

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

12. Food Trucks

- Michael Deganges, 565 Glasgow Street – indicating that he owns and has operated an ice cream truck for the past five years, licensed by the City of London and that his business operates a little bit different than what the food trucks operate; noting that he is not speaking today as a food truck operator or a restaurant operator, because he doesn't own a restaurant, he is here to speak only as a regular resident of London who has experienced the food truck phenomenon; noting that throughout the past fifteen years of being in this business, food trucks are a culture, they turn to be a culture and they turn to be a phenomenon since the day they started; asking what starts a culture, what starts a phenomenon, nobody knows, it starts and then it spreads, and as we speak food trucks are a phenomenon, followed by thousands and millions of people in North America; expressing that the food trucks operate under regulation, there are different regulations in different cities; noting that he experiences events to the food trucks, he experiences charities who work with food trucks, experiences social media talking about food trucks, and the only thing he got out of it is, it's a positive note; indicating that last year he was working with a charity organization in Kitchener, and they told him that by incorporating food trucks into their charity program the revenue for the charity increased 400%; recently he came back from Cincinnati, Ohio, where he attended a food truck event, not as an owner but as a visitor, he went around and asked the people and they said to him that the event takes place for six months now, twice a week, where they have 30 – 40 food trucks combined with the restaurants together and all them, even though the restaurants were hesitant to see the food trucks parked right outside their establishment, all of them had positive comments to say about the food trucks; indicating that the food trucks created a lot of traffic and interest about the food trucks and all the businesses around benefited from it; further indicating that if he comes to the downtown core to eat at one of the food trucks, he is going to bring a friend along, and his friend might say look there is a place to have a beer which the food trucks don't sell, now here he is going around spending money on a beer at a restaurant; noting what he is trying to say is that it creates traffic, food trucks are its own culture and he believes it will benefit all the businesses, either in the downtown core or wherever they go because they make slow streets to busy streets, they make less traffic to a lot of traffic, because a lot of people have interest in food trucks; also indicating that he is agreement that health inspections and regulations should be enforced and inspected because a food truck owner or a restaurant owner has to keep their establishments nice and clean and sanitary for the public.
- Chris Bunting, 334 Whisperwood Avenue – indicating that he is the co-owner of the Gouda Gastro Truck here in London and have been in operations for just over a year, this is his second time up to the mic, he was here last year as well to talk about food trucks; noting that his comments are going to be more specific to the proposed by-law; noting some concerns and comments, starting with the proposed licensing fee of \$3,565., making the case that it is extremely high, obviously when you look at other food trucks and other municipalities, he thinks this is second only to Toronto on how high the fee is; noting what stood out for him was how it compared with the other licensing fees for businesses here in London, he thinks that there is only one other license that is higher and it is dramatically higher than any licenses issued for food-based businesses; indicating that it seems to almost be a replacement tax of sorts as opposed to a business license fee, which he thinks it's supposed to be; further indicating that for themselves, as an existing food truck business, is one thing but for a lot of entrepreneurs who are thinking of starting a food truck that fee could be seen as a deterrent, and could also be seen as well that you can have a food truck and a license in London but we are going to price it in a way that maybe would be out of reach for some people; further noting that the GPS tracking was interesting, as a food truck it is obvious that you want people to know where you are, it is kind of important to the business model; between facebook and twitter, he wants people to know where they are because they want them to find the trucks because that is the business; further noting that if the by-law goes

