

March 6, 2007

Good evening Mayor Jackson, members of council, city staff and citizens of Burlington.

I have lived in this city for more than 40 years. My career path has dedicated about half this time to environmental protection and education. I am currently a member of a local citizens group committed to try and save the green space at the former location of General Brock High school. However, tonight I am here to speak to you as a parent.

I believe it is my responsibility to do my part to do what I can to ensure that the generations that follow us have an opportunity to experience what it is like to grow up in a community that has not forgotten the importance of the quality of life, balanced lifestyles and what makes up the true character of a city.

Thank you for providing the opportunities you have to date for citizens to provide input on various issues including the proposed McMaster location as well as with the capital budget and strategic planning information sessions. I know these are critical tools to help you to gain further insight as to where the taxpayers priorities sit and where we would like our dollars spent.

I attended an earlier council meeting on the McMaster proposal where various representatives and stakeholders provided a compelling presentation complete with stats, designs, projected health benefits and economic growth spinoffs. I was most pleased to hear that the University included the necessity for the facility to be engineered as “green” as one of their key design criteria.

My concern is less with the intent of the proposal and certainly the projected improved access to health care would certainly be a positive step. The reason I speak to this issue tonight pertains to the significant city dollars that would be required to support this initiative and consequently, jeopardize the ability for this council to fund other priorities – namely the environment.

While it may be obvious to yourselves, I do not believe it is as clear as it could or should be to the people of Burlington what their support or non support of each new development initiative with a hefty price tag (such as McMaster), really means in regards to the resulting impacts on their communities.

There is not a bottomless pit of available funds and if one supports A, they need to realize that B, C, D services or other spending initiatives will need to be deferred or cancelled all together. I have spoken with people in the community myself and I have found that there appears to be a disconnect between the presentation of various proposed development initiatives and how the decisions will influence the bigger picture. i.e. what services or projects will not make the budget cut and will no longer be available.

Somehow, funds to support development initiatives seem to be “found”. Whether it is the Waterfront, new park at Kerns Rd, Performing Arts Centre, the library or possibility McMaster. Please, don't misunderstand as I realize the value many of them can and do bring to the community and enjoy some of them myself. The issue I raise has to do with the losses as a result of these choices and this decision making and lack of action when it comes to support for the perhaps less tangible – nature, parks, playing fields. Whether it is because they are not as high profile, or that they do not show more obvious direct economic benefits or....., the fact is they appear to be left off the budget table.

My concern is that if this council decides to dedicate 10 million + to support underground parking for McMaster, other competing priorities will lose and yet again, the environment will be compromised.

I find it quite disturbing that to date, this council has not included any funds in the proposed 10 yr capital budget to implement a parkland preservation fund. I believe we need to hold on to what we have and what largely gives Burlington it's envied character. There will always be pressures to develop as population climbs and in turn our remaining pockets of green space will be in more demand than ever before. It is amazing to me that underground parking takes priority over a dime being added to initiative a parkland acquisition fund.

I am sure we are all aware of the fact that the number one priority for Canadian citizens at this time is not education, health care or even the economy, it is the well-being of our environment. Of course, a well planned city is a sustainable one where a healthy balance exists among all the key ingredients.

The fact that a 2004 report carried out for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities found that "The Regional Municipality of Halton now ranks third for having the highest ecological footprint and that our footprints are at least 10% higher than the Canadian average." says to me that we need to do better. Compromising the environment by prioritizing development is not the right direction. Included in this report are a number of suggestions on how city's can reduce their impact on the environment – not surprisingly, one of them includes, the protection of green space **within** our urban communities.

I believe McMaster will directly serve a select segment of the population – primarily the students enrolled in the programs and granted, it expects to also support improved health care access. I don't think the majority of folks across the city will benefit as directly from the addition of McMaster or the Performing Arts Centre etc as the majority would from being able to easily access nearby green places to visit and enjoy.

Ironically, in some ways, the representatives of McMaster want some of the same things I am hoping for today. I respect and support their intent to improve the health care support their initiative would provide. I am sure they would concur that populations need to live a healthy lifestyle as a preventative measure to avoid unnecessary pressures on the health care system later on. Removing our places to play and replacing them with housing developments and instead making choices that force residents to get into their vehicles to drive farther away to exercise to get fit does not only work in the opposition direction of benefiting our increasingly obese generation, but it increases our already higher than average, ecological footprint through CO2 emissions.

I believe McMaster really wants to be here and I hope that while business may be business, they recognize that other priorities are at stake and that they are not that different in their intent. I hope that this understanding could result in some creative, innovative, perhaps staggered funding options to meet their needs so that this council can do what I think is the right thing for the people of Burlington of today and generations of tomorrow. Don't throw the money to development. We can and will likely always be developing – new buildings will replace old etc. With green spaces, once gone forever gone.

