

**M onday, D ecember 14, 2009**



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**A nnual M eeting of**

**B rantford C ity C ouncil**

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**THE MAYOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS TO  
BRANTFORD CITY COUNCIL  
PRESENTED BY  
HIS WORSHIP MAYOR MIKE HANCOCK  
MONDAY DECEMBER 14, 2009**

***“SOMETHING TO BUILD ON”***

MP Phil McColeman, MPP Dave Levac, distinguished Guests, Members of City Council, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I welcome you to this year's Annual Address.

With a municipal election now just ten months away, this is a good time in the life of this Council to reflect on our achievements to date and where we should position ourselves for the future.

Just after we were elected three years ago, Council came together and did two things, first we reaffirmed our Community Based Strategic Plan and second, based on that plan we developed a set of priorities for our term of Council.

The result is that for the past three years, Council has generally kept its focus on these priorities and has made significant progress towards their overall achievement.

So while it will soon be the task of another Council to define their goals and objectives, it remains the job of this one to follow through on what we have started and give that future Council something to build on.

A great deal of the credit for guiding the development of our priorities and helping to keep us on track must go to our City Manager John Brown and I would thank him and his staff for all their work.

One of my favourite quotes has guided my thinking.

*“If you don’t know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else”* – **Lawrence J. Peter**

Our priorities as identified in 2006 were: (slide)

- Pre-eminent priority – South Side of Colborne Street
- Primary Priorities:
  - Downtown
  - City/County/Six Nations
  - Brownfield redevelopment
  - Post Secondary Education Development
  - Control tax increases
  - Infrastructure renewal
- Other Priorities:
  - Museum Sustainability
  - Green Infrastructure Plan
  - Neighbourhood Plans
  - Economic Development Strategy
  - New Investment in Brantford
  - Crime and Drug Agenda
  - Waterfront Master Plan

- Physician Recruitment Task Force

Other than the South Side of Colborne Street our priorities should be seen as horizontal rather vertical. We are attempting to do them all.

Tonight I will speak briefly to each of these.

### **South side of Colborne Street:**

During the last election, all candidates including myself made the commitment to see the South Side of Colborne Street either cleaned up or on the way to being cleaned up before the end of our term.

I have to admit at that time, and in fact just a year ago, I wasn't clear how this would be done but I felt that after the completion of Harmony Square, the private sector would have an incentive to develop the street.

However, after two years of discussions with developers, it became obvious that the south side of Colborne Street would never be rejuvenated in any kind of timely manner without direct action by this Council. From that came the decision to expropriate the street.

Today the process is well under way. We have plans in place to assist people or businesses displaced by the move. We start soil and designated substances tests this month and plan to go to tender for demolition in January 2010.

We are currently in discussion with the YMCA and Laurier for a 100,000 square foot sports edifice and have received many informal inquiries about the development on the rest of the street.

Perhaps the most common concern of the process is that it will cost substantially more than the \$11.5 million dollars we have set aside and I would tell you that at this time there is every indication that we will remain on budget. This project will not impact on the 2010 budget.

Like money, the City spent on the development of Post Secondary Education and Harmony Square, money spent on South Colborne is a good investment in our City's future. In fact new assessment growth should eventually repay the cost of the project.

The south side will not be cleaned up in a year, but it will be well started before our term of Council is over in 2010.

Projects like this require a great deal of work by staff and Council and I would like to recognize the work of South Side of Colborne Task Force, its chair Councillor Mark Littell, and members, Councillors John Bradford and Jennifer Kinneman for their leadership.

## **Downtown/ Post Secondary Growth:**

It is hard to speak about improvements to our Downtown without also commenting on the growth of post secondary education. It is amazing to me that it was just **ten years** ago this month that Laurier Brantford opened its doors to 39 students. Coincidentally it was also ten years ago that the Casino opened as well and both have had a positive impact on our City.

This September, Laurier Brantford will have close to 2400 students, with 700 new students starting this year. From one building in 1999, today Laurier Brantford currently **owns or leases 20 buildings**, employs 150 staff and faculty and has a campus budget of approximately \$8.4 million.

As a result of a \$26 million dollar infrastructure grant, they are currently building a \$52 million dollar Academic and Research Centre on Dalhousie Street, renovating the former CIBC bank at Dalhousie and Market Street, have purchased Moodys, and with the City, acquired the Lucy Marco student residence. They are also working with the YMCA in the development of plans for a 100,000 square foot recreational complex on Colborne Street.

