Speech delivered to City Council
October 10, 2013

Regarding the appointment for Ward 3 Councillor

Good morning:

My name is Stephen Thiele, and I am the President of The Toronto Party for a Better City.

I have applied to sit as the Ward 3 Councillor based on three promises:

1. that I will not run for Council in the 2014 municipal election;
2. that I will not take the $105,000 salary; and
3. that I will not spend from the $30,000 office budget.

In making those promises, I was criticized at the Etobicoke-York Community Council meeting that the position of councillor should not be solely for the wealthy – I grew up in Jane-Finch and lived 27 years of my life in a rental apartment - and that my promises meant that I would do nothing – Toronto values its “volunteers” Councillor Palacio and you should be thankful to “volunteers” like me because without my volunteerism Toronto would not necessarily have a residential Gypsy Moth spray program nor would community groups in the west end of Toronto benefit from a fundraising dinner which nets more than $50,000 annually.

What I am not, unfortunately, is a former politician who is seeking to climb aboard the “gravy train” of government and to get back in the game. Otherwise I might be the frontrunner for the Ward 3 appointment.

At a time when an expense scandal plagues the Senate thanks to appointed Conservative Senator Mike Duffy and government shuts the doors to the public as a result;

At a time when an expense scandal plagues the Pan Am Games committee – a committee that hasn’t included the Athletes Village in its budget – Etobicoke York Community Council recommends that Chris Stockwell be appointed to City Council.

Well, according to media reports dating back to June 2003, which I have here, Chris Stockwell resigned from Cabinet and Queen’s Park amid a chorus of calls for his resignation because he was embroiled in an expense scandal. According to these sources he had taken a lavish European trip with his wife and friends for which $10,000 was paid by Ontario Power Generation and other amounts were paid by the Etobicoke-Centre riding association through tax receipted donations.

An investigation was conducted by then Integrity Commissioner Coulter Osborne to determine whether Chris had breached the *Members’ Integrity Act*.

The report was never made public and a month later Chris announced that he would not seek re-election.

I ask that Chris Stockwell disclose Coulter Osborne’s report before any vote is taken by this Council on the Ward 3 appointment!

Moreover, it is time to call for leadership on the part of our provincial politicians since this appointment process only exists because of provincial legislation.

It is time to end the practice of appointing people to elected positions.

To appoint someone to an elected position is archaic and contrary to the best interests of our democracy!

We are a modern democracy yet by permitting appointment to an otherwise elected position we cling to the old rules of Kings and Queens.

Despite your current $1.1 billion scandal Premier Wynne, show Ontario leadership and change our archaic municipal legislation.

Put aside your differences, and join her in doing so Mr. Hudak and Ms. Horvath.

Take away the power of municipal governments to appoint people to an otherwise elected position and end this practice once and for all.

And do it retroactively so that whomever this Council decides to appoint, their decision should be rendered void!

The integrity of our democracy has lately been under siege. It is time to stand up and preserve its integrity and therefore instead of affirming an appointment, I would urge this Council to do the right thing for Toronto and Ontario and ask Queen’s Park to repeal the authority of all municipalities to appoint people to Council.

Thank you.