

April 18, 2010

Re: **Oshawa Harbour**

Mayor Gray and members of Council,

I had requested an opportunity to speak at your meeting on the 19th, however. Given that it is closed to the public, and given that I have an urgent personal matter to tend to, I will not be able to attend, even if permission was granted for me to address Council. Therefore, I am writing to you now to express in part my feelings on the entire matter.

Coming to grips with the Federal Dept. of Transport and the Oshawa Harbour Commission has dogged city councils as far back as the 1960's as far as cooperative measures and initiatives. It has been one long struggle!

With the recommendations of the Crombie Report in hand, it was hoped for that finally, the port lands would be transferred to the City, where they belong. This never came about! If Oshawa had an MP (from any party) with a goal of being loyal to the citizens of Oshawa instead of his/her masters in Ottawa, this matter could have been cleared up long ago in my opinion. We have had no such representation for Oshawa unfortunately since the days of the Hon. Ed Broadbent. That being said, I hasten to suggest that any 'deal' the federal government is offering the City at this point will be tainted. It will favour the continued existence of a Port Authority status for a long defunct port. I sense that it will also promote the industrialization of our waterfront, and specifically, the establishment of an ill-conceived ethanol plant that will, in my opinion, render the waterfront, along with established jewels such as the Second Marsh Wildlife Area, the McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve (McBWR), and Lakeview Park as a future wasteland. This 'ain't' Hamilton; it's Oshawa!

Back in the 1960's, I started an organization (Second Marsh Defence Association) to begin a long and often bitter battle to save Second Marsh from Harbour development. It was not until 1983 that this controversy was put to rest, and the Second Marsh was returned to the City from DOT/Oshawa Harbour Commission. Many members of the current Council (Nicholson, Lutczyk, Pidwerbecki, Kolodzie for example) were involved in the fight to save Second Marsh, and I thank you.

From that time, the City began to formulate a master plan for the Oshawa waterfront. In keeping with most other lakefront communities, this was long overdue. No longer do citizens prefer dirty industrialized waterfronts. The City put together a great plan. It called for most of the former Gifford farm to be set aside as an upland buffer for the environmentally sensitive Second Marsh. It envisioned a 'Centre of Excellence' in the same location now being proposed for an ethanol plant! The plan called for retail development of the existing west wharf, upscale living accommodations for the north end of the port land, as well as a full service marina (badly overdue). It called for a modest east wharf to service certain industrial needs with loading/unloading and storage facilities. It was a good plan. I hasten to add, that it also called for a massive cleanup operation of the port. I was indeed fortunate to have been involved in some small way in formulating the master plan for the waterfront; working with Council and leaders then such as Noel Hutchinson.

The Second Marsh Defence Association, now, Friends of Second Marsh (Friends), worked hard both within and outside our community to bring partners to the table to rehabilitate this Provincially Significant Class 2 wetland, as it had been all but ruined while in the hands of the Oshawa Harbour Commission. The community was eager to get involved, and as a result, many innovative and

ambitious initiatives were enacted to see the marsh restored. Not the least of these was our bringing the City, the federal Dept. of Environment (Canadian Wildlife Service) and Friends together in partnership to see this done. Phase 1 of this operation began in the early 1990's and well over \$3M was raised for this task. Upon completion, Friends brought Ducks Unlimited Canada to the table to see Phase 2 of this master plan initiated. I was able to retire from Friends a few years ago, leaving it in good hands. It is still ongoing today. I need not tell you (members of Council) that Second Marsh is a jewel on the Oshawa Waterfront.

In the late 1980's, I approached General Motors of Canada Ltd. with a proposal to develop most of their new land holdings on the east side of Second Marsh (the former Beaton Farm) as a passive recreation area. They bought into the idea almost right away under the visionary leadership of then President George Peapples. I was transferred from the car assembly plant to the new GMC office in 1990 to implement the plan as Manager of the newly-formed McBWR. I overseen the development of habitat restoration, implementation of trails, etc. for about 15 years before I finally retired.

During this time as well, I served on the Board of Directors of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust (under the leadership of the Hon. David Crombie) to see the Waterfront Trail make it's way through Oshawa, much to the delight of the City and her citizens. Keep in mind, this was and remains, a 'waterfront' feature.

Need I remind Council as well of the time, effort and money that has been spent on the beautification of Laeview Park, another waterfront jewel?

Will all of this work and money be put aside now as Council negotiates a 'take-it-or-leave-it' deal with Ottawa? The city does not have to accept bargaining under a threat or ultimatum such as this; nor should they.

1/ The City should re-state your intentions to have the harbour (and harbour lands) turned over to City ownership.

2/ The City should renew and embark on your Waterfront Master Plan, and

3/ you should insist that the federal government clean up the highly polluted port lands now.

Whether the federal government owns the port or not, dangerous chemicals continue to leach into the lake (the source of your drinking water) every day, and have done so for decades. It is their mandate to rid the port of this mess. This is what your MP should be fighting for. That, and what's in the best interest of the City and her inhabitants - not born-in-Ottawa deals to support two full-time jobs (Port Manager and her secretary) to maintain an aging, dirty harbour. Not a deal that will see the waterfront accepting an ethanol plant or any other dirty, polluting industries.

Mr. Mayor, you and Council must act now. You cannot depend on Ottawa, and it seems you cannot depend on Colin Carrie. City Council must stand up for the City and for the people of Oshawa.

The future of the Oshawa waterfront is in your hands.

Thank you for taking the time to read my contribution.

Sincerely,

Jim Richards, Orono, ON