

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Tow Truck Business and Impound Yard Storage Business Licence By-law Amendment

- D. Cameron: See attached presentation.
- F. Ibrahim, Low Price Towing: Thank you for having me here. My name is Fadi Ibrahim, I am the owner of Low Price Towing in London. We all know that, that the part of the meeting today because people are chasing. I am with the City 100% percent against chasing but we've been telling everyone in this meeting and other meetings that people are chasing because they are trying to make an honest living. I am with the City against any people that they gouging and put pressure at the citizen that should be no. I am with the City 100% and I am so glad that they coming with pricing list this way. Every tow truck company in the City of London they will, should charge the same as others and the other thing what I need to say, citizens they do have the right to choose who they are going to go with. I am against the idea that a Police Officer call a tow truck company to the scene without he even sometimes at the scene and sometimes he doesn't even ask the citizen. You, as a Police Officer, you should ask the citizen, after you ask them about the condition of their life, if they already call for a tow truck company or not and if they say yes, then awesome, if they say not at that time he will call for a tow truck company after the citizen agreed with him. Two days ago, actually, no, three days ago, at Dundas and Clarke there was an accident happen. I was at the scene across from the McDonald's by the TD Canada Trust, the customer he's a Manager at Chrysler Dodge Jeep at AutoMall Dundas East. He choose to go with me because he know me. The Officer attend to the scene, he said I don't need nobody at the scene other than Ross Towing. This is my scene, I need everything to go with Ross. I said "Officer, that shouldn't be happening like that." The lady, right away she stopped the Officer and she said "Sir, we are not going to go with Ross, we are going to go with Low Price Towing because we had an incident that it is our vehicle has been stolen before and we ask them today to release it to us and on Friday they didn't release it and we ended Monday paying \$600." and after that the Police went to the Ambulance, tried to brainwash the citizen and he said no, he had high blood pressure and he said "No, I'm going with Low Price Towing." So, and after that, he gave me the car. We don't need that to happen, we don't need to burn bridges between us as the tow truck operator and the Police Department as we are part of the city and we all should work together as one community, one unit but we need a fair system and this is what we hoping from you to do. The only thing we are asking is a fair system, we are with you with licencing, we are with you with putting one price list and anything like that we support you because we need law, we need everybody to follow the law include us okay, and but, you know what, we not getting treated equally and everything is going to one company, one company only and that, it shouldn't be like that. Yes, there is people they are chasing but the reason why people they are chasing because they are trying to make an honest living. The problem because there is no rotation, we need a fair rotation, fair system and everybody should follow the law and the rules and anyone that doesn't follow the law and the rules, bad, he will be the one who is in trouble, not somebody else. We shouldn't be brushed with the same brush. As a professional as we know our job and we have been in the towing business for more than 20 years, we are fully licenced and we have compound, we have all the money you need and we support you but we need something from you to support us. You asking us for licencing, you asking us for more paperwork, more money, more expense, that's on top of what we are facing right now with Coronavirus. We need something from the city to tell us you know what, we need from you one, two, three but we are giving you one, two, three. You can't, like, with all my respect, ask for everything and don't give us nothing and one person, he's the one who's getting everything. That, it is an unfair system. Thank you.

