

Present: Mayor Mitchell
Councillor Drumm
Councillor Leahy
Councillor Lee
Councillor Mulcahy
Councillor Newman
Councillor Roy
Councillor Shahid
Councillor Yamada

Also Present: M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer
S. Beale, Commissioner of Public Works
W. Mar, Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor
K. Nix, Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer
J. Romano, Commissioner of Community Services
J. Taylor, Senior Manager, Zoning and Regulation
D. Speed, Fire Chief
H. Ellis, Executive Advisor to the Mayor
C. Harris, Town Clerk
S. Davé, Legislative Specialist (Recording Secretary)

Regrets: None noted

1. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

1.1 Mayor Mitchell declared a pecuniary interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act regarding any discussion pertaining to the proposed hospital site in North Whitby as well as the mid-block arterial road, as Mayor Mitchell and his family have an interest in 5455 Ashburn Road, which is a part of the proposed hospital site and the mid-arterial road.

2. Public Meeting - 2020 Operating and Capital Budget
Councillor Lee, Chair of Finance, provided an overview of the format of the public meeting to members of the audience.

2.1 Presentation - 2020 Budget Overview

M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer and K. Nix, Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer

M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer and K. Nix, Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer provided an overview of the proposed 2020 Budget. Key highlights of the presentation included:

- A high-level overview of the 2020 Budget including key capital and operating expenditures, their rationale, inflationary pressures on the Town and how they will be mitigated;
- Investing in the Town's assets such as infrastructure, parks and community spaces to ensure that they are in good working order for current and future generations;
- Maintaining a good quality of life, which Whitby is known for, while valuing fiscal responsibility and ensuring that the Town plans ahead for future growth;
- Managing growth and its impact on tax revenues and expenses;
- Overview of the impact of the 2020 Budget on Whitby households, in particular the property tax rate;
- How property taxes will be used to fund services;
- The challenges related to managing competing priorities of taxpayer affordability, service delivery and growth, especially when Whitby is experiencing unprecedented growth of 40% in the next 12 years; and
- Ensuring robust economic development while addressing climate change.

2.2 Delegations

Michael Baker, 10 Southshore Street, provided a delegation with respect to the lack of community engagement during various stages of the budget planning process. He advised that instead of soliciting stakeholder feedback at the final phase of the budget process, the Town should be engaging citizens at all stages, from inception to finalization, so that they are involved and have opportunity to provide input. He further suggested that the Town create an "introductory course" which educates residents on how to read the budget, and understand its components. He advised that the amount of community engagement with respect to the budget was insufficient, and the Town and councillors should work together to conduct Town Halls within each ward so that residents have an opportunity to discuss the budget and voice their opinion to Council members.

A brief question and answer period ensued between Members of Council and Mr. Baker, and questions related to items the delegate had

raised were directed to staff. These included:

- Current community engagement opportunities for the Budget and how they were managed by the Town;
- Opportunities for enhancing engagement with residents through Councillor Town Halls and how those types of activities can be managed within the current budget;
- Touch-points within the Budget process where residents could be engaged; and
- Limitations on Council Members' budgets as per the Council Expense Policy and how that can result in less engagement.

Karey Anne Large, Executive Director of the Downtown Whitby Business Improvement Area (BIA), provided a delegation supporting the BIA's ask of \$10,000 in kind, which is a part of the 2020 proposed budget. She provided an overview of the growth that the BIA has undergone since its inception, rising costs due to increased event planning for signature events and opportunities for cost savings for future events. She requested that Council accept the BIA's request for \$10,000 in kind so that they may continue to hone their event strategy and provide sustainable, signature events for the downtown.

A brief question and answer period ensued between Members of Council and Ms. Large with respect to the Open Streets event and its impact on future downtown events.

Paul Kneebone, 101 Fallingbrook Street, advised that his tax bill had gone up significantly in the past few years. He questioned why growth in the Town of Whitby was a positive thing, why was it necessary and what percentage of his taxes would he be personally benefiting from, in terms of services provided. He asked why current taxpayers were having to pay for future growth, and whether it was possible to see more of an analysis of cost saving measures in the budget. He further questioned the lack of commercial growth versus residential growth in Whitby, and the implications for residential taxpayers as a result. He also advised that he had received limited communication from his councillor and would like to see more engagement digitally.

A question and answer period ensued between Mr. Kneebone and Members of Council with respect to:

- The impact of tax increases and reassessment to Mr. Kneebone's total tax bill over the last five years;
- The impact of residential growth versus commercial growth and its impact on residents;
- The limitations of Council Members to organize Town Halls on a regular basis; and
- The various factors that drive population growth in Whitby.

Ron Lalonde, 12 Winterberry Drive, provided an overview of rate increases to his personal tax bill over the last few years, advising that the increase on the Town's portion was higher than the Region and education component. He expressed concern regarding the rate of increase to Whitby property taxes, and advised that in the private sector, such increases would not be accepted. He questioned why Whitby taxpayers were paying for future growth and whether development charges could offset some of the taxpayer burden.