through he would be more mobile and that would become much more important, less stationary; also indicating the possible concerns around health inspections or by-law enforcement, but again, he would suggest that trucks are pretty easy to find, especially when you compare us to other mobile businesses in the city; reiterating that because of the reliance on social media to be successful in business, they are probably the easiest to find for inspection and for the different officers to ensure compliance; expressing concern that it is a bit of a surprise a bit odd that out of all the mobile businesses they would be singling out food trucks for GPS tracking; noting that GPS tracking to him was something you seen in the movies where someone had to wear it around their ankle or when they are under house arrest for doing something wrong, not just in case they decide to do something wrong; asking the Committee to consider that and that maybe there may be an alternative as far as making sure they are available and their locations are known; further expressing concern around the minimum distances, not just around the distances themselves but just in the fine print, that if there was ever a need or somebody felt there was a need to request an exemption for a specific circumstance or an event that there would be a process to do that, so that no food truck would be putting themselves in a position that they were contravening the by-law; indicating that now that he has the mic he would like to address a couple of other concerns, obviously there have been lots in the media written about food trucks, concerns about food trucks, so he just wanted to quickly go through that list, such as, what do they do about grey water and waste, yes they pay for that, that is something we are required to do; as a small business some suggestion have been made that they were able to hide earnings, not pay taxes, WSIB premiums, etc. and noting again food trucks are a small business and not any different than any other mobile business in the City, it doesn't mean that they are more inclined to break law, and to suggest otherwise is a disappointment and discourteous at best; also indicating that their business models are no different than any other business model, they want to provide a quality product, at a reasonable price point in a way that their customers enjoy and thinks that ultimately food trucks, whether they are successful or not in the City of London or anywhere else, will be based on that, and they should be based on that as opposed to bureaucracy, red tape, etc; lastly, indicating that he believes that restaurants and food trucks can co-exist and can contribute to creating a draw to the downtown core of the city and that's what we are all about; suggesting that the Committee view a YouTube 54-minute documentary called "Food Truck War", explaining what impact food trucks have in the community, negative and positives, noting that this happened in a community that had the food trucks.

- Omar, 756 Eclipse Walk – indicating that he has a couple of concerns, asking how many food trucks are going to be out there, noting that he is not opposed to the idea of food trucks being there, just wondering how many food trucks will there be in the downtown area, because Richmond Row right now has twelve vacant spots, it already is a very competitive industry and he heard eight food truck around Victoria Park, that will definitely affect the businesses that are already there; noting that his second concern is where they should go, noting that if they are evenly distributed up around the City, maybe not right on Richmond Row or right on Dundas, maybe if some are put next to the parks, some next to some factories that probably need food vendors, that would be helpful for everybody; further commenting on the licensing fee, per year, he knows that might seem like for food trucks it is high, but it is probably half the rent that restaurants pay per month.
- Jared Zaifman, on behalf of Matt Helfand, President, University Students' Council – see attached communication dated February 18, 2015, with respect to this matter.
- Bob Defercha - 1040 Riverside Drive – indicating that he has been operating restaurants in London since 1980; expressing that he has met with several of the restaurant people in town, and they are not against food trucks, they do believe these will be an addition to the City and they realize that, but everybody needs to look at the impact, noting that for him personally he doesn't see a ton of problems with it, everybody has competition it doesn't matter who you are, but he thinks there are a lot of smaller businesses downtown, the Market, which is basically a food court, all the little restaurants, they will be impacted; noting no doubt about it, it will be cutting off the foot traffic right from the start, leading to empty stores, which is already happening; advising that when the restaurant people met there were retailers who were very concerned as well; indicating

that the number of trucks downtown is mostly the issue, suggesting starting with two trucks downtown, 4 quadrants with two food trucks in each; asking that if this is really a test to see how they function in the City, should we not test them throughout the City, not just in one area; expressing that is what is important and then when you sit down in September to review; suggesting that every week rotating the two trucks from one quadrant to another quadrant and gives everybody an opportunity to try the different trucks out there, he thinks this is very important; further indicating that none of the restaurateurs were approached for their suggestions, like he said from the outset, they know this is going to happen, they are not fighting it from that end, they are just fighting the implementation and how it takes place; further indicating that he has no doubt that the Health Unit is going to check them out, they aren't just there as inspectors they are coaches and they are working with everybody, he has no doubt that the Health Department will do their job; further noting that as far as the grey matter, that's up to the City, it would be nice if it gets put away like we spend the money on; further commenting on the cost for licenses, he knows that for someone to get two parking spots for the summer cost \$2,600, so to him it doesn't seem like a bad thing with the price they are at; suggesting also if you look at what we pay for signage, taxes, taxes on canopies and now a new BIA tax, is questionable at best, they look at all these things; noting all he is saying at this point is that you take a look at it and make sure it's going to work and has a true picture of what is really happening with food trucks; suggesting Gibbons Park, Springbank Park, they are all under serviced in the summer, there is no reason to have everybody downtown, and right now all the talk is about downtown; noting a picture was shown where the parking was going to be for downtown and the availability of 100 spots, yet you go out to the east end and there is nothing; expressing that everybody in the City deserves to experience food experience not just the downtown people.