

The **TORONTO PARTY**

LEADING THE WAY

TTP UPDATE OCTOBER 2009

This is the official newsletter of The Toronto Party.

COUNCILLORS WHO VOTED FOR THE MUNICIPAL LAND TRANSFER TAX and/or MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAX

Maria Augimeri (a)
Sandra Bussin
Shelley Carroll
Raymond Cho
Janet Davis
Glenn De Baeremaker
Frank Di Giorgio
John Fillion
Paula Fletcher
Adam Giambrone
Mark Grimes
Suzan Hall
Adrian Heaps
Norm Kelly
Gloria Lindsay Luby
Giorgio Mammoliti
Pam McConnell
Joe Mihevc
Peter Milczyn (b)
Howard Moscoe
Anthony Perruzza (a)
Joe Pantalone
Gord Perks
Kyle Rae
Bill Saundercook
Adam Vaughan

(a) MLTT only
(b) MVRT only

Website:
www.thetorontoparty.com

E-mail:
thetorontoparty@yahoo.ca

A NEW REGIME IS NEEDED

STATUS QUO OF EXISTING COUNCIL UNACCEPTABLE **By Stephen Thiele, President**

Mayor David Miller's decision to not seek re-election in the 2010 municipal election has satisfied many people. Under his leadership, Torontonians have faced a litany of new taxes and user fees, including the motor vehicle registration tax, municipal land transfer tax, a 5 cent fee on plastic bags, and a garbage bin fee.

We fought against these taxes and fees. We have argued that spending at City Hall is out of control. Indeed from 2003 to 2009, the city's operating budget increased from \$6.4 billion to \$8.9 billion. And for all this increased spending, services did not improve substantially or at all.

City politicians, however, increased their own salaries and when called upon to reduce their last salary increase, they refused to do so. In a recession economy, with Toronto's unemployment rate almost 2 percent higher than the national rate, City Council has let the people of our city down.

There is talk at City Hall that Toronto is already facing a \$500 million shortfall in the 2010 operating budget. And now

media reports suggest that politicians will be seeking a 5 per cent cut in spending by all departments to help balance the budget.

The call for cuts comes too late. Belt-tightening at City Hall should have occurred two years ago when Torontonians rallied to express their disapproval of the new taxes imposed upon them. In our view, City Council is only now taking a more responsible attitude on the issue of spending at City Hall because we are entering an election year.

Torontonians should not be fooled by a group of politicians that has continued to fail to listen to the voter and which has imposed measures that has cost children the enjoyment of using outdoor rinks and swimming pools, and forced people to close their businesses and lose their jobs.

The municipal land transfer tax has been a disaster. Its imposition cost Toronto \$240 million in economic activity in its first year.

The motor vehicle registration tax, when added to the other tax

Continued from page 1...Toronto Party continues to lead the way

increases, including a property tax increase which was almost twice the rate of inflation, unnecessarily took more money out the pockets of Toronto residents and more economic activity out of our city. It is a tax that hurts the middle and lower groups of our economy the most since the wealthiest of our society were able to avoid it by registering their cars to properties located outside of Toronto.

The Toronto Party has already gone on record. It will repeal the municipal land transfer tax. It will repeal the motor vehicle registration tax. It will repeal the 5 cent fee on plastic bags. The latter fee is wholly unjustified. It raises no revenue for the city, and does extremely little for municipal waste or litter issues. It is merely a policy in "symbolic environmentalism" that has added \$10 million in revenue to business at the expense of city residents.

The Toronto Party has also gone on record as supporting a balanced transportation strategy for the city that includes the building of new highways, subways and an integrated trail of bicycle paths that are located off of our roads. Mayor Miller's "Transit City" is short-sighted and a recipe for economic disaster in the waiting. Above ground dedicated streetcar lanes will cut communities in half, take away road space and thereby lead to more gridlock, and shut down more small businesses. Subways are a better form of public transit and will help Toronto build for a future well beyond the year 2030.

The Toronto Party is also moving forward on other policies and continuing to lead the way while Councillors at City Hall remain sleeping at the switch.

Municipal reform is badly needed. Nearly 70 percent of eligible voters no longer cast a ballot in a municipal election. They have given up on a system that is broken. With very few exceptions, incumbent councillors always win as a result of the significant advantage they hold over

newcomers. While incumbent councillors can access a \$53,000 annual office budget to promote themselves, challengers must wait until they are nominated before they can raise and spend money. This must end and accordingly The Toronto Party is proposing a reduction in this budget from its current level to no more than \$30,000 annually. The party is also proposing greater scrutiny on how these budgets are used and limiting spending from these budgets during an election year.

We will put an end to spending on fridge magnets and calendars, and the promotion of a councillor's name on the backs of local sports teams.

We will end the practice of permitting corporate and union donations to candidates.

We will also impose term limits on city politicians. Too many councillors hold their position as "a job for life." Fresh ideas and fresh faces are prevented from lending their talents to public service because of the systemic problems that plague municipal government.

We will also re-examine the need for 44 councillors. There is no reason for the corporation called the City of Toronto to be run by a 45 member "Board of Directors". It is inefficient and unnecessary. 2 councillors do the job that only one MP or one MPP does, and therefore a reduction from 44 councillors to 22 councillors is worthy of serious study. This is particularly so in light of the city's unveiling of the new 311 phone system which will permit Torontonians to access City Hall without the need to engage their City Councillor.

The 2010 municipal election will mark a watershed for Toronto. While it will elect a new Mayor, it must also shed its past and elect a group of new councillors because changing a Mayor only changes one vote.