A brief question and answer period ensued between Mr. Lalonde and Members of Council with respect to the percentage increase on his tax bill. Questions raised by the delegate regarding MPAC reassessment, development charges paying for future growth and past property taxes were directed to Staff.

Eric Ireland, 25 Rothean Drive, advised that he was frustrated with the increase to his property tax bill over past years. He further expressed disappointment at the lack of dialogue regarding a zero percentage increase to the 2020 budget, or possibly even a negative increase, and the implications to the Town. He advised that an increase to property taxes was difficult for residents whose salaries were not increasing at the same rate. He asked the Town to consider a zero percentage increase, and work with the Province and the Federal Government to reduce tax increases at those levels as well.

A brief question and answer period ensued between Members of Council and Staff with respect to the implications on Town services of a zero percentage increase to the budget.

Andrew Vahey, 5 Gainsbrook Court, advised that the lack of communication regarding budget deliberations was concerning, and questioned whether the budget was considering increased communication costs. He advised that the Town had a responsibility to engage with residents, at least electronically, so that they could be apprised of Town matters such as the 2020 Budget. He expressed concern at the current state of communications and how that would be affected when there was more growth in the Town, and an increased burden on resources. He asked the Town to increase investment in web access and communication now, so that future residents would also benefit from that.

A brief question and answer period ensued between Mr. Vahey and Members of Council with respect to the types of communication that residents would find helpful.

Norm Sawula, 6 Lacey Drive, provided an overview of the increase to

his tax bill over the past few years, and advised that it was a lot of money to pay for future growth. He asked if Town Staff could work with MPP Lorne Coe to lobby the Provincial Government to increase development charges so that some of taxpayer burden could be offset by developers. He asked if there were other ways to fund growth as opposed to property taxes, and whether the Town could find more efficiencies than what was indicated in the proposed budget.

A brief question and answer period ensued between Mr. Sawula and Members of Council, and questions regarding items raised by the delegate were directed to Staff, including the factors driving tax increases.

It was the consensus of Council to take a recess at 8:55 p.m. Council reconvened at 9:09 p.m.

A detailed question and answer period ensued with respect to:

- How much of the budget would be allocated for future growth versus current expenditures;
- Reasoning for increased growth to the Town of Whitby and its associated costs;
- Residential growth versus corporate growth and how that is addressed through the budget;
- Potential to raise funds through means other than property tax increases, especially for future growth;
- Whether software upgrades or capital costs for software could be included in development charges;
- The costs to maintain current services versus increasing service levels;
- The implications of having a zero percentage increase on Town services, including loss of service, reduced hours and lay-offs;
- Budgetary pressures and inflationary increases to the budget;
- How increased community engagement from the Town as well as Council was addressed in the budget;
- How the additional positions requested in the budget would allow Council Members to communicate more with their constituents, including Town Halls, community meetings, etc.;
- How the proposed new staff positions would add value to the Town;
- Ranking the proposed positions from most critical to least critical so Council could determine which positions would add the most benefit to the Town;
- Total costs related to the proposed positions;
- Expectations from residents on community engagement and communication;

- Whether the public can be engaged at different phases of budget preparation as opposed to the final stage when it is presented;
- Implications of Bill 108;
- How reserve funds are used by the Town;
- Tax increases in previous years and how they have impacted the current ask in the proposed budget;
- Impact of climate change to the need for certain staff positions, and how that would be addressed in future staffing plans;
- Timelines for increased parking in the Whitby Downtown and how that would be addressed;
- Details regarding Cullen Park redevelopment, and how the Town's park assets would be maintained;
- The potential regionalization of the Fire Department and whether that would be happening in the near future; and
- Asset Management and Asset Growth in the next few years.

3. Other Matters for Consideration
Mayor Mitchell assumed the Chair.

3.1 CN Rail Blockade - Impact on Whitby Businesses

Resolution # 24-20

Moved By Councillor Leahy
Seconded By Councillor Mulcahy

Whereas Indigenous communities and supporters have been protesting the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline in northern British Columbia, including through the establishment of blockades along Canada's rail lines and by temporarily blocking bridges and highways;

Whereas there is a need to work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to find solutions to the concerns raised;

Whereas the blockades have had a significant impact on the transfer of goods and people across the country, including disruptions the economic activity of Whitby businesses, such as Gerdau Ameristeel, and,

Whereas Whitby business that are unable to transport their goods to market in a timely manner have contacted their local elected officials, concerned with the losses of millions of dollars in revenue due to the blockades.

Now Therefore be it Resolved:

1. That the Council of The Corporation of the Town of Whitby calls upon the federal and provincial governments to end the blockades to CN Rail urgently and safely, while maintaining dialogue with Indigenous communities to address their concerns; and,
2. That the Clerk be directed to circulate a copy of this resolution to the Prime Minister, Minister of Transportation (Canada), Premier of Ontario, Minister of Transportation (Ontario), Ontario Attorney General, Local MPs and MPPs, and Durham Area Municipalities.

Carried

4. Adjournment

4.1 Motion to Adjourn

Moved By Councillor Shahid
Seconded By Councillor Lee

That the meeting adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Christopher Harris, Town Clerk

Don Mitchell, Mayor