

REPORT FROM COUNCIL: 2002 YEAR END REPORT

By Ed Corrigan, Councillor Ward 7

As we enter 2003, it is time to review your rookie Councillor's activity for the record. After a tumultuous year Council has settled down to business. The job of councillors can be divided into three parts - working on Council and in committee, working for constituents and representing the City on various Boards. I presently serve on the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Huron Water Board.

The first half of 2002 was dominated by the Malpass affair. A culture had developed where City staff were operating often without the knowledge or sanction of Council. I was one of four Councillors who voted against the 8 weeks vacation, and \$4,500 a month bonus for the acting city manager. I voted for the job review and against the exit package for Mr. Malpass. I voted consistently for the public release of information on all exit packages paid to staff.

At the beginning of my term I refused to accept that Council did not have the authority to get information on the "retirement" of our Chief Engineer and I challenged that legal position. Ultimately my view was endorsed by our legal staff. I am proud of my efforts to ensure that minutes of senior management meetings are now recorded. Strangely this position was not supported by the majority of Council, but the new management committee quickly adopted the suggestion after I raised the concern. This is a standard practice and will help ensure accountability. Changes made by Council and the new city manager are clearly having a positive effect.

My work in favour of banning the cosmetic use of pesticides, after our Medical Officer of Health said such use posed a health risk, is well known. I was pleased to present a letter to Council from Dr. David Suzuki supporting this position. I proposed two resolutions to improve air quality which were both adopted by City Council. I am also supporting a By-law to restrict smoking in public places.

Free speech at Market Square was another issue I supported and I seconded Councillor Baechler's motions on this question. I voted against the use of tax dollars for donations to political parties. Together, with Controller Joe Swan, I worked for investigation and disclosure of the tendering process for the water contract. The review identified a number of problems and hopefully these errors will not be repeated.

I also helped obtain an enhanced buffer for Warbler Woods. I supported preserving Reservoir Hill as open space. The appeal of the OMB decision allowing the apartment building on the hill is still before the Courts. My proposal to ensure fairer access to tickets at the John Labatt Centre was unanimously supported by Council. Council also supported my proposal to reduce the 200% increase for liquid waste disposal which would impact harshly on those who do not have access to sanitary sewers. I have supported in writing the concerns over safety issues at the Col. Talbot/401 interchange where several tragedies have recently occurred.

Other issues where my position may be less popular are support for a fair procedure for the survey process for traffic calming measures in Westmount; support for the location of the new Westmount Library on Wonderland Road, and support for the Gateway at Airport Road. I voted for the acquisition of the TD Bank building but with commercial tenants on the first floor to offset costs.

I have supported the west-end expressway rather than the widening of north-south arterial roads in Ward 7. Protecting transportation corridors for the future needs is vital if we are to keep environmentally friendly options open like dedicated bus lanes.

I have made myself available in person, by phone and by e-mail to deal with the concerns of constituents. These contacts range from potholes to the budget. This work is largely invisible but it is essential that the residents of Ward 7 have access to someone to represent their interests. Most issues have two sides and it is not always possible to please everybody. I try my best to workout compromises but in the end will try to support the best solution for Ward 7.

We have been a major beneficiary of some of the capital spending that the city has recently undertake; the Byron Fire Hall, Lambeth splash pad, a new roof on Lambeth Arena, Westmount Library, Oxford Street bridge, Springbank footbridge, Springbank Park and Storybook Gardens revitalization represent millions of dollars of investment in Ward 7. It is true that the area has been under serviced for years and even with all of this we are still playing catch-up.

I am very proud of all these projects which I have supported and helped implement. I hope to see a 2-pad arena and a community centre in south-west London and will work toward that end. It is currently a priority project in the City's Recreation Master Plan. However, there are 19 members of City Council competing for projects. I readily acknowledge the role of Controller Gord Hume and my ward-mate Susan Eagle who have also worked to make these projects a reality.

It is clear that property tax increases are a major concern for everyone in Ward 7. I believe the City will now have to reduce its capital spending plans. For next year I pledge to support the lowest tax increase possible without unacceptable reductions in service. I would like to hear your concerns and I can be reached at (o) 661-1558, (r) 652-0973 or at ecorriga@city.london.on.ca.