

The TORONTO PARTY

LEADING THE WAY

TTP UPDATE
FEBRUARY 2008

This is the official newsletter of The Toronto Party.

WHAT'S NEW

The Toronto Party begins its second year of existence with a more user-friendly website.

We are using an upgraded website program that gives us greater flexibility in delivering information to the public.

We have added many new menus and submenus that will help us keep a record of what is happening and what has happened at City Hall.

We are also beginning to examine the various ways in which technology can assist us in delivering our messages creatively.

If you have not already done so, please visit our new look.

Website:

www.thetorontoparty.com

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MAYOR MILLER BREAKS PROMISE

"In the last three years, we've kept property tax increases at a reasonable level in line with inflation and that is my commitment for the next four."

Mayor David Miller, Inaugural address to City Council, December 5, 2006

When Mayor Miller spoke the above words, Torontonians believed that he would keep his promise and that their property taxes would rise either at or below the prevailing rate of inflation for Toronto. There was little indication given in the 2006 election campaign that Toronto was facing a fiscal crisis and that significant tax increases were required to balance Toronto's operating budget.

Indeed the Mayor's affirmation of his election promise provided comfort to those who supported his re-election.

But last year, property taxes increased 3.8%, more than twice the rate of inflation for Toronto.

This year, Toronto's recommended 2008 operating budget proposes that property taxes rise by 3.75%. Accepting that the rate of inflation for Toronto over last year was 2.4%, the proposed increase is more than 1 1/2 times the rate of inflation.

This "out of line with inflation" property tax increase is uncalled for, especially since City Council has imposed additional tax measures, including the new municipal land transfer tax, the new motor vehicle registration tax and the stealth garbage tax.

Across our city, people are discouraged by governments and politicians who make grand promises and then once elected or re-elected immediately break those promises.

Whether examined individually or examined as a whole, it is clear that Mayor Miller broke his promise to Torontonians.

We will remind people of the Mayor's broken promise, and we will stand ready to defeat him and his supporters in the next election.

PARTY OPPOSES RECOMMENDED 2008 OPERATING BUDGET



For the first time since amalgamation, the City of Toronto has produced a balanced budget. Although some herald this as a great accomplishment, we do not.

The budget has been balanced with a property tax increase that once again exceeds the rate of the inflation and with other taxes. In effect, the \$8.2 billion proposed operating budget — which is up 4.2% from last year — has been balanced with an equivalent 13% property tax increase.

With the help of accounting expertise, we have examined the documents that were made available to the public on the city's website and have been told that there is inadequate disclosure. This not only makes it difficult for our party and Torontonians to accept this budget, but it ought to make it difficult for City Councillors to accept the budget as well.

Accordingly, we are opposed to the budget for the following reasons:

- There is a failure to describe the models and factors used in the process and the underlying assumptions upon which the budget is based;
- There is inadequate explanation provided for new expenditures;
- Core services and infrastructure are inadequately supported;
- The proposed 3.75% property tax increase and other new taxes are out of line with inflation;
- The budget has been balanced due to the implementation of additional tax increases rather than on a line-by-line zero-based budgeting approach;
- The budget is based on undisclosed assumptions for projected tax revenues, labour costs and economic growth;
- Torontonians are being asked to accept this budget based on trust instead of being provided with the disclosure necessary to make an informed judgment.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHT: The budget recommends that the City spend over \$900,000 for a new stingray touch-tank exhibit at the Zoo. With the City still in a fiscal crisis, we question the need for this expenditure. If the City is adamant that such an expenditure is necessary to attract new revenue for the Zoo and the City, then we ask why it cannot be built from donations made by the private sector.



MEETING NOTICE

THE TORONTO PARTY WILL BE HOLDING ITS SECOND ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2008

**AT MASTER'S BUFFETERIA,
310 BLOOR STREET WEST**

FROM 3:00 P.M. TO 5:45 P.M.