It is unfortunate that one has to be chosen over the other and hopefully this will not be the case and some creative, innovative funding solutions can be realized. If the introduction of McMaster can be achieved without compromising necessary funding to protect our green spaces then terrific. If not and a choice needs to be made, I hope you will choose the environment.

During the most recent election campaign, some of you highlighted the importance of the environment, specifically parkland preservation as an issue you believe in and an area that you will fight for if elected. Here is your opportunity to be true to your commitments, your promises.

As you do the tough part. Weigh all the options, the competing demands and very important needs and services that require dollars in this city. I am here today, again as a parent to urge you to not only think about your constituents, the residents of Burlington and how your decisions will play out in the next 4 years. I ask that you think about and consider those who are yet to have a voice. Please consider future generations when you think about dollars needed to support McMaster.

The choices you make will have a significant impact on those to follow. Wouldn't it be wonderful for each of you to leave a legacy as one where a group of leaders chose to make the tough choices, the less high profile, popular decisions, they took a stand and chose the environment and the children of tomorrow will say – thank you.

I expect the physicians who spoke in support of the need for the health care services no doubt the McMaster development would provide

We can choose to protect and better manage our ecological assets just as we manage our infrastructure and other manufactured capital assets.

Excerpts from city of Burlington's report on sustainability – see MAP that includes all parks and red circles highlighting distance to parks which actually reflects the lack of parkland space in the Lakeshore district. EXCELLENT factual representation of the shortfall in this area! Map 2.3

The City needs to make present and prospective residents aware that there are “limits to growth” and thus limits to population. It may be necessary at some future date to limit population in order to attain sustainability.

ISSUE: URBAN PARKS

WHY WAS IT MEASURED

It continues to be important to ascertain the amount of green space within Burlington, so that this data can be used as a point of comparison for future citizens, in order for them to know whether the City is gaining or losing valuable green space. Green space is a crucial component of any community as it provides opportunities for active and passive recreation pursuits as well as habitats for a variety of plant and animal species. It is important to note the aesthetic value of these lands, places where our citizens can not only appreciate the beauty of nature, but have time to reflect.

WHAT WAS MEASURED

Data on the number, area and location of the City parks was obtained from the City of Burlington's Parks and Recreation Department. Map 2.3 shows the location of all City parks. As in Map 2.2, circles of radius 750m have been drawn around each park to indicate what might

be considered as within “walking distance” of the park.

☺ Amy

Dear Mayor Jackson and Members of City Council,

- Surprised there is not a more balanced approach to content with guiding principles of sustainability. Heavy in development initiatives without balanced consideration to the need to ensure green spaces in this city are not at greater risk / are secured.

From city’s white paper re: sustainable development – “**Sustainable Development** is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs.

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- For the past 4 years, community has strived to work with city staff and worked hard to ensure our leaders are aware that this is a concern. It is NOT a neighbourhood concern only, the fact that approx. 500 people attended the open house (I believe one of the highest attended, daytime open house attendance, over 40,000 hits to the website with expressed concern from every ward in this city, sports groups, seniors, local high school teaching staff and football players, baseball associ..... This is known and yet here when the opportunity presents itself in the form of the capital plan, there is no action taken on this subject. (perhaps attach Fred Galloway report or at least the public comments – taxpayers have spoken loud and clear what they want to see with this issue)
- Realize and appreciate that there are many significant priorities that need to be considered and only so many dollars in the budget, however, I believe one could argue that new development initiatives will always be available for years to come, for green space, once it is gone, there is no turning back, it will be gone forever and the character and shape of this great city will be forever changed.
- In keeping with the Official plan, surprising that there is not a more integration of the sustainability principle “.....”
- While admirable that city is proactive in seeking public input on **some city** initiatives , (McMAster, Waterfront development), I respectfully suggest that in addition to focusing on each initiative in isolation , that the citizens of this city have the opportunity to look at them in context so when they are asked to provide their input, it is more clear to them how the initiative would impact the overall picture i.e. support of one initiative could result in the defer

or cancellation of other city priorities. I do not know if this has been done but I think a very helpful tool for our city planners and for you, our leaders selected to represent our interests, that a survey via tax bills, ballot forms or newspaper seeking input from residents on what matters to them most as residents of this city – prioritizing development, arts & culture, economic growth recreation, health, green space and sports fields preservation etc. In this way, you are able to have a broader set of guiding principles along with public input on specific initiatives that you can assess together when you assign dollars via the capital budget to support them.

