

Other Business Notes

It has been approximately 7 months since I began on Council and with half of year one complete I feel I have accomplished some very important initiatives. I also spent these months with a steep learning curve, however with the experience and knowledge that I have gained during the past several months I now feel even more confident and energized to continue to do what I was elected to do, which is to represent the residents of Pickering and to create an open and transparent level of government. It is this common theme of transparency that I would like to address three issues here tonight on behalf of those whom I represent.

With the recent trial involving former Councillor Maurice Brenner completed I have a number of questions that I would like answered. If anyone is able to provide the answers to me tonight then that would be great, however if time is needed I would like a written report answering each question before the next Council meeting in September, which gives more than a month to respond.

1. Who were the City of Pickering 'public officials' (as described by the Judge) who brought these charges forward to the DRPS? In the testimony given it was stated that our Treasurer, Mr. Paterson was satisfied in 2003, 2006 and still today that the work had been done and the money was paid for such work. Also stated was that it was not the CAO Tom Quinn who brought forward these charges, therefore if not the CAO or the City's Treasurer than who brought forward these allegations of fraud and requested charges be laid?
2. Before these claims were brought to DRPS to lay charges was Council consulted? If so what direction was given and I would like to see the meeting minutes when this item was discussed?
3. How did the "reporter" named by the judge and witnesses get hold of copies of the Councillor's expense files, files that would normally not be given to a member of the public? What action was taken to investigate how the reporter received such information and what action has been taken to ensure that the City's records are safe and to ensure that private files are not copied in the future? Can we assure the public that their private information is secure?
4. Who was the Councillor who was referred to as being the one who in 1999 asked for copies of each members claimed expenses, in 2001 requested to see each Councillor's Outside Agency expenses, and in 2001 and 2004 raised questions concerning the Council Outside Agency budget during the Audit Committee meetings?
5. How much money has been spent by the City of Pickering bringing these charges forward? How many City of Pickering staff hours have been spent on this matter over the years?

After finding out through the trial that this matter pertaining to Maurice Brenner's Outside Agency expense claims had been investigated in 1999, 2001, 2003 and even audited by an external auditor and our Treasurer did his own due diligence in 2003 and was satisfied with his investigation that the work had been done and the money was paid accordingly. After understanding the numerous investigations that took place regarding this matter and both the CAO and Treasurer were satisfied to take no further action, I am curious why this matter went further and I am even more concerned with how much of tax payers money was spent to bring this matter to trial knowing that on at least three occasions it was determined that no wrong doing on the part of Maurice Brenner had occurred.

I also would like to know that the documents kept at City Hall are secure; I want to know that the personal information of residents and employees is not vulnerable to theft or tampering.

The residents of Pickering have a right to know where their tax dollars are being spent and if they are being spent with the best interests of the City in mind or if their money is being spent through an abuse of power on personal motivations. The people of Pickering also have a right to know that the information we keep here is protected and secure from outside sources. I truly hope that we the people of this City can get the answers that we are seeking and ensure that this government is truly open and transparent.