



Councillor Mike Del Grande



WARD 39 • SCARBOROUGH - AGINCOURT

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 2

A Tale of One City in Crisis

Accords and Agreements have become the new political reality. Their successes, as well as failures or ineptness, mark their imprint or lack thereof, on Canadian everyday life.

Toronto finds itself in those unwritten understandings that supersede any pen to paper agreement. Toronto is the City that everyone loves to hate. Any organization that includes this City, loves its money but offers low recognition of its needs. We are continually viewed as whiners.

While Toronto carries significant political clout in numbers, that strength is overshadowed by the remaining Federal and Provincial membership that browbeats Toronto's elected officials. Many a time I have heard the mantra: if you give anything to Toronto, it must be given to every other community.

As a native Torontonian, I see this City's greatness in decline. No longer are we the "Banking Capital" or the "Hi-tech Centre" of our nation. Toronto is pillaged for its wealth but dumped with very unique problems, created elsewhere. We have downloaded issues from the Province as well as Federal immigration policies, coupled with socio-economic problems.

Toronto is unique. What the Country and the Province have forgotten is that Toronto is the Capital of Ontario. This City is not treated with the respect of an important Capital City. Elsewhere in the world, governments invest heavily in their capital cities, not here.

For me, the City of Toronto Act, is one of those failures that has marked the attitude towards this City. The power to tax lets the other levels of government off the hook. Property tax has subsidized Provincially-mandated responsibilities. Taxation powers unique to Toronto, will make Toronto's decline that much faster. Other cities and towns will eventually feel Toronto's pain, as migration will flow out of Toronto. Provincial and Federal politicians, particularly those from Toronto, would be wise to push for a new accord that would also benefit the rest of the Province. Using a forward-thinking approach, remove all property taxes and collect them from either income tax, sales tax, gas tax, GST, PST or a combination thereof. Then provide funding on a per capita basis to ALL municipalities using pre-determined formulae for social items such as welfare and immigration settlement, roads, public transportation, etc.

A new Agreement is needed not only for Toronto but for all cities, towns and regions. Our political leaders have failed the Capital City of Ontario. We have two elections coming up and it is now time for us to flex our political strength. The rest of the country would be wise to help Toronto for its own sake and also, to keep uniting the country, by loving to hate this Proud and Great City.

Your Neighbour,

Mike Del Grande
Councillor, Ward 39 • Scarborough-Agincourt

(Please visit my website at:
www.mikedelgrande.ca)

Because of Canada Post's delivery requirements,
residents outside of Ward 39 may have
received this newsletter.

請閱內頁中文版

What's Inside

- City Hall Taxes P2
- Development News P2
- Picturesque Walls P2
- When Do I Need a Building Permit? P2
- Find a Service Canada Centre Near You P2
- Winning Gardens P3
- Trees - (almost) free!! P3
- Commemorative Trees P3
- Grow Houses P3
- Loud Noise P3
- Huntingwood and Glendower Flood Update P3
- New Taxes P3
- Property Tax Relief for Seniors P3
- New Chief in Town P4
- Toronto Hydro P4
- Special Occasions P4
- Pay Raise Donation P4
- Coming Soon to a Street near you P4
- McNicoll Avenue Avenue Arboretum P4
- Toronto's First 2007 Neighbourhood Beautification Programme P4
- Back to School P4



WWII - French Legion Awards



Serving you on McHappy Day 2007

Mike Del Grande

416-392-1374

Councillor Mike Del Grande

CITY HALL TAXES

When I took office in 2003, my first priority was to review the City's finances. I quickly concluded that our financial course was a slippery slope, totally unsustainable and that Council should focus on reduced spending. 4 years later, my prediction has come to pass.

Why? Because....

- Staffing levels continue to increase;
- While the Rate of Inflation is up by 3.5% overall, City wages went up by 5.8% in 2006;
- New programmes are added without considering the source of funding;
- Spending is neither prioritized nor rationalized – just undertaken ad-hoc; (Examples: \$100 Million+ for a dedicated right-of-way for streetcars along St. Clair Avenue; Purchased bike racks for TTC buses costing \$1.5 Million which are not being used).
- Personal “pet” projects are still the order of the day;
- Costs are high; management of expenditure is poor;
- Grants and assistance are given liberally sans accountability or measurement.

As a result...

- Water rates are going up by 12% each year;
- New taxes levied on: garbage, land transfer, vehicle registrations, alcohol & tobacco, billboard, entertainment, road tolls, parking fees;
- More overall spending of tax dollars for less service; New taxes proposed for Toronto residents - no other City pays them;
- Toronto's competitiveness headed for decline and a City that's too expensive to live in;
- Provincial & Federal representatives are off the hook to assist our City by giving Toronto the power to tax under the new City of Toronto Act.