- Desmond Williams, 519 Tow: Hello. Thanks for having us. My name is Desmond Williams. I own towing company 519 Tow here in London. It just seems to me like these meetings and, the same issues keep coming up so I'm going to try to make this as short as possible because we keep talking about the same things here and it's kind of getting redundant now. If you want to licence a business class like towing, you want to give us plates on our tow trucks and you want to licence the impound facilities and you want to make rules and regulations as far as rates, capped rates and for storage, for towing, that's fine and the distance law, we've already been debating this for a long time now whether it's 200 metres, 100 metres, okay, we've already been going back and forth on these so the main thing that I have to say is that if you want to licence us, like Fadi was just explaining and Dwayne had explained, you have to at least acknowledge that the RFP does coincide in some way with this which it does, that's just a fact, I know that we keep saying that we are trying to keep that separate, okay, so we're going to keep it separate somewhat. You want to licence us, you want to regulate us, well you have to offer us something for our expenses, for the fees we are incurring when we already incur tons of fees every year just to operate our business, just to keep it open. So, I think the distance law can be debated, whether it's 100, 200 metres, I mean, we would like to have no distance law but if the City's pushing for it, that's fine, we've already put in there, Nicole and Orest have already put in the Good Samaritan Law which states that it is going to follow what the *Highway Traffic Act* says, which says, per vehicle involved in an accident there's allowed to be one tow truck per vehicle that appears to meet the services of the tow involved in each collision scene and that goes, that's exempt from the distance law so that's fair, so that would mean that the first two tow trucks on scene, for a two vehicle are allowed to be there and this would prevent the issue that we are having in the city now from five or six tow trucks showing up to one collision scene when there's only two or three cars involved. You've got five or six towing companies there so it's just unnecessary and the Fire Captains are getting sick of it and the EMS Paramedics and the Police are getting sick of it and this is the Police contractor doing it and all the other companies doing it. It's everybody doing it. What I found ironic was in the last Zoom meeting, the people who were pushing for this by-law are now the ones getting upset at the rules that have come forward to make it fair. You've got the Police contractor complaining about the distance law and saying that it's encouraging first on scene, well, it's just ironic to me, it's funny to me that he would even say that because his guys are the ones that are chasing the most and this is the Police contract company who has the contract with the Police and they are the ones chasing the accidents the most and they are the ones pressuring their guys to do it the most and this came out recently in the document that you've all had. They've all been sent from somebody who used to work for them but let's keep that aside. I think the main thing is we need to have clear communication between City Council and the industry which, so far, we have actually done quite a good job of and I think we need to keep giving input to each other in order to make the laws that are fair and to help regulate the industry properly so that business can go on in a clean-cut and professional manner which I think is all everybody's goal, like Fadi was saying and Dwayne was saying, regulate the rates, follow the *Consumer Protection Act*, follow the *Repairs, Storage and Liens Act*, and have everybody follow the rules, do a good job and that's the main thing, is tow trucks, our job is to be a first responder, our job is to come to the collision scenes and clean up the accidents and tow the vehicles off the road to safety. That's our job. Fire does their job, EMS does their job, Police do their job but the problem is, is we do not want to have this law interfering and babying it for the contractor, the Police, we don't want the Police saying to us "Oh, you have to keep 200 meters back." but the other guys are allowed to come in and we don't want to have Police, like Fadi was saying, Police sometimes use their authority and try to call a tow truck for the person without even speaking to them; that can't take place. It has to be fair so that the citizen has the right to choose, if they want to chose the contractor they can do that, if they want to choose the towing company of their choice they can do

that, if they want to choose the tow truck that's available to them first available on scene that's also their right to choose as per the *Highway Traffic Act* and I think that's the main thing is consumer protection and the *Repair, Storage and Liens Act* needs to be followed, as well as the by-law, and we just don't want anything getting in between the rights of the citizen and also the rights of the business owners who operate in the city. Anyways, thank you guys for your time and looking forward to what's going to happen here.