- Public interest of this local issue has continued to grow since the press announced the school closure. Record numbers in attendance at recent public open houses on this issue; over 40,000 web site hits during the last 12 months alone; hundreds of petition signatures; countless hours dedicated by our volunteers and many special stories shared by concerned citizens who have written to our web site at www.savegeneralbrock.ca.
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- Two studies in particular focus on learning more about growth and parks and rec (reference the two). Reassuring to see they are proposed however it is concerning about the timing. Lands can be lost and development can continue on before having this critical information is gathered. They reports could provide valuable insight to support a more sustainable city and yet without any projected funds to support the resulting needs, again, we will be without a strategy to support the need. I ask this council why a green space /parkland acquisition fund is not included in the budget? While it may be considered unprecedented for this city, innovative and responsible to the citizens of today and tomorrow.

From F.J. Galloway's Facilitator's summary report:

The following are the key summary points that emerged from the two public meetings:

- The need for the City to act assertively to secure what park and open space lands become available at Brock, pursuing the broadest possible size and opportunities. Significant support was provided verbally and via comment cards for the long term preservation of significant park and open space lands in this area of Burlington.
- A need for clarity exists as to School Board and other educational / institution uses of the site, and related to both School Board and City financial strategies in terms of use and availability of funds, etc.
- Concerns over the proposed residential development impacts on density increases, traffic, public safety, property values and overall quality of life.
- An interest in creative solutions that bring about a positive result for the area and in the use of these valued lands as park and open space resources.

- Recognition that the community itself will need to be part of the solution related to both commitment and financing.
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- The GB committee is not the first community group to have to be formed to try and protect local greenspace at risk. AS city staff have stated themselves, residents of this city do not differentiate between what is city designated parkland and what is parkland owned by the school board – we just use it, depend in it and enjoy it.
- Park preservation fund would be both innovation and demonstrate vision so that an action plan is in place to ensure these areas like Brock have a chance while we await the results of these studies. With projected population growth, earlier than predicted build out, taxpayers support and owned.Example:
- Mr G. Cullen stated on FEB.....”the land will be deemed surplus” and yet even after 4 years of what is clearly not just a local issue and yet no actions by our local government has been taken and the opportunity is here now. By not including the allocation of funds is saying to many of your constituents that it is not a priority compared to other important initiatives and primarily development and economic growth. Where is the sustainability principles from the Official Plan.
- City staff have indicated that all the wards of the city meet the standards of parkland space and distance to travel. However, our Committee and thousands have residents believe we have shown this not to be the case. The city’s park land map (attach) clearly reveals the Lakeshore district and area where the GB parkland is located includes a shortfall of green space. Without GB we will have a deficit of parkland and we ask, what strategy this city has in place to accommodate these needs. If there is a plan, this needs to be communicated to residents so they can be reassured,,,
- Check city of Oaville budget to see if they or Hamilton have a parkland fund.
- Some of you included the environment and specifically parkland preservation in your election platforms and significant considering the # 1 ranked issuer for Canadians is the environment, Now here is the opportunity to remain true to those election promises by ensuring that funds are set aside to support places like GB that are projected to be at risk. If the park does not become at risk, these funds will only be grow and be the best investment our leaders will ever make.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for public input regarding Burlington’s proposed Capital budget and Strategic Plan. I have lived in Burlington for more than 40 years and have seen many changes, both positive and not so positive unfold over time. To date, I have strived to live a life with respect for the environment and those within it by minimizing my ecological footprint on the landscape.

I commend the City for including sustainability in it’s planning and policy strategies and documents but upon review of the Capital budget I find there to be a disconnect. The Official Plan states “ *From an environmental planning perspective, the main intent of the Plan is to integrate environmental considerations with economic and social factors in land use planning decisions. Achieving a balance between these three components requires that the long-term environmental, social and economic implications of development be considered.* ”

Sustainable development is premised on the ability to create links between the environment and economy that can support an enhanced quality of life”

Upon review of the proposed Capital budget, I was unable to locate any mention of the environment or sustainability in relation to this city’s economic growth with capital budget funding? I trust there are guiding principles and specific criteria that you apply to each of the proposed projects/initiatives to ensure they are an appropriate “fit” with the city’s vision and commitment to ensure a sustainable community for existing and future generations. Surely, proposed projects are not reviewed in isolation only but are considered in relation to the bigger picture of the longer term strategic plan as well. I would appreciate further insight to this process as my initial inquiry with a council member indicated that there was no criteria used when assessing the various components?

I recently attended a presentation by internationally recognized environment expert and inspirational leader, Dr. David Suzuki. He emphasized the need is greater than ever before for citizens to speak up and remind our local governments of why we voted for their leadership and why the environment is considered the number one priority among Canadians – ranked higher than education, health care and the economy. Of course this makes sense as they are all interconnected and required to provide for healthy, sustainability communities.

Ecological Footprints of Canadian Municipalities and Regions

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September 2004 From Federation of Canadian Municipalities report:

The Regional Municipality of Halton now ranks third behind Calgary and Edmonton for having the highest ecological footprint. Their footprints are at least 10% higher than the Canadian average. We can choose to protect and better manage our ecological assets just as we manage our infrastructure and other manufactured capital assets.

