

**Feedback from the  
February 4, 2009  
Budget Public Information Meeting**

**February 9, 2009  
General Committee**

# Feedback from the February 4, 2009 Budget Public Information Meeting

1. Concerns were raised about the reduction in the baskets & barrels on Yonge Street, and the baskets & barrels and flowers at the Heintzman House.

Response: The baskets & barrels on Yonge Street are not being eliminated. The quantity is to be determined. A report will be brought forward to General Committee on February 9, 2009. The Commissioner of Community & Fire Services will provide details on the proposed plan for Heintzman House to the Manager of the Heintzman House.

2. Inquiries were made on assessment and reassessment of property taxes.

Response: The Treasurer provided an explanation of the property assessment process and how it relates to the Town of Markham's taxes. The Treasurer met with the individuals after the meeting to provide further explanation on the process and impact.

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3. The Mayor and Members of Council were thanked for the 0% net tax rate increase in 2009. In addition, positive comments were made on the 2009 Capital Budget that includes projects such as the Main Street Unionville South, Crosby Arena and the installation of public washrooms
4. Question was raised on the location of the public washrooms.  
Response: Commissioner of Community & Fire Services responded that 1 washroom facility will be constructed in 2009. A report will be brought forward to General Committee in March 2009 to report on the results of the feasibility study, and a recommended first location. It was requested that the Commissioner of Community & Fire Services contact members of the Unionville Villagers Association to discuss the initiative.

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5. Queries were made with respect to whether there is funding in place for the Cathedral Fire Station and equipment for the Cathedral and Cornell Fire Stations.

Response: Staff advised that funding had been included in previous years budgets for the construction of the Cathedral Fire Station as well as for fire apparatus at both stations.

6. Inquiries were made on the results of operations for 2008 and the treatment of surplus/deficit.

Response: The Treasurer addressed that 2008 was a challenging year especially in the area of winter roads due to the significant amount of snowfall. A report to General Committee on the results will be brought forward in March.

In the situation where there is an operating surplus at the end of the year, in the following year, the Town's policy is that the surplus will be transferred to reserve. In the situation of a deficit, funding would be from a draw from reserves or included in the tax levy.

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7. Concerns were raised about the windrow plowing services under the Senior's windrow clearing assistance program, and verification on where the horticultural budget is accounted for.

Response: Staff advised that any questions regarding the program should be forwarded to the Town's Operations department.

Furthermore, it was noted that in the 2008 budget, the age threshold had been lowered from the age of 65 to 60.

It was noted that the horticultural budget is included as part of the Operations – Parks department's base operating budget.

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8. Question was raised about the sidewalks and street illuminations in the Boxgrove area.

Response: The Commissioner of Development Services indicated that funding is included in the 2009 Capital Budget for sidewalks and illumination requests. The Commissioner will respond back to the President of the Box Grove Community Association on the specific locations being proposed.

9. Question was raised about the cost of \$350K for the design of the Cornell Fire Station.

Response: The Commissioner of Community & Fire Services responded that the base design for the Cathedral Fire Station was applied to the Cornell Fire Station, alterations of the design would be necessary to meet the site requirements. In addition, the architect will have to certify the plans as part of the required process.

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9. Question was raised about the cost of \$350K for the design of the Cornell Fire Station.

Response (continued): The Budget Chief added that the Town retained the same architect for both the Cathedral and Cornell Fire Stations which resulted in reduced fees.

10. Inquiry was made on the Leitchcroft Community Park.

Response: The Commissioner of Development Services indicated that a public consultation process will be followed. The Commissioner further added that the construction is intended to commence in 2009 and the completion date will most likely be in 2010.

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11. It was raised that the 0% net tax rate increase was due to the increase of user fees.

Response: The Commissioner of Corporate Services referred to the E3 revenue enhancement initiatives in the amount of \$1.6M, and noted that the major components are increases in investment income, additional sponsorships, advertising revenues, parking fines and library overdue fines.

It was also noted that the recreation user fee increases would bring the Town's fees to be within the 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> percentile in comparison to other municipalities within the GTA. The largest increase in user fees was levied to the non-resident fitness initiation fee.



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12. It was raised that additional funds beyond what's included in the 2009 budget should be added for Thornhill storm sewer upgrades.

Response: The 2009 capital project is phase one of a multi-year project to address the situation in the Thornhill area.

13. It was suggested that additional funds be added to the budget for the Museum.

Response: It was responded that there is a \$10M budget set aside for the implementation of the Museum Master Plan.

14. Question was raised with respect to plans to preserve farmlands in Markham.

Response: The Commissioner of Development Services responded that approximately 40% of the land base is still rural, and approximately 24% of the land base is permanently protected under the Provincial Greenbelt Plan.