- Sheehan Abeysena, RMS Towing: Hi there. So, I'm sorry. Can you guys here me? Perfect. Ok, so I'm the owner of RMS Towing, Sheehan Abeysena. We are in London. So, one thing I'd like to bring forward to everyone is I am with the City, I believe there needs to be regulation, I believe there needs to be restrictions and I believe the proposed by-law is quite fair as long as there is fairness with the rules imposed. So, like Desmond said, if there's two vehicles there and two tow trucks there, no one should be soliciting, no one should be bothering the customers or the people involved in the accident. Once the first responders have completed their duties, taken care of the individuals involved in the accident, and the Police have done their investigation, they should allow for a fair chance for any tow truck that is regulated by the City to tow the vehicle, gain business and obviously be respectful to everyone there. One thing I will say is, in the recent past, Desmond and I, you know, we're very good friends, we're both business owners, we work together, we have been working on gaining unity amongst all the tow companies in London. So one thing we've been doing is we've been regulating if there's a collision, if, you know, RMS shows up, or if 519 shows up, we'll tell everyone else there's a two vehicle accident, there's two tow trucks here, no one else needs to come, we don't need ten trucks on scene. Our role is to be fair, to be courteous and to clear the roads. Essentially vehicles involved in an accident, if they are left on the roads, is a danger not only to the people involved in the accident as they will be walking around the vehicles, they'll be in the middle of traffic but also it is a danger to the public. When vehicles are involved in accidents, I'd say about 75% of the time, there's a secondary accident due to that accident. So it is essential that the vehicles are cleared promptly but also the main concern that the City has is regulation. So a proposed by-law with regulated rates, regulated storage rates, regulated compounds, regulated tow trucks is essential. The 200 metre rule should be followed like Desmond said, following the *Highway Traffic Act*. So if there are two tow trucks there, and there's a two vehicle accident, the tow truck operators should not be soliciting. Once the Police are done their investigation, or the first responders are done caring to the individuals involved and they clear the vehicles to the Collision Reporting Center, or if the Police attend and do their report there, the Police should give the tow companies on the scene a fair chance, meaning the tow trucks are marked somehow, whether it be plates, stickers, markers, and they can see the trucks, they say "Ok, this truck is regulated by the City, that truck is regulated by the City" and then they go to the individuals involved and say "You can use the trucks on the scene or we can call you a tow.". I believe that's fair. That does not put a monopoly on one tow company, that does not, you know, sway the customer or the person involved towards a specific company, let's say the Police contractor. If these rules are followed, I believe London will be, you know, a role model to many other cities and I believe that, with the by-law in place, with the correct regulations, with the correct rates, and the correct rules, all the tow companies can come together and work in union.
- Mitchell, 519 Tow: No, that's fine. Thank you. In regards to this, the only thing that I see, again, as an issue that has been kind of arisen, I originally came from the tri-cities, Kitchener, Waterloo, Guelph, where they have a current by-law that they actually got rid of in the 2020 financial year because of the issues of towing. So, in that by-law pretty much was similar to the one they are putting in now. The issue that will arise, again, I have seen it firsthand, is the 200 metre rule and unfortunately the combination of the current contract until whenever that comes up for renewal with the Police Services Board. So there needs, in regards to the 200 metre rule that the City wants to have stipulated with this by-law, there has to be

some strict enforcement of it and there has to be some non-biased enforcement about it like we are currently having at this time in regards to towing in general and in to the 200 metre rule.