As Laurier President Max Blouw observed, it is amazing to see the incredible transformational impact a University has on a City.

## **Nipissing University:**

We also have good news from our other University. **Nipissing University** operating from two locations in Brantford continues to grow and prosper in our City. It is my pleasure to welcome the new President of Nipissing University, **Dr. Lesley Lovett-Doust**, a new Dean of Education **Dr. Sharon Rich** and a new representative on their Board of Directors for Brantford, our own **Andy Molenaar**.

With the opening of their new renovated building at 50 Wellington Street in September 2008, they have demonstrated their confidence for further academic growth in our City.

This year, **Nipissing** will have **735** Laurier-Nipissing full-time concurrent education students, **18 full-time Nipissing Masters of Education** students and about **200 teachers** in Additional Qualifications courses and **60 part-time Masters of Education** students in year-round courses.

## **Mohawk College:**

I am particularly pleased to recognize the new **President of Mohawk College, Rob MacIsaac** for his vision and drive, to not only expand Mohawk's presence in Brantford, but in our downtown in particular.

**However, even before their downtown plan is finalized, Mohawk Brantford** continues to transition programming to the downtown. For 2009/2010, Mohawk expects a total enrolment of over 2500 students in Brantford, with over 400 students in downtown locations in the **Odeon building** and rented space at **Nipissing University's 50 Wellington Street location.**

Currently, Mohawk College is looking at opportunities to partner with Laurier and Nipissing for both academic and student services. They are also looking at new collaborative program opportunities in Child Development and Early Learning, Integrated Media Arts, Health Studies, Sport Management, as well as Police Studies, Urban Design and Sustainability.

### **Downtown Vision:**

This year, we expect that between all our post secondary partners we will see nearly 3000 students studying downtown. Given the plans we know about today, it is not out of the question that we would see a post secondary campus of 10,000 students within ten years.

In addition to students, we expect to see many more people living Downtown, all of whom would want services near them. With that in mind, the vision that is evolving is of our downtown becoming its own village, with stores, shops, accommodation and entertainment all developed for the people who live there.

Considering that students are estimated to spend at least \$10,000 a year over their tuition costs that is \$100 million dollars into the local economy. Downtown Brantford would seem to be a good place to consider a business opportunity.

Today however, in spite of all this new activity in the core, businesses are having a hard time making ends meet when the students leave for four months a year. To encourage more commercial development, we need a more stable customer base.

In this regard, I have spoken to all of our Post Secondary partners and all of them are considering the development of more semestered programming over the next few years which should keep the student population more stable.

### **City/County Relations:**

Certainly, the one area that this Council has not been as successful as we would have liked has been in negotiating agreements with the County of Brant.

To be fair, we have had a few successes, like the **transformer station** where we came in a million dollars below budget, the **West Brant Fire and Ambulance Station** and the **new Ambulance Station at Francis Street and Powerline Road**.

What these small agreements have shown is the value and importance of working together. Unfortunately, on other much more significant issues, such as the merger of our energy companies or boundary changes, agreement has eluded us.

To be fair to both of us, the world changed as we were developing our proposals. Native land claim issues, the economy, new development trends and a lack of provincial commitment all influenced our lack of enthusiasm for the original Letter of Intent. The letter did not really reflect changing growth patterns and included considerable land that, under Places to Grow, could not be developed for at least 20 years.

Then a few months ago we became aware of the **Barrie/Innisfil Boundary Adjustment Act** which would extend the southern boundary of the separated City of Barrie to include approximately 2293 hectares of land currently in the Town of Innisfil.

What this proposed piece of legislation does is establish a whole new set of **criteria** for boundary settlements. The Barrie/Innisfil agreement provides Innisfil with no compensation whatsoever while our original letter of intent provided, by comparison, very generous terms to the County.

In light of this legislation, it would be difficult for Brantford City Council to accept the terms of the old Letter of Intent today.

Just as the Province was planning to use our Letter of Intent as a model for Barrie, for us this legislation now has to be considered a model for any future negotiations.

So the question is what can we do today?

