

Comments by Mayor Joni Baechler

Introduction to Council meeting of July 29, 2014

A traditional and routine aspect of our procedures is that each new Mayor has an opportunity to give an address at the first full mtg. There was of course nothing routine about my appointment to Mayor and I am not interested in giving an address, but rather I have indicated to the Clerk I would like to make a few comments.

The agenda for this meeting has important matters that will impact the future of this City. All deserve our careful attention. The people of London have bestowed faith in us to make important decisions during this term, and that work will continue tonight.

As I indicated briefly at our last SPPC meeting, since my appointment I have spent many hours meeting with city leaders from the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce and numerous business leaders to non-profit sector leaders, community organizations, political leaders from all parties and a multitude of engaged citizens at festivals, malls, meetings and social media.

The message from our public is clear and delivered in a consistent, persistent and very frank manner. I would not be raising these comments this evening if it was a random or infrequent event. Enough people have brought this to my attention that I am compelled to share with you.

The community wants council to carry out the business of the city in a professional, responsible and productive manner. Business, community, organization leaders and everyday Londoners want to feel proud of their council

and confident in our decision making. Remember, our actions and comments are live streamed with a very long shelf life.

To achieve our community aspiration there are a couple of things I can do as Mayor. I have asked the city Clerk to bring the report with respect to engaging an Integrity Commissioner to the next committee agenda cycle at the end of August. Secondly, I will chair meetings with the goal to ensure our council procedural by-law and the respective code of conduct is adhered to. Finally, I will certainly commit myself and do all I can to help guide Council in doing its business effectively, and swiftly.

To be clear, I am not suggesting we all “sing from the same song sheet”. We can have good, respectful debates, but I will call you out of order if a debate disrespects a colleague, staff or our community.

We are the leaders of this corporation. We all signed an oath of office, knowing full well the expected conduct articulated in our code of conduct. Our actions must be in the best interest of the corporation with professional, respectful conduct at the core.

My time as Mayor will be brief as I am retiring from council. I have nothing to lose or gain. There are many of you seeking re-election and the manner in which we conduct business from now until the election will send a message either positively or negatively to your constituents.

We can certainly move ahead in the spirit of democracy, and work hard to represent our different views and the

interests of our respective constituents. With your commitment we can do it. Let's do it well.

Thank you.