

November 2008 Newsletter



Margaret McCarthy
Ward 15 Councillor

Area Rating to be Maintained:

While most of us were still reeling from the Slot revenue being taken away, another threat to our wallets was looming..... that of Area Rating being removed and increases from Current Valued Assessment.

On the books at Hamilton City Council was a motion to phase out area rating, a necessary tool to the outlying areas to help mitigate tax increases since amalgamation. Area rating is based on the premise that you don't pay for services you don't receive, not a long shot if you live in Flamborough and don't have such things as a full time fire department, recreational services including municipal swimming pools, and full time transit, just to name a few. Area rating, if eliminated, would have been a hefty 9.7% increase to our taxes in the 2009 and 2010 budgets. However, that imminent threat no longer exists due to a Council motion passed with the help of Councillors Tom Jackson and later Scott Duvall, which now allows the current Area Rating policies to stay in place until 2011. At that point, a new area rating policy must be approved.

Consultation and input on that new policy will take place over the next two years before a new plan is put in place in 2011. More discussions on that to come, but for now, at least that issue is no longer hanging over us thanks to the community's participation and attendance at my North Wentworth meeting last May which saw residents come out in droves, with over thirteen hundred participants attending that night. The message we sent to the City helped forge the continuation of area rating. Credit must also go to Benjamin Levinter QC, who has consistently volunteered legal expertise to me free of charge and met with Councillors in order to seek fairness on Flamborough's tax issues. In the mean time, Ben and I continue to work to reverse the Council vote that saw our taxes go up an extra 4.2% because the slot money from Flamborough was taken and placed city wide. Obviously though, I am grateful we are not faced with a further loss to the community of a 9.7% increase going into the 2009 and 2010 budget.

I want to thank the community for responding to my call for action by attending all my meetings in droves. We stood strong, which spoke volumes through the numbers in attendance. Again Benjamin Levinter Q.C. was greatly responsible for the position Council took by continuing Area Rating until 2011. Without his efforts, it would not have been possible. He is a gentleman who defines the term "manpower". And although we have not seen Council voluntarily reverse the casino money as yet, we are encouraged through continual discussions with Council members that positions might change. More on that to come....

Now onto another issue threatening our pocket books.

Current Value Assessment:

Property Assessment Notices directed by the Province have arrived. The following information is provided to you in order to help navigate a process which creates much frustration and anxiety. Provided along with the process for appeal is the DRAFT breakdown of increases throughout the City by Ward. You will also see how these increases compare to the Provincial average. **The following is provided for your information.**

Assessment increases will be phased in over a four-year period, starting in 2009. Municipalities use the assessed value of a home to calculate the tax rate, however, **the city does not have a say in determining the value of your home, that is the jurisdiction of the Province.**

If you do not agree with your assessment, you have the right to ask MPAC to review it through a *Request for Reconsideration*..... **and I encourage you to do so**, there is no cost, but the request must be done by March 31, 2009. You can do this by submitting a *Request for Reconsideration* form available at www.mpac.ca or by calling 1-866-296-6722 or writing a letter to MPAC providing all pertinent property details and the reasons you feel your assessment is not correct. If, following the *Request for Reconsideration* you still disagree with your assessment, you can file an appeal with the Assessment Review Board within 90 days of the Request for Reconsideration decision. Further information is contained in the flyer that accompanied your assessment notice.

The City's Finance Department has undertaken a PRELIMINARY evaluation on the impacts of the Current Value Assessment on properties throughout the City. The chart below is ONLY A DRAFT and is subject to potential fluctuations. This is a DRAFT analysis of the average changes in 2009 phased-in assessment values, both by former area municipality and by ward, and compared to the Provincial average. These are simply averages, and are provided as a means to illustrate the varying assessment changes throughout the City. Each area will have properties above and below the stated average. The figures identified in the tables are subject to change, as the data is reviewed by property owners and potentially revised by MPAC. Final results will be provided to Council early in 2009 once the City receives the final assessment roll.

Further information with respect to potential tax impacts and policy decisions will be presented at the November 10th meeting of the City's Committee of the Whole. **PRELIMINARY DRAFT ANALYSIS** is as follows:

CITY OF HAMILTON
PRELIMINARY 2009 CVA REASSESSMENT (YEAR 1 OF PHASE-IN)
COMPARISON OF CHANGES IN CURRENT VALUE

based on SEPT MCP file (NOTICE ROLL)

| | Residential | Multi-Residential | Total Commercial | Total Industrial | Farmland |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Stoney Creek | 5.6% | 5.7% | 8.7% | 9.2% | 8.8% |
| Glanbrook | 5.1% | 8.8% | 5.2% | 4.5% | 10.9% |
| Ancaster | 5.3% | 5.6% | 6.6% | 6.4% | 8.8% |
| Hamilton | 5.5% | 5.2% | 7.6% | 5.3% | 8.6% |
| Dundas | 6.8% | 5.7% | 7.5% | 9.1% | 6.3% |
| Flamborough | 5.9% | 6.0% | 5.9% | 8.4% | 8.3% |
| TOTAL | 5.6% | 5.3% | 7.5% | 6.4% | 9.0% |

| | Residential | Multi-Residential | Total Commercial | Total Industrial | Farmland |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Ward 1 | 5.5% | 5.5% | 7.7% | 4.6% | N/A |
| Ward 2 | 5.9% | 5.2% | 7.4% | 8.2% | N/A |
| Ward 3 | 5.0% | 5.5% | 6.9% | 6.5% | N/A |
| Ward 4 | 5.1% | 4.8% | 5.2% | 2.9% | N/A |
| Ward 5 | 5.6% | 5.3% | 8.2% | 8.6% | 12.4% |
| Ward 6 | 5.4% | 5.3% | 10.0% | 12.6% | -1.1% |
| Ward 7 | 5.6% | 4.9% | 8.7% | 9.6% | 9.4% |
| Ward 8 | 5.5% | 4.8% | 6.1% | 9.5% | 9.5% |
| Ward 9 | 5.4% | 5.9% | 7.6% | 1.5% | 6.8% |
| Ward 10 | 5.7% | 3.3% | 9.5% | 9.6% | 15.3% |
| Ward 11 - SC | 5.9% | 14.7% | 8.7% | 9.0% | 9.0% |
| Ward 11 - GL | 5.1% | 8.8% | 5.2% | 4.5% | 10.9% |
| Ward 11 - TOTAL | 5.4% | 10.6% | 7.2% | 8.8% | 10.4% |
| Ward 12 | 5.3% | 5.6% | 6.7% | 6.4% | 9.0% |
| Ward 13 | 6.8% | 5.7% | 7.5% | 9.1% | 6.3% |
| Ward 14 - AN | 5.2% | N/A | 4.4% | N/A | 8.6% |
| Ward 14 - FL | 5.8% | 2.3% | 3.9% | 10.5% | 8.3% |
| Ward 14 - TOTAL | 5.7% | 2.3% | 3.9% | 10.5% | 8.4% |
| Ward 15 | 6.0% | 6.2% | 6.9% | 6.6% | 8.3% |
| TOTAL | 5.6% | 5.3% | 7.5% | 6.4% | 9.0% |
| Provincial Average | 5.1% | 2.9% | 6.4% | 5.6% | 4.2% |

Challenges of Massive Residential Development:

Many of you may remember the arguments I raised time and time again about the need to get on with the approvals for new roadways to facilitate the extra 6,500 new residential units approved by the province under OPA 28. My concern has always been that we would get the development without the roads. Never a truer word was spoken; in fact, most recently, we have two prime examples of Developers trying to push for their housing without the new roadways.

Currently the City of Hamilton is fighting that development so that it does not circumvent the process. Fortunately we are in a strong position to fight these attempts, because my earlier concerns were listened to at Hamilton Council regarding the need for new roadways. The planning for the Waterdown Aldershot and East West expansions were endorsed by Public Works and later Council which now allows us the ability to fend off the pressures of this growth. In doing this, we are able to adhere to the Cabinet decision which stated we needed to resolve the transportation roadways to accommodate the growth. By following the directive laid out by the province, we legally can stave off an industry bent on circumventing the regulations. Special thanks must go to a brilliant lawyer at the City of Hamilton, Art Zuidema, for his erudition on this issue. Legal resolutions on these issues can be viewed at www.margaretmccarthy.ca under Issues.

St. Marys Proposed Quarry:

Looks like there are mutterings of St. Marys getting ready to make some kind of changes to the MOE for their Water Taking Permit requests. While details are sketchy as to what they are proposing to change, it looks like they have had to rethink their strategy on how to prove their theory of Water Recirculation. Not surprisingly, they must be frustrated with their inability to support an application for a zoning and official plan amendment change, and feel they need to have a way out if they can not prove one system works. More on that to come, but for now, congratulations to a community who has successfully warded off an industry giant to date. Community has banded together to the point that all levels of Government are standing up and paying attention....no small feat!!!

Congratulations Flamborough on our victories to date, and continued support for our future challenges.

OUR VOICES, OUR NUMBERS = OUR POWER

Thank you for lending yours!

Margaret McCarthy
Flamborough Councillor, Ward 15

If you would be interested in receiving regular updates from my office through e-mail distribution, please provide my office with your e-mail address at:

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