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PART 1 TAXES

Pat Perkins and Marcel Brunelle have seen our taxes rise by 65% during their time in Mayor's office! This is due to out of control and wasteful spending as well as terrible decisions regarding our physical assets that are costing you Millions!

Let's be frank! They have done a terrible job when it comes to spending your money which has resulted in repeatedly higher taxes. On Pat Perkins watch the increase has been 18.7 % (Just under 5% per year). Under Marcelle Brunelle it was a whopping 46.3 % rise (just over 5% per year)

Because of their lack of leadership and vision these increases have been necessary to simply continue to offer you the level of service you should expect from your Town. We are talking about 5% on average every year JUST TO KEEP WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE!

Let me repeat. In 13 years Mayor's Marcel Brunelle and Pat Perkins have raised yours and my taxes by a total of 65%. One more term with either one of as Mayor would be a disaster. Ask yourself a question: Do you feel you are 65% better off as a Whitby resident now than you were 13 years ago?

Why have our taxes increased so significantly when our town has had seen such exponential growth !

It's certainly true that we have seen a lot of growth in recent years. The 2006 Census showed that we are growing at one of the fastest rates in all of Canada. With growth should come added revenue, yet we still saw huge tax increases. How and why did this happen?!

Growth can be a good thing when effectively managed and done with a sense of balance. Regrettably our growth was neither managed effectively nor was it balanced. The vast majority of our growth over the past several years has been residential and very little with commercial or industrial growth.

For a tax balance to be effective and the costs shared among all 3 sectors you need balanced growth. Our imbalanced growth has caused an imbalanced burden on our residential taxpayers and #1 reason for the steep annual increases we are dealing with. Due to our leadership taking their eyes off the ball or not understanding this fundamental "growth" rule we now have the highest industrial tax rate in the region and 4th highest tax rate in the province ! Seriously folks would you locate your business here? Or if you were here would you stay?

The bottom line is that virtually no significant businesses (by size) have set up in Whitby in recent years, yet many have decided to leave. Whitby currently has 1.1 Million square feet of vacant industrial space. This is space that could provide local jobs and tax relief for our residents, yet our leadership has not made this happen

Rocky's Answer:

Balance the budget. I will wage a battle against waste and non-essential spending. I will not allow an increase to our taxes until every line on our 2011 budget has been reviewed meaning we will look at every dollar spent.

I will ensure that every Town staff member has the same respect I do for the tax payer.

Over my professional career, I've probably balanced more budgets than Pat and Marcelle combined. I feel very confident that I can shave up to 5% off the current expenditures that hit \$ 100 million in 2010 and thus offset any increase's the Town faces through labour, rising costs of necessary line items and infrastructure improvements.

For my first budget only we will review all staffing needs down to all contracts currently involving the municipality and everything in between. I will ensure that the major losses the Town faces every year from some of its physical assets stop and move them to the positive side of the balance sheet.

I will personally implement my "Business and Industrial Growth Plan" to attract new businesses and new prestige jobs back to Whitby. We need the "entrepreneur spirit" to get these buildings leased so people can live work and play in their own home town.

Will this be easy to do? No ! Can it be done? Absolutely ! If you know what you're doing and you have a solid plan in place to execute.

I think my personal bottom line with regards to the tax issue is that I am not bound by the saying "that is the way it is, the way it has always been done". My new fresh, ambitious and positive results will see everyone join together and make it happen. I will be a Mayor that questions everything. If the answer to the "Why" does not make sense it simply won't cut it!

My opponents will argue that you "Can't Vote for Rocky Varcoe as he is not a Professional Politician" In reality the opposite is true, you must vote for Rocky Varcoe for the very same reason.

I bring a new mindset to a system that isn't working, and install new thinking and ideas to get our financial house in order once again! In situations like these I

always think of the classic definition of insanity which is to do the same thing over and over again the same way, yet to expect a different result each time. Clearly the system isn't working, so why have our leaders continued to try to do things the same way over and over again?!

PART 2 COMMUNITY AND CRIME

GREAT TOWN:

One of the great things about Whitby over its history has been the sense of community that resonates so strongly.

Sadly as has been expressed to us time and time again, we have seen a gradual but constant decline in the strength of our community spirit. It is no longer the driving force that it once was and I believe a significant reason for this is due to the lack of engagement and support from the Town.

Many of our great community spirit building tools have become less and less important to a Town that continues to evolve. Our Town Carnival, Canada Day celebrations, Parades, Heritage Days and other events don't seem to have the relevance that they once did in building community spirit and I feel our elected officials have allowed this to happen.

This upsets me and many others as I am asked when I go door to door whether Whitby can ever see that sense of community return and be as strong as it once was? To each and every one of the people that ask me that question I always answer the same way – with a resounding YES!

Here is how I plan to do that:

We will bring the Town Carnival back to downtown Whitby where it had been for many years, and in my opinion, where it always should be.