City Hall must learn to say NO. It should allow Councillors to help resolve problems. I ask you, my fellow neighbours: Is the Mayor serious about combating our financial crisis when he does not utilize my expertise? He knows that I am the only Accountant (C.A.) on Council, who has balanced a School Board's books (\$700 Million) and brings over 20 years of budgeting experience in the private sector.

In my opinion, this Council is not about collaborating, it is about power. The leadership divides and excludes rather than unites Councillors to work together for you. It is not just about decisions pertaining to spending but about a lack of a unified attitude in Council as they relate to priorities.

PICTURESQUE WALLS

The brush goes as far as the imagination. It takes skill and imagery to portray vision in beautiful art, even on concrete walls. Ward 39 is home to two exquisite mural projects initiated by “Art Starts a Neighbourhood Storefront Cultural Centre”. One is near Nicey's Food Mart Plaza at Victoria Park Avenue & Morecambe Gate, the other at 2821 Birchmount Road near the basketball court. There is another mural in Sanwood Park, designed and painted by the students of Dr. Norman Bethune CI. It is our hope to deter graffiti by producing art on walls.



Sanwood Park Opening - June 9, 2007

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

- 53 single family homes on Tom Wells Crescent (Sanwood Boulevard & Canongate Trail) are to be completed this November. The developer will provide window cleaning for immediate neighbours, when the dust settles completely.
- In Spring/Summer of 2008, Senator Homes plans to build 18 single family homes on a cul-de-sac off of Birchmount Road, just north of McNicoll Avenue. The original proposal was to build townhomes; however, after I initiated a series of meetings with the community and builders, we mutually agreed on single family homes.
- The owners of Bridlewood Mall (Fishman Holdings North America Inc.) are looking at having their property developed by the Malibu Group. The proposed development is massive (1600 – 2000 condominium units). You attended my Town Hall meeting in large numbers. Together with you, I am not supporting this aggressive proposal due to the density and the strain on the infrastructure as well as on City services. I have encouraged the owners to retain and develop commercial expansion of the mall. Updates will be posted on my web site: www.mikedelgrande.ca

Please feel free to contact the owners at: Fishman Holdings North America Inc., 5001 Yonge Street, Suite 203, P.O Box 152, North York ON M2N 6P6, Tel.: 416-733-2969, Fax.: 416-733-3686, galia@fishmanholdingsna.com or grace@fishmanholdingsna.com. My sincere thanks to Allen Appleby and his team of experts for their time and assistance on this issue.

WHEN DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?

If you plan to:

- Construct a new building;
- Renovate, repair or add to a building;
- Demolish or remove all or a portion of a building;
- Change a building's use;
- Install, change, or remove partitions and load-bearing walls;
- Make new openings for, or change the size of, doors and windows;
- Build a garage, balcony or deck;
- Excavate a basement or construct a foundation;
- Install or modify heating, plumbing or air conditioning systems;
- Install or reconstruct chimneys or fireplaces.

The building owner is ultimately responsible to comply with all building requirements and avoid fines/consequences for non-compliance.

Where do you apply for a building permit?

At any City of Toronto, Buildings Division.
Business hours, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Scarborough Location:

Scarborough Civic Centre
150 Borough Drive
Scarborough, Ontario
M1P 4N7
Telephone: 416-396-7303

FIND A SERVICE CANADA CENTRE NEAR YOU



Through a partnership with Service Canada, Service Ontario and the City, residents now have access to a range of government services and information offered by all three levels of government. Information on employment insurance, pension benefits, birth registrations and marriage licences, etc. are all available at this joint service counter in the West side of the Rotunda, Main Lobby, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West.

Federal Government: 1-800-o-canada (1-800-622-6232)

http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/gateways/where_you_live/menu.shtml#city

Provincial Government: (416) 326-1234

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/kiosk/locations.htm#TORONTO>

WINNING GARDENS-CAN YOU SPOT THEM?

