

BUDGET COMMITTEE

2013

I HAVE LIVED MY ENTIRE LIFE IN LONDON, IN FACT IN SOUTH LONDON. THREE OF MY FOUR ADULT CHILDREN HAVE ALSO CHOSEN TO LIVE AND WORK IN LONDON FOR A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT REASONS. THE ONE COMMON REASON IS THE DESIRE FOR A REASONABLE QUALITY OF LIFE. WE COUNT OURSELVES EXTREMELY LUCKY.

MY TWO GREATEST CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS CITY LIE IN THE AREAS OF A SLOWLY DECLINING QUALITY OF LIFE AND A COUNCIL THAT APPEARS TO BE UNABLE TO ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE AND CREATE A STRATEGIC PLAN THAT WILL MITIGATE THE REALLY NASTY RESULTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. LET ME SPEAK FOR A MOMENT ABOUT OUR DECLINING QUALITY OF LIFE. TRAFFIC PASSING MY HOME HAS INCREASED EXPONENTIALLY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS AND THIS IS MOSTLY PASS THROUGH TRAFFIC. THIS IS HAPPENING ON A COLLECTOR RD JUST ONE BLOCK SOUTH OF A MAJOR ARTERIAL.. E.G. { COMMISSIONER'S RD HAS YET TO BE COMPLETED TO WONDERLAND RD AND WHARNCLIFFE RD IS A NIGHTMARE AT MOST TIMES OF THE DAY) INFILL, BAD AIR DAYS, THE LOSS OF MANY OF THE LARGE MATURE TREES. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE OLD SOUTH PLANNING DISTRICT HAS THE LEAST AMOUNT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OF ANY OF THE PLANNING DISTRICTS IN THE CITY. OUR QUALITY OF LIFE IS UNDER SIEGE!

LET ME TALK BRIEFLY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE. A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO A CLOSE FRIEND OF MINE (NOW DECEASED) WHO HAD RECENTLY RETIRED FROM AN ACADEMIC CAREER IN GEOPHYSICS SPOKE AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FRIENDS OF THE COVES SUBWATERSHED INC. ON THIS TOPIC. HIS MESSAGE WAS CLEAR AND BRIEF....WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT....THE REASON BEING THE INABILITY OF GOVERNMENTS AT ANY LEVEL TO COME TO GRIPS WITH SOLUTIONS FOR DEALING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE. SOUND FAMILIAR?

SO....WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT ALL OF OF THIS AND WHAT DOES OUR BUDGET TELL US ABOUT THE PRIORITIES OF THIS COUNCIL. IT WOULD SEEM AS IF THE ONLY PRIORITY IS A NO INCREASE BUDGET. I'VE YET TO HEAR AN UNDERSTANDABLE REASON FOR ESTABLISHING THIS AS THE PRIORITY.

IS IT MEANINGLESS BUMPF THE STATEMENT THAT I HAVE RECENTLY FOUND ON THE CITY'S WEB SITE? "THE CITY OF LONDON IS COMMITTED TO BEING A LEADING CANADIAN MUNICIPALITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP." HOW IS THIS DEMONSTRATED IN THIS BUDGET? I WAS UNABLE TO TELL! THE REVISED SWAP SCREAMS OUT AS AN EXAMPLE OF"PLANNING ON THE FLY". IN THESE TIMES TO HAVE SET ABOUT ON THE SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION OF THE DINGMAN CREEK WATERSHED IS VERY HARD TO BELIEVE. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WETLANDS ASSOCIATED WITH DINGMAN CREEK IS FATAL TO THE CONTINOUS FLOW OF THE CREEK DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. I SOMETIMES WONDER JUST HOW MUCH THE ORIGINAL SWAP COST TAXPAYERS IN PLANNING TIME. I SUSPECT THAT WE WILL NEVER KNOW.

ESA'S ARE AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE FOR MANY OF US. MY CULTURE REFERS TO THESE PLACES AS 'THIN PLACES". OVER THE LAST DOZEN YEARS OR SO I HAVE GIVEN SOME CONSIDERABLE EFFORT AND TIME TO CREATING AND

IMPROVING EXISTING ESA'S. AS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF AN EXISTING FRIENDS OF GROUP I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT FUNDS GIVEN BY THE CITY HAVE BEEN MORE THAN DOUBLED BY MATCHING FUNDS AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS. NOT A BAD INVESTMENT I THINK.

THESE ARE INTERESTING TIMES AND I HOPE THAT WE HAVE A COUNCIL THAT IS UP TO THE CHALLENGES.