

The **TORONTO PARTY**

LEADING THE WAY

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This is the official newsletter of The Toronto Party.

City Tax Shortfall

The City of Toronto once again has egg on its face.

Last year, the city, against the wishes of a vast majority of residents, introduced a motor vehicle registration tax.

This tax was projected at raising \$56 million for the city. However, it has recently been reported that the city only collected \$46 million.

This demonstrates that this kind of tax policy does not work. People have been able to easily avoid paying the tax by registering their cars elsewhere.

It is time for the city to use the money it already gets wisely, instead of over-burdening the middle class with more taxes.

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PARTY BLASTS TORONTO BUDGET COMMITTEE

BUDGET COMMITTEE TAKES HEAT FOR PROPOSING 4% PROPERTY TAX RAISE

The Toronto Party, led by President, Stephen Thiele, Vice-President, Max Wynter, Treasurer Ed Sweet, and communications committee member Murray Maltz blasted the City's Budget Committee last month over its \$8.7 billion operating budget.

After patiently waiting for nearly 4 hours in the council chamber, Mr. Maltz, acting as spokesperson for the party, hammered the budget, describing that "it represented the city's ongoing inconsistent policy concerning the taxation of Torontonians and [the city's] inability to use tax money that was already levied in a prudent and cost effective manner."

Budget committee members sat stone-faced in their seats throughout the party's 5 minute deputation as Mr. Maltz took the city to task for freezing the levy paid by real estate developers for new real estate development. By doing so, the city has foregone millions of dollars in tax revenue from developers while placing a higher tax burden on homeowners. Mr. Maltz chastised the budget committee, saying: "These are the people (the homeowners) who are losing

their jobs, who can barely pay their mortgages or feed and clothe their families. People in Toronto are losing their homes and yet you continue to increase the tax base on these hardworking people. If you feel the need to stimulate the economy of Toronto it is not done by taking more money out of the backs of the working man and middle class."

The party's deputation also criticized the city's decision last year to create a municipal land transfer tax. The party told the budget committee as follows: "This tax assisted in destroying the real-estate market in Toronto. Toronto sales lag behind those in Vaughan, Mississauga even in recessionary times. With the decline in real estate sales you have harmed more and more jobs. All the ancillary jobs surrounding buying and selling property has decreased, from furniture sales, movers, painters, people who renovate homes such as plumbers and electricians. Your actions have contributed to Toronto having an unemployment rate greater than the national average."

Although the 4% property tax and

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Budget increase has been justified based on the economic theory of John Keynes, Mr. Maltz pointed out that the "continual grab for money from the hardworking people of Toronto must stop and stop now. Increasing taxes during the 1930 depression is recognized as a major factor in worsening the depression."

The party also took the city to task for the way it has spent its money and reminded that budget committee that the city needed to use the money it already collected in a cost effective and efficient manner. Mr. Maltz told the committee: "...The TTC does not provide a better service, trash pick up has gotten worse, ice rinks close early, roads are full of pot holds, and badly cleared after a storm, bike paths are terrible and the city has become dirtier and dirtier. [The City] continues to waste money on studying everything from the Gardiner to street rental carts and menus."

He then told the committee: "During these recessionary times when people are losing their jobs and taking salary cuts, [city council has] the audacity to increase their wages. Shame on you."

The party recommended that before City Council chooses to simply raise taxes, it must first look at its own books and figure out how better to use the abundant tax base the city already has. The operating budget of \$8.7 billion is for 2.2 million people. It is larger than many provinces which are required to deliver more costly services, such as health care.

Mr. Maltz concluded the party's deputation with the following statement:

"Services are no better in Toronto despite increased tax revenue. Not one thing in this city has improved and increasing your tax revenue will not improve Toronto either. Manage what you already have better first. Stop making it harder and harder for the middle class and hard working people in Toronto to live. These days, everyone is managing on less and less money; they are using it smarter, and they are expecting you and City Hall to do the same."

Portions of the party's deputation were covered by CTVNews Toronto.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER, BY STEPHEN THIELE

When the party was first created in October 2006, one of its primary goals was to amend provincial legislation so that municipal parties would gain formal recognition.

Recently, a Toronto Star editorial reported on the need for municipal reform and said that a resolution would be introduced into the Legislative Assembly seeking the formation of an all party committee to examine municipal reform including municipal political parties and term limits.

The Toronto Party has also sent a petition to Queen's Park asking for the recognition of municipal political parties on election ballots, and recently sent a letter to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs asking that the City of Toronto Act be amended to allow municipal political parties to appear on ballots.

We continue to remain optimistic that needed legislative reform will be made soon.