We will have our Canada Day Parade and many other celebrations once again and allow Whitby residents to celebrate the fact that we live in the single greatest country on Earth!

Our elected Town Councillors will show our support to the many fundraising and charitable groups in town by participating as often as we can. Being an elected official brings with it a certain sense of celebrity, and I think it makes perfect sense to use that celebrity for the good of the community at large.

As your mayor I will get our downtown associations working together again in order to foster a sense of community and to bring strength in numbers.

Together with council I will strive to find ways to recognize our community leaders whose efforts make a huge difference in a special way each and every year.

Together with our elected officials we will work hard to ensure that Whitby is the most accessible Town in our Region, and work on becoming a leader within our province.

We will reach out to new residents of our Town, who are perhaps not as familiar with the community building tools that we have. I'd like to see that each new resident be educated on our history and invited to be a full participant in all that makes Whit by so great.

We will introduce a new summer arts or music festival to bring tourism dollars in and provide both financial and staff support to the ones we already have. Communicate with you so you don't miss a thing!

PART 3 FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Physical Assets:

Whitby is fortunate to own many assets throughout the town. Managing these assets properly takes business sense which means thinking like a business person to make them successful. Regrettably though, our elected leaders have instead handled them differently with the end result being assets that fail to live up to their expectations, which in turn costs the town significant amounts of money. To illustrate what I mean, I have selected 3 examples of mismanaged and under-utilized assets that over the years have cost the taxpayer Millions.

Heydenshore Pavilion:

This banquet hall which is situated directly on our beautiful underutilized waterfront is in significant need of both repair and an upgrade. Given its state Pat Perkins herself will not use this town owned facility to host either her annual Whitby Chamber of Commerce "State of Whitby" address and her "just announced" Gala to raise money for her pie in the sky "Performing Arts Centre". Over the past two years (3 events in total) instead of holding her events there, UNBELIEVABLY our Mayor has chosen to stage these events in Oshawa. Yes, Oshawa...this isn't a misprint!

One has to seriously wonder that if this facility in Whitby is not good enough for Mayor Perkins and her Three prestigious events, why should we keep it and expect folks to rent it for their functions ?!

Heydenshore Pavilion is good enough to host our Whitby Sports hall of fame Gala Dinner and our Annual Chamber Of Commerce Citizen of the year and Business Awards Gala Dinner (Peter Perry awards) yet it's not good enough for our current Mayor's 3 major events? Optics are everything in this regard and if the Mayor doesn't see Heydenshore as worthy enough to hold her own events, why should the Town keep a facility that loses \$140,000 per year of real taxpayer dollars?

B) Sports Garden Café:

Few Whitby residents are likely aware that the Town owns and operates (thru a Toronto based management company) this restaurant and bar. The café currently loses approximately \$120,000 per year of your real tax dollars and has been operating at a loss for many years. This situation has taken place during the administrations of both Mayor Perkins and former Mayor Brunelle. It competes with other restaurants/bars in Whitby that are owned and operated by private citizens, who manage their properties with the goal of making a profit, and who also pay taxes to the Town. One can only imagine how much the café would cost taxpayers with its mismanaged style if it had to pay rent or pay taxes. The Town has no business being in any business other than running our town and this is a classic example of why!

C) Cullen Park:

This confidential purchase was orchestrated by Marcel Brunelle while he was Mayor and was supported completely by Pat Perkins. It will sadly go down in Whitby's history as perhaps the biggest and most costly financial bungle ever. The price paid for this property in 2005 as we later discovered was \$8.2 Million. Not a single appraisal was done nor a debate held, they paid the full asking price. Once purchased, the Town also immediately invested \$500,000 in order to bring the buildings up to building code since no provisions were in the agreement that required the previous owner to do so.

The reason for the purchase as stated by Mayor Brunelle was to keep it out of the hands of developers. The ironic thing though was that two thirds of the property was already protected by C.L.O.C.A.. **After 4 years and Millions of dollars of carrying charges, upkeep and losses paid for by the Whitby taxpayer, a decision was made to dispose of the property.**

A nearly \$1 Million study into the matter was completed and the decision was made to sell. After much debate and staff and council time and many studies the winning bidder was Le Nordik Nature Spa ownership group. They are obligated to pay fair market price for the useable land and all indications suggest it will be in the \$5 Million range. When you factor in the amount of lost tax revenues over the years (\$120,000 per year) as well as lost return on investment dollars (\$400,000 per year) along with the costs for improvements, the financial hit to the

Whitby taxpayer will be in the range of \$6 Million plus. An estimated \$ 6 million dollar loss !!!

If this debacle had taken place in the real world, where personal or shareholder dollars were spent instead of public taxpayer dollars, one can be certain that people would have been held accountable and fired! With this election and after learning the sad truth, Whitby taxpayers will have their chance to do so. You simply cannot expect to lose \$ 6 million dollars of your boss's money and keep your job can you? Our MAYOR and former MAYOR do.