First thing to consider is that it is still in our best interests for the County of Brant and the City of Brantford to develop our own home grown proposal, rather than have the province dictate one. Second, with 2010 being an election year it will not be possible to have any agreement start January 1, 2011 because you would in effect have disenfranchised people in the changed boundary area who would have voted for County Councillors.

In light of the theme of tonight's Address – “something to build on”- I would like to see us come together informally to consider a range of options, some of them quite “outside the box”.

We should not be coming together where one municipality is considered the supplicant, but two municipalities trying to meet a common challenge.

The point is that we need to put the past behind us and start over in the best interests of all of our constituents. At the very least we need to leave a foundation that a future Council can build on.

### **Brownfields:**

Brownfield renewal has been a commitment of the last few Councils, and now after so many years of planning we are finally poised to bring our two last major brownfield sites, Sydenham-Pearl and Mohawk-Greenwich, back into productive use.

I would like to recognize the efforts of the members of the Brownfields Community Advisory Committee, co-chaired by David Belleville and Thomas Oldham, with members Mary Ellen Kaye, Linda Marie Ford, Vera McAllister and Eddy Ramsay along with **Councillors Marguerite Ceschi-Smith and Greg Martin**. They, along with City Staff, have done a fantastic job of moving these major projects forward.

I would particularly like to recognize the efforts of Councillor Marguerite Ceschi-Smith who for many years championed this cause on her own. She has every right to be particularly pleased as this huge project gets underway.

- **Sydenham-Pearl Development**

This location was the former site of the Northern Globe roofing company and the Crown Electric metals company and is set to be redeveloped into townhouse units, some of which will be affordable housing with the rest being freehold market units.

Currently, the Brantford Land Revival Corp is applying for various funding opportunities that will move their plan forward.

They have received a positive response to their application to FCM's Green Municipal Funds program. They also have an application with Brantford's Financial Tax Incentive Program which is under review.

The biff-tip program as it is referred to, rebates taxes on the municipal and school portion of property taxes paid on rehabilitated brownfield properties. Our Development Charges by-law also supports brownfield redevelopment through awarding development charge credits equal to the cost of the environmental clean-up.

The current plan is for 39 affordable units on 22 Sydenham and 27 units on 17 Sydenham, which is still subject to funding approvals. Currently while the lands have been made safe, they have not been remediated and this will be addressed as a part of the formal RFP.

A big part of the delay is the generally tight money supply and money to fund brownfield projects is even more difficult to find. It is, however, slowly moving ahead.

### **Greenwich-Mohawk Brownfield**

After so many years of consultation, discussion, planning and Council support, the **Mohawk-Greenwich** brownfield site remediation project is finally moving forward in a positive direction.

This roughly 51 acre site is the former location of two of Brantford's most prominent industries, Cockshutt Plow Company and Massey-Harris Plant and has extreme soil pollution.

Funding for the City's portion of what will be a \$200 million dollar project comes from a \$12 million dollar Federal grant, a \$5 million dollar Provincial grant, and a FCM green fund loan of \$14 million the City is currently applying for.

Last May, **Terrasan** successfully responded to an RFP by the City with a redevelopment concept that proposes a combination of townhouses, loft units and garden

apartments on the 51 acre site. The **Canadian Military Heritage Museum** currently on the site will be given a new home in a custom built facility within a “museum district” plaza. Neighbouring Eagle Place residents will also be able to share 16 acres of proposed green space, as well as some small neighbourhood commercial facilities.

At public meetings in May, the proposal received positive response from City residents.

Currently, Brantford is negotiating a development agreement with Terrasan to finalize the City’s partnership with them in this major Brownfield development.

This project will not be completed overnight; in fact it is estimated that the clean up of the soil will take four years with ten years needed to complete the proposal.

We are however, finally moving forward to clean up two of the most polluted sections of the city after decades of neglect.

## **Relationships with Six Nations:**

Certainly our greatest challenge over the past two years has been our relationships with our neighbours in Six Nations. The issues are land claims and aboriginal rights, neither of which the City has any authority to deal with. Caught between the laws of the province, our limited authority and the demands of protesters, this has, to put it mildly, been a difficult period.

Currently, Brantford's Aboriginal Task Force Committee composed of the Mayor, Councillors Bradford and Carpenter is having regular meetings with members of the Six Nations Elected Council on a wide range of issues. From our talks thus far we seem to have found many areas of common interest, and I believe recognized that we will be much more able to influence other levels of government if we do it together.