Congratulations to the winners of the "2007 Beautify Scarborough-Agincourt Award". Many entries were reviewed to make a tough decision....but these 10 nature-lovers truly caught our attention. My thanks to Valleyview Garden owners, Benny and Larry Varlese for generously donating 10 gift certificates of \$25 each. These amazing gardens are found on:

- Blairwood Terrace
- Brookshire Blvd.
- Candlebrook Crescent
- Colinayre Crescent
- Fulbert Crescent
- Glendower Circuit
- Kimbermount Drive
- Lanewood Crescent
- Perthshire Street



Winning Garden

GROW HOUSES – LANDLORDS BEWARE

In 2007 only 3 Grow Operations were found in Ward 39. This is a significant decline from the 72 we shut down since I took office in 2003. We did it together with your support, my diligence, City staff assistance and police involvement. Let's continue to be vigilant so they do not return. I will work towards a new proposal to protect our neighbourhood and properties. My sincere thanks to Jim Hart, Director, Executive Management of City Manager's Office for his dedication and the 42 Division Police team as well as the Toronto Drug Squad, East Unit for their tireless work.

LOUD NOISE

The City's noise by-law covers everything - from playing your stereo too loud to noisy air conditioners and disturbances by toy cars or airplanes. Generally speaking, noise that could disturb the community is not permitted between 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (9:00 a.m. on Sundays & holidays). Amplified music is permitted only until 11:00 p.m. While not an emergency, for enforcement of noise control during loud, late night parties, contact 42 Division Police at (416-808-4200). You can call my office for assistance to register an ongoing noise concern. If you provide your name and address, a loud noise information package will be mailed to you.

HUNTINGWOOD AND GLENDOWER FLOOD UPDATE

I am pleased to inform you that in these two areas, houses affected by recent flooding have received remedial work from City Water/Waste Water Management Department. My thanks to Lou Di Gironimo, General Manager, Water & Wastewater, Martin Bugden, Manager Operations & Maintenance and Gary Burger, District Operations & Maintenance for their assistance. My office has received numerous communiqués, outlining frustration and helplessness caused by this devastation which have been addressed. Bamburgh Circle was another area affected by a similar problem caused by grease. Two primary flooding causes are: taking away green spaces and pouring grease down the drain. It is my hope that with the extra measures the City now has in place and your attention to causes for flooding, we can safeguard against future flood damage.

Do not pour grease into the drains. Allow it to solidify fully and then put in the green bin.

NEW TAXES - LAND TRANSFER AND VEHICLE TAX DEFERRAL VOTE

I continually endeavour to represent you, my constituents, fairly and with balanced decisions at City Hall. The issue is about first putting our "Financial House" in order before increasing taxes on a one-off basis. I have not wavered from my position against imposing these taxes and will continue to fight for our interests as hard-working taxpayers.

Raising taxes to cover debt or create new programmes is not the answer. The focus should be on assessing City services and re-allocating funds, where required. I voted to postpone this assessment because of a dire need to first consult with the Public. I recently held a Town Hall Meeting for this specific purpose which many of you attended. I arranged for you to have an opportunity to meet City staff and ask questions. My thanks to Joe Pennachetti, Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer and his team for their assistance. You have already been hit with 2 new significant tax increases: Water Tax at 12% per year for the next 10 years and Garbage Tax which will soon limit you to 1 bag from the current 6 bag limit unless you are willing to pay more.

Please feel free to contact your Mayor, David Miller, to voice your opinion and make suggestions - tel.: 416-397-CITY (2489), fax: 416-696-3687, email: mayor_miller@toronto.ca Take the time to let him know where you feel your money should go.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR SENIORS

My office has received hundreds of calls for assistance with this programme. You must apply annually to participate and to be eligible. You may call Customer Service directly at 416-338-4829 and have them send you information for 2008 by providing your Assessment Roll #, found on your Property Tax bill.

TREES - (ALMOST) FREE!!



Backyard Tree Planting Programme

LEAF is a non-profit group dedicated to improving and protecting our urban forest. They plant native trees in Toronto backyards at a subsidized cost. For more information call 416-413-9244 or visit www.leafontario.org.

COMMEMORATIVE TREES

Excerpt from Forestry Dept.:

The Commemorative Tree and Bench Program allows the public to pay tribute to a person(s) or an occasion by purchasing a park bench or tree for installation in a public park (even Centre Island).

Please complete The Commemorative Tree and Bench Program Request Form and enclose a cheque or money order payable to 'Treasurer, City of Toronto' and submit to the address indicated on the form. Written confirmation will follow after installation is completed. The donation is tax deductible. For further information on this program please contact Ruby Jajwan at (416) 395-6028 or email commemorativeprogram@toronto.ca.

Cost of tree (hardwood tree)	\$642.00
Cost of new bench with plaque	\$2,200.00
Cost of plaque on existing bench	\$1,525.00



Bridlewood Mall - Town Hall Meeting - June 5, 2007

Councillor Mike Del Grande

THERE'S A NEW CHIEF IN TOWN

I would like to welcome Superintendent Robert Clarke as the new Unit Commander of 42 Division. I will be meeting with him periodically, so let me know if there are police or crime-related issues that I need to discuss with him.