Rocky's Answer:

Heydenshore Pavilion:

We will first look to lease out the facility to a private enterprise and have them invest in the needed renovations to make it viable and competitive for Weddings, Banquets and more. Failing that our second choice would be to invest in it ourselves and ensure that the capital costs will be recovered by the increased revenue that a revitalized facility will generate. We will also require that all Town sponsored events be held within the Town of Whitby unless there are compelling reasons why it cannot happen.

Whichever route we choose, the one thing that is certain is that we will stop the bleeding and put \$140,000 (minimum) back in the coffers of the Town.

Sports Garden Café:

This facility will be leased out to an independent operator or chain at a very reasonable rent to ensure success. The Town will benefit by receiving income from rent as well as from the taxes it collects. This should put close to \$200,000 back into our coffers.

Cullen Park:

The deal will be completed with Le Nordik Nature Spa ownership group, and the losses will be put in the books. However we will put an end to the bleeding of \$600,000 plus per year. In addition we will work with the new spa to help promote it, thus ensuring its success and guaranteeing the Town a constant and significant source of taxes.

These 3 simple moves alone will return \$1 million dollars per year to you the Whitby taxpayer in order to be used to assist me in holding the line on tax increases moving forward.

As mentioned above I simply chose three. There have been bungle after bungle and if Pat wins this election her \$ 80 million dollar performing art's centre will ruin

us for years to come. If we cannot manage just the 3 properties above how does she expect to manage a Performing Arts Centre? It's that simple folks!

Commitments like these are always ambitious, but I believe they are achievable and necessary. With so much to be proud of and so much to look forward to, I believe there has never been a more important time to bring back the powerful sense of community and pride that other communities that will make Whitby flourish again!

CRIME:

With growing communities there can be so many positives and in turn some not so positive. Personal crime is on the rise region wide and Whitby must be pro active in ensuring our Citizens remain safe. I have a complete "safer community" plan put together with DRPS senior management to keep Whitby safe and a very positive relationship with Chief Ewles and his Senior staff. I will move for a stronger presence in our downtown with more bike and foot patrols.

I will establish a "crime task force" to meet 4 times a year or more as needed made up of Citizens and current and past Law enforcement staff and management to lead the way and make Whitby one of the safest communities anywhere.

BUSINESS VS RESIDENTIAL

While spending as much time out in the community as I have since announcing my candidacy, I've had the opportunity to hear what people think of both me as well as my ideas if elected Mayor. One thing that has come up a few times that I think needs to be addressed is the belief that I am someone who is far more PRO Business than I am PRO resident.

I consider Bob Attersly to be not only a Mentor and a supporter of mine, but arguably the best Mayor that Whitby has ever had. I think that he perhaps said it best when, on the subject of community, he offered this: "Community by definition is its identity – it's all inclusive, but it's also a sense of freedom and security which allows us to grow cohesively."

Mr. Attersly also said to me that community is also about pride, and it's about libraries, the arts, the recreational facilities, the parks and the organizing that we as a community can do together. Community is about the balance which is required to understand the needs of our citizens as well as the required means to achieve what is necessary.

Building the perfect community is really an inexact science and it's also somewhat of a balancing act. What makes a community perfect can change as the town grows or evolves. By acknowledging this we can learn to adapt as time passes and our town changes.

I brought this up because I feel it's relevant in regards to addressing the issue of businesses versus residents. You see to me, it's all about balance.

Our municipal tax structure is supposed to be based on balance, with tax revenues distributed in an equitable manner between residential, commercial and industrial taxpayers. Right now, the ratio in Whitby is regrettably NOT balanced! Businesses have been leaving Whitby while new one's have not been replacing them. This means that the tax burden is weighted too heavily towards residential taxpayers, of which I am included, and I find this both unacceptable and not fair.

Whitby needs to do a better job at attracting businesses to our town. If we can do that, we can better adjust that tax balance and take the extra burden off of our residents. However for this to happen, we need an attitudinal shift at the top.

We need to be out there with a solid Economic Development strategy and we need to be aggressive in attracting new businesses to Whitby. If we can do this, we will see more than just tax benefits since new businesses in Whitby, means new jobs as well. That is also a big part of what balance is about! I consider this to be all a part of my Live Work and Play in Whitby philosophy and this is a guiding principle behind much of my election platform.

Achieving this balance that I speak about can be done! While I'd love to say that we can go out and find a single new business that will hire 80 employee's, we can also achieve the same target by finding 20 companies with 4. As your Mayor, I will pursue both those avenues aggressively and I won't stop until we can find a balance that works for everyone.

To sum it up...I am neither Pro nor Anti business. Instead, I am about balance or to be even more succinct, I am about community.

A COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

During any typical political campaign, you are guaranteed to hear a typical collection of clichés that are just about as tiresome as they are old. Electors have every right to be cynical about those seeking public office since they hear the same promises and claims all the time, yet seldom see those promises kept.

