

February 13, 2012

Attention: Mr. Stephen Orser, Councillor Ward 4  
Cc: City Councillors and Cathy Saunders, City Clerk

As resident in Ward 4, I am very concerned by council's actions last week with regards to voting to dip into the city's reserve funds. The motion to do this occurred at a point in time where you had reached a 0.3% tax increase, resulting in only \$6.97 dollars per year to the average household tax bill.

As a homeowner who pays property taxes in this city I believe it is part of your duties as my councillor to ensure that the city is being fiscally responsible. It appears by your comment "for the purpose of reaching zero, this is not a bad idea" that your motive is that zero must be reached not matter what the cost is. I ask you: should your motive not be to create the city of opportunity? This is the vision of the city according to the 2011-2014 strategic plan. How are we to create opportunity of all citizens if we are cutting services (whether they are core or not) and using our reserve funds to keep afloat? This fixation of zero increases is a dangerous train of thought and risks serious future consequences for all citizens in this city.

I am also concerned by the lack of citizen engagement in the budget process. At no point in time were citizens made aware that the strategy on affordable housing was going to be changed. The strategy had been endorsed by council which included the point of maintaining an annual \$2 million city investment in affordable housing, which appears to have been changed in favour of a plan the Mayor himself came up with, without any consultation.

May I also remind you Mr. Orser that you voted "Yea" in favour of adopting the London Community Housing direction, below on June 28, 2010.

*4(a)(ii) the source of financing related to the implementation of this strategy remains reliant on the ongoing commitments from other orders of government and the ongoing, annual, municipal budget contribution of \$2,000,000 to the housing capital reserve;*

I am also astonished at council's lack of recognition of the expertise of city staff, whom have been hired by the city as "experts" in municipal management. I believe more thought and review is required on items that were presented in the budget process by staff. I also believe that if you want to recruit the best and brightest to work for the city, actions like these will make it harder to do so.

I ask you along with your council colleagues to please reconsider the action to dip into the reserve budget and the recommendation to cut funding in order to change the affordable housing strategy. I do believe that your intentions are indeed to make the best decisions for all Londoners, and so I ask you to please give these items the thought and consideration they deserve.

Sincerely,



Jennifer King

*\* Please note that my views are my own and do not reflect my employer or any organization that I am affiliated with.*