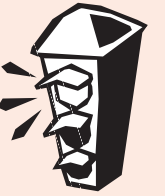


TORONTO HYDRO

As promised to you, Toronto Hydro has undertaken major work in Ward 39. Massive sums of money have been spent at my request to bring stable, reliable power to our neighbourhood. The project has been disruptive but necessary to reap future benefits. In the short term, sidewalks will be asphalted to allow ground settlement. Once the ground has settled, new concrete will be poured to replace the asphalt patches. Some specific issues have arisen and my office staff has assisted in resolving them. My thanks to Blair Peberdy, Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs, Toronto Hydro Electric System and his team for delivering on their commitment.

COMING SOON TO A STREET NEAR YOU...

NEW TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT BRIDLETOWNE CIRCLE AND BEVERLY GLEN BOULEVARD



At the present time, there are all-way stop signs guiding traffic on Bridletowne Circle and Beverly Glen Boulevard. As your Councillor, I requested Transportation Staff to study this area for the installation of calming lanes and a traffic light. Their study concluded that both a traffic light and calming lanes (similar to those on Huntingwood Drive) are warranted. These recommendations will be carried forward to Scarborough Community Council in September. If approved, installation will take place in the near future to address the increased traffic and safety concerns.

McNICOLL AVENUE SMOOTHER RIDES

As this newsletter goes to Press, the City continues to work on Phase 3 of the McNicoll Avenue Road Reconstruction. The Eastbound lane on McNicoll Avenue is closed until the end of October to allow for the reconstruction, realignment and resurfacing of the road from Warden Avenue to Pharmacy Avenue. Construction on McNicoll Avenue from Kennedy Road to Warden Avenue has been completed. Riddled with temporary asphalt patches, uneven curbs and temporary sidewalks till now, this roadway will soon become one of the smoothest in the City.

TORONTO'S FIRST AVENUE ARBORETUM IN WARD 39

What is an arboretum? It is a place where a collection of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants are cultivated for scientific and educational purposes. McNicoll Avenue will be an Avenue Arboretum, the first of its kind in the city. Children and adults alike will have the opportunity to know more about our rich natural green resources. In order to complete the road improvements, some of the existing trees along McNicoll were removed. There is an extensive plan to replant trees, shrubs and bushes of all species along the roadway, giving motorists and pedestrians a flavour of our very own flora and fauna. My special thanks to Blair Peberdy, Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs, Toronto Hydro Electric System as well as Richard Ubbens Director of Urban Forestry and Gary Welsh, General Manager of Toronto Transportation for making this unique experience happen.

2007 NEIGHBOURHOOD BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAMME

The City is focusing even more on living in a clean and beautiful environment; one that encourages and promotes a happy and healthy lifestyle. My thanks to Rob Watson, Project Officer, Clean and Beautiful City, for his assistance to our ward in this fairly new endeavour. The Heathwood Ratepayers' Association has been allocated \$3000 to give a face lift to City streetscapes and thereby inspire the community. Cleaning up litter and debris, cutting grass and planting flowers are but small steps in making a big, positive difference to the appearance of any home or community. As the City's web site says: Sweep It, Design It, Grow It, Build It, and Celebrate It. Let's be proud of our homes; let's care for our neighbourhoods so it shows.



Mike with Soo Wong & John Del Grande (School Trustees) at Retirement Function

SPECIAL OCCASION?

If you or someone in the community is celebrating a milestone or special achievement, I will be pleased to arrange a personalized City of Toronto scroll. Please contact my office at 416-392-1374. The more lead time you give, the better - minimum 4 weeks.

PAY RAISE DONATION TO CHARITY

In the Council meeting of July 2006, I was one of the Group of Seven like-minded Councillors who signed a pledge to reject the 9% pay increase and to only accept a cost of living increase. The vote was passed and the increase took effect.

I promised to donate my increase to charity this year and I delivered on my commitment in the spirit of goodwill and philanthropy. My donations were made public. I had the chance to direct the money where I felt it would make a difference and be appreciated rather than have it allocated by the City to less deserving causes.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Another school year has commenced - Good Luck to our students! For school related issues please contact:

Toronto District School Board (General Number) 416-397-3000
TDSB Trustee - Soo Wong 416-397-3066

Toronto Catholic District School Board (General Number) 416-222-8282
TCDSB Trustee - John Del Grande 416-512-3407

Keep in touch!

CITY HALL • 100 Queen Street West, Suite A1 • Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2
TEL: 416-392-1374 • FAX: 416-392-7431 • E-MAIL: councillor_delgrande@toronto.ca