

Firstly, I would like to thank the staff for all of their hard work on this budget; I know this was a challenging time. There are many areas of this budget that I feel are fair and reasonable and provide some great initiatives that will benefit the residents of Pickering. However, we are in a situation where we have a 0.8% growth increase and a huge reliance on the residential tax base. We are relying so heavily on new development, yet a majority (72%) of our land is locked in legislation. We cannot rely so heavily on the residential tax base, it is not economically sustainable and it is frankly bad business.

I raised a number of questions during our budget meeting and I feel that we should not be budgeting based on the previous budgeted amounts, instead we should be basing our budget on the actual amount that was spent in previous years unless an increase can be justified.

For example, on page 5 of the treasurer's memo there is an outline as to how much is needed for consulting fees. The total is \$816,348 yet we are budgeting for over 1.4 million. I understand that **some** of this money is reimbursed to the city but the money must be there initially and is reflected in our current budget. There is not enough justification in my opinion to budget for nearly 700,000 more than what we foresee as our actual costs. This difference alone is worth approximately 2 percent.

We are not in an easy situation, and I feel we must be exceptionally frugal this year under these circumstances. I have a hard time asking the taxpayers to pay for these "what if" situations when we haven't needed these increases in the last number of years and we have unique financial restraints which limit our justification to continue our spending in the same way as previous years.

With the right leadership and ideas, we can become more financially sustainable, however we are not there yet and we must act accordingly in order to allow our residents the opportunity to continue to live in this city.

There is too much emphasis on residential growth. Residential growth creates revenue, yes, however, it costs the city huge amounts of money as well.

Going forward, I don't want this city to view the development in Seaton the answer to our financial limitations. Residential growth is not the answer; we need a stronger commercial tax base to reduce the residential burden.

I offered changes on this process and I gave options, but my concerns were not addressed. For these reasons I am unable to support this budget.