Admittedly by pointing this out, it leaves me a bit vulnerable since, like any other candidate, I have promises to make and some have been said many times before. However, having said that, I think it's still important for you to know what types of promises and statements I am making to you as I seek your vote when electing the next Mayor of Whitby. Well, here's a few:

I'm committed to creating an economy here in Whitby that is both economically and environmentally sustainable.

I believe that the residents of Whitby should have the ability to both live, work and play right here in their own home town.

I believe that the elected members of our Town Council should be accountable to all of its citizens.

I believe strongly in the importance of community safety and the role that our police force plays in ensuring that.

I feel that inclusiveness and accessibility is vitally important for all. I believe that Whitby should be a leader in the Region and the Province with respect to accessibility.

I believe that we haven't effectively utilized our relationships with UOIT and Durham College and that by not doing so, we are missing out on some key opportunities.

I am a firm believer in the concept of good governance.

Lastly, I believe that come October 26th, the Mayor and council of this Town need to let prospective employers and investors know that Whitby is open for business.

MY VIEW ON POLITICS:

A cliché that is often referred to with respect to politics is that it tends to be a blood sport. The general implication is that politics brings people down, and I must tell you that I've always disliked that concept.

I firmly believe in the type of politics that lifts people up. A type of politics that is compassionate, yet dedicated and relentless in its drive to achieve what is best for Whitby.

Politics can provide citizens with an arena for change. It can be an opportunity for determined and passionate individuals to change lives. Leaders with conviction can do that, and that is the leader that I want to be!

These are some promises that I am making to you, the voters of Whitby. I'm willing to take these promises to Town Hall, but I need you to help me make that happen. On October 25th, I need you to take the time out of your day necessary to vote for change and to help elect me as the next Mayor of Whitby!

HIGH TAXES AND THE PRICE WE PAY BECAUSE OF THEM

One of my greatest concerns as both a resident and a business owner in Whitby has to do with the incredibly high level of property taxes that we pay.

Over the past few years it seems like annual tax increases of 4%, 5% and even 6% have become the norm. These annual hikes are placing an ever increasing burden on local taxpayers to where one has to wonder just how much more can we take!

Why is this so? Why are our tax increases much higher than in some of our neighboring municipalities and how can we curtail them? The answers are complex, but also quite simple at the same time.

For all municipalities in Ontario, the vast majority of its annual revenue comes from property taxes placed on residential, commercial and industrial properties. Development charges and other user fees types of revenue tend to make up the rest. Whitby has seen some rather explosive residential growth in the last few years and from a revenue point of view, this offers both good news and bad. The good news is that we are collecting high levels of development charges from builders. The bad news, however is that for every house that is built, we have infrastructure demands that go along with it. New homes need new roads, schools, parks, emergency services and so on. These come with significant costs that can't be met by the development charges alone.

If a municipality has a proper balance of residential, commercial and industrial taxpayers to draw from, no one particular sector has to pay more than their fair share. Sadly though, in Whitby we have been going through a rash of business closings and departures to other jurisdictions, which create a situation that has gone from bad to worse. Whitby homeowners wind up shouldering as much as 90% of the tax burden which means existing residents have to pay for the infrastructure needs of those moving in. It's a bad situation that our current Mayor has done little to fix, and it's something that must be addressed now!

The Government of Ontario dictates what we can collect for regarding development charges which are restricting, and it is to the point where it actually

hurts Whitby. As Mayor I will fight to allow Municipalities the right to collect what is needed and not be restricted to the point Whitby is hurt.

WHY ARE BUSINESSES STAYING AWAY?

The answer as to why we are losing businesses to other municipalities, as well as not attracting new ones is two-fold.

According to a 2009 study by BMA Consulting, which monitors tax rates within municipalities across Ontario, Whitby currently has the highest industrial tax rate in Durham Region and the fourth highest in all of Ontario. You can't blame any business owner from thinking twice about operating in a municipality that taxes them higher than just about anywhere else.

Second is the lack of suitable land or industrial space for prospective businesses to choose from in Whitby. Currently we have a number of areas of land that could be of interest to business site selectors, but because they are not serviced (no sewers, electrical, water, etc) businesses look elsewhere as they usually don't like to wait or pay the costs to service the land. A few years ago a neighboring community was sitting on 1,000 acres of prestige employment which wasn't drawing attention because it was not serviced. To deal with the problem, the Town committed to paying the costs up front to service the land and the end result is that businesses are now looking at this land and moving to the neighboring community in greater numbers. To them, it was an investment that they felt was worth the associated risks, and it's an investment that is now paying off. We could learn a lesson from our neighbours to the west.

Having said that, there certainly is plenty of existing space, that is currently available for businesses to come to Whitby. Right now there is approximately 1.1 Million square feet of vacant industrial space in town. What worries me though is that if these land owners can't find tenants or buyers due to the restrictive tax rates we have, they soon will realize that it makes more sense to demolish these buildings than pay exorbitant taxes on a space that sits empty. If that starts happening, then we will really be in big trouble!

