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Subject: Cold Beverage Vending Machines in City of London Recreation Facilities and City Hall- Communication Item For Added City Council Agenda

Mayor Brown and Members of London City Council,

Please find below my comments to be put onto the public record as part of the added city council agenda for January 31st. It is regarding Clause 9 of the 2nd Report of the Community and Protective Services Committee to be considered at that meeting.

My comments are in relation to the possible removal of both cold beverage vending machines in city facilities, and also the vending machines for various confectionery items. I am speaking out as not only a soft drink consumer/connoisseur, but also as someone who enjoys the occasional confectionery item from time to time.

I encourage city council to endorse the following item within the clause for consideration:

(a) That this report and the report from the Middlesex London Health Unit (Appendix A) BE RECEIVED for information;

I encourage city council to vote against items (b), (c) and (d). I propose to combine both items (b) and (c) into a new item (b) as noted below. Lastly, I encourage city council to accept the committee recommendation to hold a public participation on the matter.

ORIGINAL CLAUSES:

(b) That Civic Administration's plan to arrange the removal of cold beverage vending machines from recreation facilities and City Hall BE ENDORSED, including the development and implementation of a comprehensive communication and education strategy;

(c) That the Middlesex London Health Unit BE ASKED to develop and implement the communication and education strategy that helps to support this direction;

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ORIGINAL CLAUSES:

(b) That Civic Administration's plan to arrange the removal of cold beverage vending machines from recreation facilities and City Hall NOT BE ENDORSED, but that the Middlesex London Health Unit BE ASKED to assist in the development and implementation of a comprehensive communication and education strategy that informs the public about their respective drink and food choices in City of London Recreation Facilities and City Hall;

I had the opportunity to attend the Community and Protective Services Committee on January 24th, and take in the fulsome debate on the issue. The debate, and also discussion both before and after the meeting in various channels have not swayed my opinion in regards to the removal of cold beverages from city recreation facilities and city hall.

While the discussion focused primarily on the sale of cold beverages, there was little to no discussion on the sale of confectionery items within such facilities as proposed in the staff report. It was also brought up in the discussion that on site concession stands would not be included in this move. That means that fountain soft drinks and their own confectionery items, among other non-healthy choices not outlined in the staff report, would still be available for

purchase for the time being. It is an inconsistent approach, as stated at the committee meeting, and in my view one which seems like a piecemeal approach.

I have no issue with providing factual educational information to the public about their options when it comes to cold beverage and food choices at city recreation facilities and at city hall, but it should be incumbent upon the individual, or respective guardian, to use that information as a tool to make their own choice. Part of that educational component could be partnering with the Canadian Beverage Association as part of their Balance Calories initiative launched in October 2015. The initiative aims to reducing the number of calories Canadians consume from non-alcoholic beverages by 20% over the next decade through product innovation and marketing. It should be noted as well that many beverage providers have also in the last few years provided different size bottles and cans, so the consumer has more choice and variety in terms of the amount of beverage they prefer, as well as caloric consumption being posted on the beverage of their choice.

I am also concerned about the loss of annual revenue of \$47,000. While it may not seem like a significant amount to some, it is still providing the city with a form of additional revenue in a time when cities are faced with many financial challenges. In addition to that concern is one of accessibility to the items within the scope of this recommendation. For those who attend city recreation facilities or city hall, and especially those who work at such facilities, it would provide an additional burden if they wanted to purchase a beverage or confectionery item that is included within this recommendation, and it was not readily available. It may not be practical to bring it from it from home or purchase it at an outside private business, if they have an appetite for the item(s) at that moment. It is also not always a convenient option either as they may not have time to leave the property to get such said item(s) either at home or at a private business. This would prove difficult if they work at those facilities and are only afforded a set amount of breaks/down time as well.

If this motion unfortunately passes, I would hope that fellow members of city council would lead by example and remove items from their respective fridge in their office as outlined in the report as part of the initial committee agenda, this includes: soft drinks (defined as a drink that contains carbonated water, a sweetener, and flavouring), sports drinks, iced tea, fruit drinks, fruit juice, flavoured water, energy drinks and cold coffee beverages. I would also hope they would not have them as well as at committee/council meetings, as was rightly pointed out by one of your fellow colleagues at the Community and Protective Services Committee meeting. This would also include any confectionery items too.

I believe there is, and pardon the pun, an appetite for a refreshing discussion on the matter, and I believe there also needs to be an opportunity for the community and key stakeholders to actively participate, not passively by submitting an electronic message, letter, phone call, etc. It was stated as well at the Community and Protective Services Committee that PepsiCo Canada, who currently holds the cold beverage contract with the city, had sent electronic messages to members of the committee asking how they could be part of the discussion. I also believe that those who have a contract to sell confectionery items, and also those who run the on-site concession stands, even though they are not a part of this recommendation, should be provided a public forum to respond.

For those who feel the matter is of little public importance and that a public participation meeting is not required, I could turn your attention to many matters over the years that have not had zero oral/written submissions on the record which were of greater significance, or frankly of less significance, and in both instances had zero to little input from members of council, meetings of which I attended.

I look forward to the discussion at city council on this matter, and appreciate you taking time to review my submission.

Rob McGarry