reviewed three letters previously submitted by Dr. Nugent
- Constantly defending the City to friends and family

A copy of Dr. Nugent's comments were submitted to the City Clerk for the public record.

**(Pearson/Clark)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

3.2 Stan Haworth

Mr. Haworth's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Feels that submissions to Mayor/Council ought to be replied to by Mayor/Council as a matter of courtesy and protocol, not by staff
- HECFI is a beneficiary of millions of tax dollars, although it is a corporation operating as an arms length agency of the City
- Parking meters in Waterdown – are they making or losing money; revenue-cost analysis required
- Asking for detailed cost of managing, collecting and maintaining the Waterdown meters, including labour, driving mileage, recovery of capital cost of equipment and share of overhead
- 10-year review of amalgamation, done by an outside party, with funding from the provincial government

A copy of Mr. Haworth's comments were submitted to the City Clerk for the public record.

Councillor Partridge recognized and thanked Mr. Haworth for all of his community work.

**(Jackson/Pearson)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

3.3 Harbans Singh

Mr. Singh's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Resident of the City for the last 40 years; retired since September
- Speaking on behalf of seniors, and requesting that property taxes be frozen for Seniors once they turn 65 years of age
- Personal income does not rise by 5% or 10%; as a skilled machinist, Mr. Singh does not have a company pension
- Many seniors living in Hamilton have lived here for a majority of their lives and have contributed to the betterment of this region; seniors are being asked to spend more and more of their meager retirement funds on bills – water, sewer, hydro
- Many seniors are living below the poverty line
- Asking Council to consider freezing/capping any increases in property taxes for seniors

Staff confirmed that there are 2 programs available to seniors, as well as a \$600.00 property tax grant when filing income tax returns. The Municipal Act also provides for a tax deferral program, where deferred increases stay on the property tax bill until the homeowner sells their home, at which time those taxes are deducted from the selling price.

**(Pearson/Johnson)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

3.4 John Dolbec, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Dolbec's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Chamber's Board of Governors decided that assisting governments at all levels, particularly municipal government, grapple with the broader issues of fiscal decisions would be one of the four priority issues on which the Chamber will focus their business advocacy efforts over the next twelve to eighteen months
- As part of the 2011 budget, the Chamber recommends the City to take immediate steps toward a zero per cent tax increase by 2015 as part of a multi-year budget process focused on restoring the City's competitive advantage
- Introduce a process to benchmark the City's competitiveness against other similar and neighbouring municipalities and improve our comparative standing

A copy of Mr. Dolbec's comments, on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, were submitted to the City Clerk for the public record.

**(Pearson/Whitehead)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

3.5 Hamilton's Business Improvement Areas:  
Kathy Drewitt, Downtown Hamilton BIA; Patty Despinic, Ottawa Street BIA; Susan Braithwaite, International Village BIA; Shelly Wonch, Barton Village BIA; Leah Higen, Ancaster BIA

The group presentation included, but was not limited to, the following:

- What is a Business Improvement Area and what is the Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas
- Properties that benefitted from the commercial property improvement grant
- The City's contribution toward the BIA's operating budget
- Christmas decorations and celebrations
- Capital Improvements
- Festivals and special events, including the Ancaster and Ottawa Street Farmers' Markets; Excellence in Property Awards Program; Salute to Small Business Event
- Other support from the City, including commercial market assessment studies; parking revenue-sharing program; staff support strategic planning support for HABIC
- HABIA's impact on the community.

A copy of the presentation was submitted to the City Clerk for the public record.

**(Powers/Clark)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

Chair Collins asked if there was anyone present wishing to address the Committee. The following individuals address the Committee:

3.7 Mike Kobilski, 934 Concession Street, Hamilton

Mr. Kobilski's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Too much overhead; so many empty lots
- Not complaining about taxes, but about people who own big dogs, but don't clean up after them; try to protect parks from dogs; cost of gas delivery
- Wants to see people be responsible for and look after their community

**(Jackson/Clark)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

3.8 Ray Fullerton

Mr. Fullerton's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- More budget materials need to be on the City's website to get information out to the community
- City's website is boring, static
- Needs to be made more dynamic
- Every department should have an executive summary which is readily available.

**(Pearson/Clark)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

Recess at 4:30 p.m. to reconvene at 7:00 p.m.

**7:00 p.m. Session**

3.6 Roman Sarachman

Mr. Sarachman's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Councillors have to focus on the fact that there has been no growth in Hamilton; suggesting that the downtown core be cleaned up (store fronts)
- Budget ideas for 0% tax increase for next two years, including:
  - Cut for the next two years, then sustainable and tax lower Department budgets for the next two
  - Use 0 base budget principles to achieve target budget
  - Establish a Mayor's Tax Reduction Committee (MTRC)
  - Freeze all hiring; essential services can apply for a new hire through the MTRC
  - Demand a 10% reduction plan and resulting impact from all Managers
  - Freeze capital expenditures at 2010 levels for two years
  - Tender more capital and maintenance projects instead of more hiring
  - Cancel all non-essential non-provincially-funded facility building projects for the next two years
  - Reinforce policy for tax arrears
  - Reinforce existing laws to combat city crime
  - Reinforce existing welfare fraud policies

A copy of Mr. Sarachman's comments were submitted to the City Clerk for the public record.

**(Whitehead/Jackson)**

That the presentation be received.

**CARRIED**

3.9 Larry Pomerantz, Rain Barrel

Mr. Pomerantz' comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Proposing a \$50,000 cut to the water/wastewater budget
- Operates a rain barrel business in Stoney Creek; hires local labour and pays taxes
- Questioned the timing of a cancelled meeting with Councillor McHattie and staff with the City's issuance of a Request for Quotes for a planned rain barrel sale by the City on April 30, when he had alerted staff to a scheduled rain barrel sale for April 16 in partnership with Horizon Utilities, Earth Day Hamilton and Limeridge Mall
- If staff was directed to cancel the RFQ, the City would be able to save \$50,000 from the water/wastewater budget and in so doing, will be contributing to the economic development of local business.

**(Whitehead/Johnson)**

- (a) That staff report back to the Committee with information in terms of how the rain barrel program is delivered, with the understanding that there would be no award for the procuring of rain barrels until such time as the information is presented, including how many times per year the sale occurs, how many rain barrels are sold;
- (b) That Mr. Pomerantz be permitted the opportunity to address the Public Works Committee on March 7, 2011. **CARRIED**

**(Pearson/Johnson)**

That the presentation be received. **CARRIED**

<b>4. ADJOURNMENT</b>
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There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Councillor C. Collins, Deputy Mayor  
General Issues Committee

Carolyn Biggs, Co-ordinator  
Committee Services/Council/Budgets  
February 24, 2011