

The TORONTO PARTY

LEADING THE WAY

**TTP UPDATE
JULY 2009**

This is the official newsletter of The Toronto Party.

Party Update

**POLICY
DEVELOPMENT**

There are now less than six months before the start of the 2010 municipal election.

A lot of residents have complained about the way in which our current government under Mayor Miller has managed the affairs of Toronto.

We agree with the complaints. But in order to replace the Mayor and his Council we need to support ideas that Torontonians want.

Accordingly, we want to hear from you. Please send us your policy ideas.

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SOCIALIST MAYOR BECOME SURVIVALIST MILLER

Clock ticks down on Mayor's tax and spend regime

The reasons for denying Mayor David Miller a third term in next year's municipal election are piling up – quite literally. Even the pro-Miller *Toronto Star* that routinely parses every city action to portray the Mayor in a favourable light appears to have had its fill. Recent editorials have been critical of the Mayor for his lack of clear leadership in the municipal worker's strike and have called for reforms to local elections that could help oust deadwood councillors in the next campaign.

Meanwhile, the momentum during week four of the strike has shifted back to the union with the Mayor refusing to seek injunctions against illegal obstructionist tactics on the picket lines along with his reluctance to call a meeting of City Council lest he should upset

the strike sympathizers of his handpicked Executive Council, many of whom have refused to sign a petition forcing the Mayor's hand despite a backlog of urgent non-strike related city business.

This half-in-half out-posturing by the Mayor (drawing a line in the sand with the unions one day, hectoring or failing to support law-abiding citizens the next) is not helping his cause and has likely prolonged the strike.

No doubt the resolve of CUPE leadership was strengthened by the rejection of a forced vote by inside and outside workers in Windsor, that would have settled a 14-week strike, although the margin of the 'no' vote was not known at the time of writing, and was aided by a questionable decision by the city to present

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back to work protocols at polling stations before workers had cast a ballot.

Can a similar strike last 14 weeks in Toronto? The province ended the 2002 strike after 16-days in part because the Pope and Catholic World Youth Council were coming to Toronto. The Toronto International Film Festival does not begin until September 10, meaning there remains a wide berth for both sides to dig in their heels.

But for Miller at least, the game is over. It is difficult to see how the Mayor can exit this strike covered in glory. Make no mistake, if the next election was in 2011 rather than 2010, the Mayor probably would have given in to every CUPE demand and would have likely tossed in the suspension of private sector garbage pickup in

Etobicoke for good measure, much like he did with the former City of York.

Even now, the City's most recent published offer, which includes a 7.2 per cent salary increase over four years and partial payout of the thorny banked sick days has all the signs of a nervous Mayor wavering and is still too rich for a city tottering on bankruptcy after six years of tax hikes and undisciplined spending.

The fact that the Mayor picked this fight now suggests he realized his coveted third term was slipping away long before the *National Post* and *Toronto Star* published polls showing Miller's approval rating in free fall and that survivalist Miller now had to trump socialist Miller. It might have worked too, except that in times of crisis, missing-in-action Miller always takes over.

President's Corner
By Stephen Thiele

The current municipal strike is poised to begin its fifth week.

When it first started, many were of the view that it would not last more than 2 weeks. Given the lingering recession, people said that the workers should be thankful that they still had a job. However, as shown by public polls, the people are also putting blame on our municipal politicians. Mayor Miller and his council are not winning the public relations war, and hence the strike could drag on.

The way in which residents have been managing to cope, however, raises some interesting questions about the services that must be offered by our City. While we certainly have a need for garbage pick-up, it is obvious that this service does not necessarily have to be done by city employees. And what about our politicians. Do we need 1 Mayor and 44 councillors? Despite the strike, City Council has not held a regular meeting to discuss it. Why not?

If anything else, the current strike shows us that we need a new Mayor and new Councillors.