

From: Peter Houghton

> Sent: February-13-12 12:25 AM

> To: Brown, Matt

> Cc: Polhill, Bud; Armstrong, Bill; Swan, Joseph; Orser, Stephen; Baechler, Joni; Branscombe, Nancy; Hubert, Paul; Henderson, Dale; Van Meerbergen, Paul; Brown, Denise; Usher, Harold; Bryant, Judy; White, Sandy; Fontana, Joe

> Subject: 2012 Budget

>

> Dear Mr. Matt Brown,

>

> I am a community Social Worker specializing in mental health, who lives in your riding, and practices throughout the city as a whole. This letter is to express my concern about some of the budget decisions made last week and to caution against a zero percent tax increase goal some members of council have stated is their "mandate."

>

> I was quite distressed to learn the contributions to the affordable housing reserve fund was reduced in half to one million dollars. It is my understanding that this money is used to build or supply new affordable housing units and that the money is often leveraged at an amazing seven additional dollars for each dollar the city contributes to these projects.

> There is an affordable housing crisis in this city. I work with clients every day who have been on the wait lists for several years and have given up hope that they may ever make it into a unit. The city should not reduce financial resources made to the affordable housing initiatives until the wait lists for affordable housing has been reduced to a humane level.

>

> I am also concerned about the cuts made to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) budget. I am curious to know what efforts, renovations, or retrofits this funding cut will delay or eliminate.

> Accessibility should be a priority for London and I am fearful this cut is merely delaying expenses that will eventually occur while decreasing the importance the city places on this issue.

>

> I would like to caution against the council's decision to divert 1.3 million dollars from the strategic reserve fund in order to balance the budget. I have been lead to believe this is akin to using a long term savings account to pay the weekly grocery bill. It is not a long term strategy and it weakens the city's financial position. While it is laudable to aim towards a zero percent budget every year; it needs to be done with care. I personally would be comfortable with an increase which approximates inflation and would even favour increases beyond that should it represent good value.

>

> Knowing his platform, I did vote for Mr. Fontana, but I also voted for you in the hopes that you would be a moderating voice should the zeal towards a zero percent budget infringe upon the better interests of our riding and the city as a whole. This is why I am glad you voted against the cuts to affordable housing and the AODA. I encourage you to speak out loudly against these decisions during the final approval vote later this month.

>

> Respectfully,

> Peter Houghton, RSW, MSW

> Social Worker

> cc: London City Council