

Ward 15 Newsletter – Winter 2004



Margaret McCarthy
Ward 15 Councillor
Flamborough
905-546-2713
mmccarth@hamilton.ca

Where Does The 2005 Budget Stand At This Point? As is the case every year, we have gotten a jump on the 2005 Budget with a few preliminary meetings at City Hall and again, as has been the case in the past four years, we are running in the hole again.

Early figures indicate we have roughly a \$50 million shortfall so the next few months will see the 15 councillors and mayor struggle as we try to trim department spending down to a reasonable figure that won't have an adverse effect on services.

The financial pressures come from the usual sources – the ongoing costs of the Red Hill Creek Expressway which will run up a \$220 million tab; expensive upgrading to our composting plant and recycling facilities; the Police Services Board has requested a budget of \$102.8 million this year and any number of other fiscal pressures that make up the annual City of Hamilton operating budget of slightly more than \$1 billion.

As it stands now, that would mean a 9.5 per cent increase on the property taxes. However, we were in exactly the same situation last year and by trimming departmental spending across the city, we eventually worked it down to a 5.5 per cent increase. As well, Mayor Larry Di Ianni is in negotiations with the Province, hoping to receive a cheque of \$19.5 million to help offset Hamilton's social services costs. Do not forget that because Hamilton is not part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), we shoulder the entire bill for our social costs to the tune of \$117 million whereas Toronto gets its social service funding jointly paid for by GTA communities from Burlington right through to Oshawa. Attempts as many of you will remember to include us in the GTA Social Service pooling at this point has been unsuccessful, save for the \$19.5 million we received from the Province last year.

Flamborough residents can hear the impact of the 2005 budget at a meeting in the **Millgrove Community Centre on January 13 from 7 to 9 p.m.** At that point, finance staff will likely have a clearer picture of where we stand.

Get Your Christmas Trees Out To The Curb: Your Christmas trees will be picked up curbside for the first 2 weeks of January on your normally-scheduled garbage collection days. Please make sure the tree is **not** bagged or no longer has any tinsel on it.

Free Skate at Carlisle Arena: I will be hosting a Free Skate at Carlisle Arena on December 27 from, 1 to 3 p.m. and again that evening from 7 to 8 p.m. Everyone is welcome – bring the whole family.

Flamborough Town Hall Constituent Days: I am still holding Constituent Days at Flamborough Town Hall every second Thursday of the month from 1 to 4 p.m. The next scheduled one is January 13. I am scheduled for 2005 Budget talks in the Council Chambers that day but my assistant, Don Redmond, will be in Flamborough Town Hall to handle your concerns. However, don't feel that you have to wait until those days, especially if you have an urgent concern. Meetings can be scheduled with me at Flamborough Town Hall throughout the month by simply phoning the office and scheduling one.

If you want to contact me through the week regarding other constituency concerns, I am available at 905-546-2713. I am also available through my City Hall e-mail address which is: mmccarth@hamilton.ca My assistant, Don, is also available at 905-546-3944 or at: dredmond@hamilton.ca. Best wishes and see you in 2005...

Sincerely,

Margaret McCarthy