While the majority of municipalities in this study fall within 6% either below or above the Canadian average ecological footprint of 7.25 hectares, Waterloo RM (112%), Peel RM (114%), Ottawa (119%), Halton RM (121%), Edmonton (130%), Calgary (136%), and York RM (143%) have ecological footprints at least 10% greater than the Canadian average. Figure 2 compares the percentage difference in ecological footprint size of the municipalities and Canadian average.

Achieving greater sustainability requires a holistic perspective that is based on systems thinking.

As individuals or municipal governments, we need to think more about whole systems (water, waste, buildings, transportation) and system parts. In a system everything is interrelated and interdependent.

For municipal governments to become more sustainable requires adopting certain tools like sustainable development decision frameworks that help assess the social, economic and environmental implications of local decisions. It will require using lifecycle assessment tools for all infrastructure and planning decisions and investing in environmental management systems to establish baselines of performance and to track progress.

11. Recommendations

The ecological footprint not only offers a baseline index or measure of sustainability but also can be used as a tool to promote, track, motivate, and guide a municipality towards becoming a sustainable community. The following are recommendations as to how the ecological footprint can serve the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, individual communities. Included are suggestions for improvements to the ecological footprint methodology.

Recommendations to FCM

- Educate members on the ecological footprint results in this report.
- Encourage FCM members to use the ecological footprint analysis as a means to engage citizens in sustainable community development.
- Track the ecological footprint annually or bi-annually to measure a community's progress.
- Use the ecological footprint as a tool to evaluate community-funding proposals.
- Award sustainability grants based on progress in lowering ecological footprints.
- Explore the use of the EFA in conjunction with other environmental indicators in the Quality of Life Reporting System that can provide a comprehensive portrait of municipal/community sustainability.

Recommendation to municipalities and communities

- Consider using the EFA as one means of measuring and reporting the overall sustainability of your municipality or community. In combination with other tools like lifecycle assessment and environmental management systems, use the EFA to communicate progress towards a variety of sustainable community objectives that may include:
 - o Sustainable and energy efficient transportation/transit systems;
 - o Green/sustainable building design;
 - o Greening of infrastructure (e.g., solid waste, waste water, and water systems).
- Consider using the EFA to communicate urban sprawl impacts.
- Adopt green procurement policies, including green power, in support of sustainable community development objectives.

Encourage full-cost pricing particularly for water and waste services to encourage conservation.

- Encourage or mandate renewable energy infrastructure investment by households and businesses through building codes and permitting, municipal showcasing and procurement.
- Support community gardens, and protect urban green-space.**
- Encourage community members to calculate their ecological footprint on a regular basis.

He reminded us to remind you that when determining policies, planning for the future communities and making decisions regarding strategic plans and spending our dollars, that consideration to the environment should be a required criteria when assessing. For example, the proposition to introduce McMaster University to this city. Does the design construction meet this city's (and global) standards as a "green" venture? Will the funds required to implement the project compromise the ability for the city to carry out priority sustainable related initiatives. Will it put at risk the ability for your government to ensure no further green spaces within this city are lost to development and that adequate funds are in place to preserve them for the future?

As a citizen of this city, a parent and a current consumer this planet, I believe it is my responsibility to do what I can to live responsibly and with respect to the environment and make choices and take actions with those that are not yet with us in mind. My hope is that in doing so, my grandchildren and those to follow will comment proudly on this generation, commending the tough choices with right solutions that afforded them the opportunity to experience what we are very fortunate to enjoy.

As our city's leaders today with a profound impact on the generations of tomorrow, I respectfully ask that as you apply your knowledge and expertise in the assessment of the budget, striving to balance the many challenges and competing factors that you must consider, that you do so with a priority to people of Canada's priority – the environment. In doing so, I have no doubt that the legacy each of you will create will be ones of integrity, vision, accountability and strength.

"Places to Grow – Burlington Intensification Study " is forecasted for 2008. What about parklands at risk in the interim such as the General Brock Parklands or any other green spaces or recreational lands that become sought after by developers? With the earlier than anticipated build out projection for this city and the significant population growth estimated for the surrounding Halton region, we cannot afford to protect all of these areas at risk before it is too late. You will never regret their preservation and they will only be more valued in years to come as more of our increasingly obese and unhealthy generation depends on local places to explore and recreate in.

Also, update of "The Community Leisure Facilities Plan" that was prepared to determine/confirm short and long term major community facility needs including recreation, sport, arts and heritage facilities is also not slated to take place until 2008. Again, it would make sense that the capital budget address the need to protect any presently used recreation facilities (such as GB), by reserving funds in the event they are deemed surplus by the HDSB and lost to development prior to 2008.