So what's the answer? In my Election Platform I propose that we move to lower the industrial tax rates that are hindering our efforts to attract and retain businesses in Whitby. We then need to create a strong and compelling economic development and retention strategy which will once again show current and prospective businesses that Whitby is open for business. If we can successfully do this, we then can balance out the tax burden once again to where homeowners aren't saddled by tax rates that are far too high.

Attracting businesses will also provide for greater employment opportunities for our residents who want to be able to live, work and play close to home. It's all

about a quality of life that I believe each of us wants to have, but is not possible due to the current rules that exist.

Our leadership over the past several years created this mess by being reactive instead of proactive. This is not the leadership that Whitby needs and it's the type of leadership I am trying to replace by running for Mayor.

The problem IS fixable and with your support on October 25th, together we can bring respectable and fair tax policies back to Whitby.

RECOGNIZING THE COMMUNITY LEADERS OF WHITBY

One of the many things that I love so much about Whitby is the quality of people that live here.

Rooted deep within the fabric of this ever changing and evolving town has been a lasting belief that the community is stronger when people work together to make it so. Famous Playwright George Bernard Shaw once said: "I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what ever I can" and I have been witness to countless examples over the years of people who live Shaw's words wholeheartedly and without reservation.

Despite the fact that our community has been built on the backs of local community leaders, the Town itself has no official mechanism to recognize the contributions of these leaders. This is something which I believe should be addressed and with that in mind, I am making this election promise:

Within 90 days of taking office as Mayor of Whitby, I will establish an award which will be presented to our citizens that recognizes outstanding local leadership and community engagement.

It can certainly be argued that local leadership takes on many different forms. This is why I'm not prepared at this time to lay out the specifics of the awards. Instead I am promising to establish a committee which will set out the criteria and then select the recipients.

What I am certain of though, is that I want this award to recognize contributions of noteworthy citizens in the year it was presented. The Whitby Chamber of Commerce has been presenting its annual Peter Perry Award, the most

prestigious award that Whitby currently has for many years now, but this award represents ongoing contributions to the community of at least 5 years or more. As our town continues to grow, we need to recognize that individuals who have perhaps only just moved here have the same potential to positively impact our community as those who have lived here for many years. It is my hope that this new award will do just that.

I would like to see this award presented to as many as 5 exceptional citizens each year. One recipient would be a Senior Citizen, and would then replace our annual Senior of the Year Award. The Selection Committee would consist of myself as Mayor, as well as potentially other council members, members of senior Town staff and even some existing and recognized community leaders. Careful attention will be given when creating the Selection Committee to ensure a balanced geographic and diverse group is chosen. Members will also be rotated with Selection Committee members only sitting for 2 year terms (not including the Mayor).

Once the committee members and selection criteria are finalized, we will work on setting up the first awards ceremony as soon as possible. The event would be held at a fully accessible Town owned or managed facility and would be open to all.

While many hard working and dedicated community members here in Whitby will continue to do the amazing work that they do whether they ever win an award or not, I still believe that as a Town we should do more to recognize these efforts. With your help, and by electing me Mayor of Whitby on October 25th, together we can make it happen.

LEADERSHIP & THE INCINERATOR

Leadership is often about making the right decisions at the right time. However leadership to me is also about the ability to admit when mistakes are made and then go about taking the right actions to correct them. Here in Durham, the issue of our garbage and more specifically, what to do with it provides me with a great case study of exactly what I mean.

Durham Region, like many other municipalities in Ontario and beyond is facing a crisis regarding what to do with its garbage. With the reality looming ever closer that our current way of dealing with our garbage, that being shipping it to landfills in Michigan, will soon no longer be available to us, the Regional government has been investigating different options over the past few years. After much investigation, it was decided that the Region should accept responsibility for its own waste, as opposed to sending it somewhere else, and then find an

appropriate way to deal with it. Many technologies were supposedly examined and the decision eventually was made that incineration would be the most prudent approach.

As neighbouring York Region was facing the same challenges, a partnership was formed and the two Regional Governments would work towards building an incinerator somewhere within their joint borders, and as an added bonus, energy would be created from the burning of waste which would then be used to power homes and businesses in the local area.

When word got out into the public about this decision, there was naturally a significant amount of opposition. A long line up of individuals, groups, organizations and other bodies lined up to voice their opposition to something they believed to have significant health dangers as well as other environmental concerns. As with all due process, the Region advised that all voices would be heard and opportunities were given to learn about what was to take place. At the same time though, the clock was ticking and the closing of the border to Michigan was looming ever larger. While all voices needed to be heard, a decision had to be made and made relatively soon.

There is obviously much more to this story, and I'm giving basically what amounts to a Reader's Digest version here, but it gets us up to today where as I write this, the Region of Durham has given final approval to an incinerator plant to be situated in Clarington and to be operated by an American company known as Covanta. The final hurdle is approval from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and many people expect that to happen before too long.