- James Patrick Donovan, James Patrick Towing and Repairs: I figured it out. Hello everybody. My name is James from James Patrick Towing and Repairs. I just want to touch base on a couple of little things here. My business mostly does the aftermath of what you guys are currently talking about, accident calls. So we'll pick up from said yards, 519, RMS, Clarks, all kinds of different companies and we will do work with the insurance company, sometimes often paying bills for the insurance company or on behalf and then getting rid of the vehicle afterwards where it goes to an auction house or sometimes just a scrapping and lots of other cases. So, we only do maybe, I don't chase at all and neither do any of my guys. We have 11 trucks, well, I do, plated, on the road, I employ 15 people between the shop and drivers and I'm already licenced in the City of London. That's another thing I'm talking about but to have another fee for like a plate per truck now I've got to pay which I'm not too thrilled to do in especially during Covid time, you know, x amount of dollars per truck for a company I already have licenced in the City of London that I'm currently doing business the same way that I would be doing every day. I don't see a benefit that would come my way in any shape or form and not to talk about a contract holdover or anything like that but with this 200 meter rule, there's not really much opportunity for me to get, you know, let's say, an accident happens and a Police Officer shows up and they, you know, they pull up their phones and look up the next towing company on Google but they don't, they figure, we've got lots, for whoever may be the contract holder at the time, it really doesn't open it up for any of my advertising or anything I've done in the past to give me an opportunity to get more business while incurring a hefty fee for a business I already have licenced and there's a smaller one truck operations that are in town, guys I know, not much of chasers, just go around doing hooks all day, \$50-\$60 tows, tire changes, 3 AM calls, things like that, don't probably have a yard. Are they required to get a licence? Is it only for accidents? If it's only for accidents, how are we going to get them? There's, I don't know, I think this by-law needs a lot more work than just what it sounds like to me and it's, there's nothing in there for more business to, for anybody, it seems like there's a lot more red tape and that's something I really think that municipalities need to get out of doing not adding. I mean, I get that there's a lot of, believe me, I get it, there's a lot of overpriced towing in this world but not everybody's like that actually, there's quite a bit of just reasonable priced towing that just goes on so I'm I see there's an alarm in some cases but I don't know, I would really like to see this by-law be something that's for everybody, not just, you know, one person. I'm in London, on Dundas Street so I see a lot of accidents. We just don't do a lot of chasing, I mean can think of one but it literally happened at the corner of my shop and I just happened to have one of my trucks there. Other than that there's no chasing that happens there so this by-law just cost me a pile more money and red tape that just doesn't seem very fair and a lot of other guys are like that. And that's all I have to say on that.
- Frank Rondinelli, Charterhouse Towing: Hi. How are you? Good. My name is Frank Rondinelli. I have Charterhouse Towing. Been in business about 48 years on Charterhouse Crescent. I agree with the amendment to go ahead and licence towing yards, I agree with the towing business being licenced. I'd like to see more regulations put into place so there is no chasing really and bring it back to original. When I started into this business, we had a rotation that worked very, very well, it was fair, it was taken care of, it was regulated by the towing companies and the originators in the City of London. Other than that, all I can say is if you are honest, you are straight, and you keep to rules I believe that everybody should have a chance to make a living but if people stand up and say that they don't chase and they do chase and they're just out for the dollars, ok and the inflated bills come in the way they do, then I think really, it should really be looked over again and regulated properly especially for, to make it fair across the board with the consumer, the insurance companies, the garages and the towing company

themselves. It should all be made fair. It's, we're not a big city, we all can make a living and a good living, if we just stick to the, to the actual reality of it's a tow, it's an accident and I just believe after 48 years, coming up to 50 years in business I would really like to see it go back to the way it was but you can't go backwards so you need to look at the future and that is to regulate it and make it honest and fair for everybody.

- Scott Taylor, Ross Towing: Can you hear me here? Sorry about that. I don't know what happened. Anyway, thanks very much and I will be as brief as possible especially after this delay. I'm here representing Ross Towing in my capacity as PR and if there's anything that we've learned over the past couple of months and especially this evening is that a by-law is needed, universal fees, universal specifications for impound lots, all that stuff is extremely important not only to the City but to the motorists of the city and to, even to the towing operators. So, in my capacity representing Ross, we, the one thing I wanted to say was that it seems to me over the last couple of months that you've heard almost all from the towing operators and not necessarily so much from the public, even this evening seems to be a good representation of that. So I just wanted to give them a voice and last July and August, we commissioned a survey with the nationally respected Leje Voting firm about towing and I'm going to go quickly through just a few of the results and that is again agreeing with the by-law. Most residents disagree that towing should be a first-come, first-to-tow situation with no price limit. In fact, strongly disagree with that is 65% they want this by-law, they want the universal fees and they want to know where their car is going and to have a say in where their car is going. Next, 83% of area London residents, London area residents, agree their vehicle should be towed to a safe destination and with a pre-determined cost. So we know we've talked about how that hasn't always been the case in the City and the by-law looks like it is going to fix that, so again, you have addressed a major concern with motorists in London. Two-thirds of residents agree that the tow operator should not have a criminal background, again, that's up for debate as to what would be considered a criminal background but it does prove and illustrate the fact that people want proper towing, people want to know whose towing them and finally I think this is crucial to the by-law wording, if three-quarters of residents have a negative opinion of chasers and for half it is very negative. They, chasers in this situation, is referred to as those that race to a scene of an accident or a breakdown and listen to radio scanners and that sort of thing, we all know what it is. So, the main thing is, if it's going to be a first truck to the accident situation, chasers and the chasing is going to get worse so we're hoping that is something that the Committee and Council considers with great weight going forward as far as this by-law is concerned and that's pretty much it. I just wanted to let the people have a voice as well. Thank you.