So how does this story fit into what I mentioned off the top about leadership? To answer, let's break it down.

The decision to take responsibility for our own waste was a good one made by the Region of Durham. I'm someone who has always believed in ownership of one's own situation and if the Region created the garbage, then the Region should be responsible for dealing with it. That is a good example of leadership because nobody was trying to pass on our problems anymore to someone else.

Next up, I think the decision to explore various ways to deal with our garbage was also good. Whereas once upon a time landfill was the universally accepted solution, we know today that landfill has many significant negative aspects associated with it. It makes sense to explore other options out there today. Again, this was a good example of leadership.

However, what follows is where I think things went off the rails a bit. Given that the deadline to have our own solution was drawing closer, I believe the Regional government made a wrong decision to focus in on incineration and not give full consideration to other ideas as well as new and constantly evolving

technologies. Many residents were very frustrated by what they perceived to be a lack of interest in other ideas, such as waste diversion, zero waste and other energy from waste technologies displayed by the Region. I can remember several very passionate and heated meetings where residents voiced their frustration at a government that seemed determined to follow one path without giving any real thought to others out there. To me, this is where a mistake has been made and where there is a chance for a newly elected Regional government to admit that and do what it takes to make it right.

For anyone who takes the time to discover the alternatives to incineration that exist, they will be blown away by how fast and rapid new technologies are emerging, that are safer, greener and less expensive than incineration. I've learned that typical incineration, such as what is being proposed for Durham is basically nothing more than 100 year old boiler room technology that is dressed up with newer technology and safe guards. I don't think it is a good decision to take ownership of a problem and then solve it by using ideas that have been around for decades, especially when newer ideas are popping up all the time. There are newer Canadian technologies that are garnering world attention that are far more efficient, less destructive to the environment and cost effective than what Durham has accepted as the solution. On top of that, we still put too much into our waste stream when there is much more we can be doing to divert our waste through recycling and other practices.

So the question about leadership, within the Region of Durham and its dealing with the garbage crisis is this: Will the new Regional Government accept that the original decision made to deal with its garbage through incineration is wrong, and if so, will they do what is necessary to make it right?

To right what I believe are the wrongs will likely cost some money and take some time. Both of these factors will require a huge amount of courage to implement, but if it's truly the right thing to do, than making the decision to stop the process with Covanta will be an ultimate example of true leadership.

I know if something like this were to happen, it would likely be unprecedented. However, isn't this the kind of leadership that people have said can't be found anymore in politics? Isn't this the kind of leadership that can actually restore faith in our society that our elected officials actually CAN be effective leaders, even if it means admitting they made a mistake? I think so, and I think this is what people in Durham have been longing for, especially where this issue is concerned.

What's important to realize is that this isn't just an issue about today. The decisions made and the leadership involved will affect not just this generation but future generations to come. That's exactly why I hope to see that come late October we will see a regional government that can both make the right decisions, but also be brave enough to admit when they've made the wrong one and then have the courage to do something about it.

MY VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

In my last article I shared with you some of the reasons why I have decided to get into politics. If you go back and read it again, you'll notice that personal legacy was not one of them. Sadly though, in today's modern political era many elected officials don't see it as I do. Here in Whitby it appears as though our current Mayor does view personal legacy as important since how else would one explain the passion and zeal she has put into the notion of building a performing arts centre in town. This of course, is in spite of the growing evidence and opinion that it would be nothing more than a significant waste of Town resources.

Her push to build an extravagant facility in the downtown core seems at odds with her strong opposition when council was debating whether to build a new library. She fought hard against the library at the time for reasons known only to her. Many of us, including myself view our downtown library as a beautiful addition to our downtown and will be an anchor for years to come. It's curious to me why she opposed something like that back then yet works so hard for the performing arts centre now.

Before going any further, I think it's important for people to know that I fully believe in and support arts and culture in Whitby. As the owner of a Dinner Theatre it would seem pretty obvious that I believe in the value of performing arts. My objections have nothing to do with the concept and everything to do with the circumstances surrounding the desire to push through a performance arts centre in Whitby at this time.

I've often said that I consider former Mayor Bob Attersley to be a Mentor of mine. He often spoke about how a community is about its people. It's about its libraries, its community and recreations centres, and about its arts and culture. Those beliefs he shared are ones that I agree with completely. However Mr. Attersley also was a big advocate of fiscal responsibility. He believed that we needed to live within our own means, and when looking at a \$50 Million (minimum) financial commitment during these difficult financial times, it seems very irresponsible to proceed with a project as grandiose as this.

For those who are not familiar with the whole performing arts centre debate, I'd be happy to offer a bit of background. About 20 months ago, Mayor Perkins

proposed that the Town hire a consultant to investigate the viability of building a performing arts centre in Whitby. One was hired at a cost to the town of \$90,000 and while I personally questioned the high price tag, I was interested to see what the report would find. I was also interested in being asked for my thoughts on the matter, and given my position as the owner of the only Dinner Theatre in Whitby I presumed I would be contacted.

It came as a great surprise when the report was presented 18 months later, that to the best of my knowledge, and the knowledge of others, the consultant chose not to speak to many significant stakeholders who would have an interest in such a facility. While he did speak to the Whitby Brass Band, he did not speak to the Whitby Courthouse Theatre, nor did he speak to me – the owner of the only professional theatre in town. It was also discovered that a cost analysis for land acquisition and parking was not done, thus omitting a significant cost that would be associated with the centre's construction.

The report offered incorrect information regarding the Regent Theatre in downtown Oshawa and it also spent very little time in discussing the City of Pickering's plan to build a similar facility. Given Pickering's closer proximity to Toronto than Whitby, one would easily presume it would be in a preferable position when trying to book significant acts. The report did note that this proposed \$50 Million facility would or could bring in acts similar to what Brampton's Rose Theatre attracts. I would have preferred to have input in this area since the consultant clearly was unaware of the fact that Class Act Dinner Theatre already brings in most of the talent that The Rose Theatre attracts. Notable performers like The Amazing Kreskin, Mickey Rooney, Michelle Wright, Ron James and George Canyon already have a Whitby home at Class Act, so what else could \$50 Million attract that I can't?!

Remarkably the report did note that the proposed performing arts centre would lose from \$900,000 to \$1.1 Million per year. This amount was estimated without considering the negative impact that the Regent Theatre and the proposed Pickering Arts Centre would contribute. My guess is that figure would in reality be much, much higher.

When adding building costs with land acquisition and parking, the real cost is likely to be around \$80 Million and it will be spent for what the report suggests will be a money losing endeavor. What is also unclear is how does the Town propose to pay for it? Should we borrow the money and make Whitby residents the highest debt per capita residents in Durham? Should we sell Whitby Hydro and take something that makes us \$6 Million per year and turn it into a \$2 to 3 Million loss? Does any of this really make sense?!

To be blunt, this is a bad idea and should have been shelved the minute it was presented as Councilors Roy, Drumm and Mitchell proposed. Sadly, they were out voted, and it was moved by Mayor Perkins and her supporters to proceed

onto the next level. That next level was to spend \$50,000 more on a Site Study. Again I will ask, does any of this many sense to you?!

What boggles my mind is that other options are not being considered in light of the obvious financial blood-bath we are poised to take. Whitby does not have a band shell and perhaps this could be a first step. We also have Heydenshore Pavilion on our lakefront and it would seem more reasonable to invest less money to build out that facility to make it more versatile, attractive and profitable, than to leave our Town with a glamorous under-utilized facility and a crippling mountain of debt.

Mayor Perkins has for the past two years held a Mayor's Gala Fundraiser with the intent of raising funds for the proposed performing arts centre. The third annual gala is planned for September. For whatever reason, we are not privy to the financial statement from these events, but one can guess that they have raised in excess of \$250,000 which is sitting in an account somewhere.

If I am elected as your next Mayor, I will propose that \$90,000 from this account be refunded directly to the taxpayers and that we cancel the Site Study and pay whatever reasonable amount is still owed to the consultant. The balance would then be invested on the direction of the new council into improving facilities that we already have, such as Heydenshore as I earlier suggested.

While a shining performing arts centre is a nice idea in theory, the reality is we can't afford to do this at the moment, and for the Mayor to move forward out of a desire for a personal legacy is a clear example of poor and misguided leadership.

THE IMPORTANCE OF JOBS

One of the three Key Platform Issues that I'm running on in my campaign to be Mayor is the always popular subject of Jobs. I say it's always popular because we have seen more than enough candidates promising to bring in more jobs if elected over the years. Here in Whitby it's no different, but a quick look at our employment base and you'll quickly see that many of the promises made in the past have fallen flat.

There are a number of reasons why having a solid employment base in Whitby is beneficial to the Town, and they go beyond what most people think. Let me list a few of them:

Quality of Life – When most Whitby residents have to leave Whitby to find work, they are often faced with long and time consuming commutes. When someone needs, say two hours a day to commute versus 30 minutes, that's 90 minutes every work day that could be better spent. Imagine having an extra 7-1/2 hours a

week, an extra 30 hours a month or an extra 1500 hours per year that is not spent commuting! Think of how that could be spent with your family or tending to personal matters instead of cursing at fellow commuters as they cut you off, or take that last seat on the GO Train. We can dare to dream, can't we?!

Taxes – Businesses that operate in Whitby have to pay property taxes to the town just as homeowners do. When there are more businesses operating in Whitby there is a greater balance when it comes to sharing the tax burden and it lessens the impact on homeowners. Currently Whitby collects 87% of its tax revenue from homeowners and only 13% from industrial and commercial taxes. This is amongst the most lopsided ratios in all of the GTA and we see the painful results of this every time we receive our residential tax bill.

The Environment – For every additional job that is created in Whitby, we create the possibility that one less car will clog up our highways while commuting or that one more seat now becomes available on the GO Train. This might also mean that the new job in Whitby is filled by someone who may not even need a car to get there. They might be close enough to walk or ride a bicycle or take public transit. Simply put the less driving people need to do, the less driving people are likely to do. Given that car emissions are amongst the leading contributors to climate change, having more jobs in Whitby can clearly have a positive effect on the environment.

Corporate Social Responsibility – Businesses realize nowadays how important it is to become involved in the communities that they are located. Quite often a company will line itself up with a local charity, cause or organization that fits in with their beliefs and the recipient's of their support are usually very grateful. As a business owner myself, I can tell you how often local businesses are asked to throw our support behind worthy causes. We donate or sponsor as often as we can, but the truth is companies can only do so much and the supply never keeps up with demand. With more employers setting up in Whitby, there are possibly new opportunities for charities and other groups to find new supporters and corporate partners. When this happens, it's always a win/win situation.

So it's clear to see just how important it is to have a strong, viable and growing employment base in Whitby. The big problem here is that our employment base isn't strong, it's losing its viability and it's shrinking more than it's growing!

The big question of course is why? I recognize that part of the reason has to do with the difficult economic circumstances most of the world has been dealing with for the past couple of years and it's hard to do anything about that. However, a bigger part of the problem has to do with the fact that Whitby has set up its tax structure and policies in such a way that it essentially tells prospective employers that we are ***Closed for Business!***

Let's start off first with the issue of taxes. I mentioned earlier that having more businesses in Whitby paying taxes helps to lessen the tax burden on homeowners. While this is true, our municipal industrial tax rates still need to be attractive enough in order to attract businesses to set up here. Corporations know that they need to pay taxes but when looking for a place to establish themselves, just how much tax they will have to pay is something they take into consideration. **Whitby is at a huge disadvantage here because our industrial tax rate is the highest in Durham Region and the 4th highest in all of Ontario.** I know some people will argue that they should pay higher taxes, but they need to consider if losing all the other benefits I mentioned earlier that come with local jobs is worth the extra tax revenue that comes directly from high business tax rates? The answer of course is NO.

Whitby will always struggle to attract or even retain businesses if we continue to hit them with a tax rate that is among the least attractive in Ontario. We need to reduce our industrial tax rate to make our town a more attractive option. If we do that we will have a better chance of bringing more jobs to town and all that follows with it. If you need proof take a look at what has been happening over in Vaughan. While much of the news coverage there centres on their highly dysfunctional council, they still managed to agree to lower their business and industrial tax rates to attract businesses. Anyone who has been through Vaughan lately will tell you that their strategy is working and businesses are flocking to take advantage of the lower taxes they'll have to pay.

Another big problem is Vision. Or let me put it differently...another big problem is our LACK OF vision when it comes to Economic Development. Whitby currently lacks an Economic Development office with a strong and viable Strategic Plan. As a result it's not able to implement the ideas and strategies necessary to get the jobs we need. What's very upsetting to me about this is that not long ago the former head of Economic Development here in Whitby understood this problem and set about on creating a plan. Much effort was put into the plan and it was presented to our current Mayor. The problem was that it has sat on her desk and has not been shared with council nor has she made any substantial attempts to implement its recommendations. You may have noticed how I said the "former" head of Economic Development and this is because the level of frustration felt by seeing a viable plan not acted upon caused our former head to seek opportunities elsewhere. How's that for optics when it comes to being open for business?!

As someone who has been in business for 25 years, I know how businesses think. I know what they are looking for when it comes to finding a place to set up shop and if elected Mayor, I will begin implementing strategies which I know will bring jobs back to Whitby. So much of what makes our town great depends on this, and I've found it incredibly sad that our current leadership at the Town doesn't see it this way. Our current Mayor would rather devote her attention to frivolous and unnecessary White Elephant projects like a Performing Arts Centre,

claiming it will be good for civic pride, when what really is necessary are more jobs to ensure a better quality of life.

The government of Ontario is determined to become the Green Energy capital of North America and its providing opportunities far and wide to create a new and sustainable employment sectors in municipalities across the province. Our Mayor needs to stop focusing her attention to ridiculous legacy projects and start focusing on getting on board the new economy train before it blows right on by. We need leadership that understands how important a solid job with a 15 minute commute is to building up our Town and improving the quality of life of its residents. If she isn't prepared to do that, on October 25th you have the opportunity to elect a new Mayor that is!

I realize that not everyone reading this resides in Whitby, but I would suggest to you that the question I just asked is applicable to your municipality as well. Remove "Whitby" and insert your own city or town's name and ask yourself whether your own council is ready to take your municipality to the next step? If not, be sure to exercise your right to vote and then choose a new council that will!