One should not think that there will be immediate solutions to all outstanding issues; the important thing is that we have started.

In an effort to improve communication, Mayor Eddy, Chief Montour, MPP Dave Levac, MP Phil McColeman and myself, have all agreed to restart the Brant Riding Intergovernmental Committee, or BRIC. This committee was designed to allow informal discussion between all of the elected heads and has proven in the past to be very useful in dealing with issues affecting us all.

I would also commend Mayor Ron and his Council for the Green Initiative with Chief Montour. Brantford will be watching closely to see how the agreement will work and if it has an application for our City.

Anything that allows us to work together is a positive move.

My sense today is that there are opportunities to build better relationships and work together, and the good news is that I think that most parties can see the value of taking advantage of them.

### **Control Tax Increases:**

**By almost any standard, I believe this Council has done a good job of holding the line on tax increases over the past three years. After assessment growth was factored in, the 06/07 budget rose less than 1%, 07/08 was a minus 2.2% and 08/09 rose just 1.69%.**

For 2009/10, Council has given staff a direction to bring in a budget with no increase. I have to say that we are all finding this goal to be quite a challenge; our assessment growth is down and our costs continue to rise. The Finance Committee, Chaired by **Councillor Rick Carpenter** is taking a hard look at all discretionary spending and where cuts can be made. While a necessary task, from my experience, it is almost impossible to ever get public agreement on what services can be cut.

The hard fact is that over 50% of the City's budget is made up of Police, Fire, Ambulance and Social Services and we have limited budget control over these areas.

In spite of the much talked about **up-loading** of social service costs by the Province, this will not benefit Brantford until we have reduced our Ontario Municipal Partnership Funds (OMPF) transfer payment to zero. What was expected is that the Province would reduce our OMPF grant by the amount of the uploading for a zero impact. However, it now appears that the Province for 2010 will take nearly \$2 million dollars more than the upload. If this decision is not amended it could mean a 2% tax increase all by itself.

Currently, our MPP Dave Levac is working with Council to have his government reconsider this decision, and I would like to thank him for his support on this and many other issues.

The budget is still being developed and will come under close scrutiny this fall with the actual budget deliberations starting in January 2011. The pencils get even sharper when it is an election year.

## **Infrastructure Renewal:**

We have known for some time that Brantford, like most cities today, has a huge shortfall in the money needed to maintain our infrastructure, something in the area of a quarter billion dollars over the next ten years. However, thanks to our Federal and Provincial governments, and recent infrastructure funding we have been able to start on a number of projects much earlier than anticipated.

These include:

- 3 million dollar Civic Centre renewal project
- Nearly 48 million dollar Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre – includes aquatics and four pad
- \$391,435 Brantford Farmers' Market upgrade
- \$700,000 for Brantford Municipal Airport to construct a new hangar. This is particularly important for the Airport as it could mean financial self-sufficiency.
- \$4.6 million to renovate and retrofit affordable housing.

While this is all good news, the Governments Economic Action Plan has resulted in a challenge for many municipalities including Brantford to fund our part without taking into account all of our other capital needs. In short, we can't do it all and have to be careful about looking after our priorities.

So in spite of the welcome infusion of infrastructure money, we are still a long way from meeting all of our long-term capital requirements.

Infrastructure renewal will have to remain a priority of future Councils.

## **Other Priorities**

- **Museum Sustainability**

In December 2007, City Council approved the Museum Sustainability Plan for the community. There are eight main components in the plan of which 12 key strategic actions have been implemented since the plan was approved.

One of the main recommendations in the plan is the development of funding programs for the museum community. The City of Brantford made a successful application to artsVest program (Business for the Arts, Ministry of Culture) in October 2009. This makes \$50,000 of matching challenge funds available to the Arts and Heritage sector in our City.

- **Economic Development Strategy**

The City of Brantford is committed to undertaking its first ever comprehensive economic development strategy that will consider all facets of economic development with the goal of developing long-term economic prosperity. The strategy will provide overall direction, which will allow staff to prepare year-to-year work plans.

The project is to be completed in June 2010.

### **Investment in Brantford**

In spite of the current economic downturn, in 2009 the Economic Development and Tourism Department welcomed seven new industrial firms to the community. These companies represent a diverse cross section of activities including manufacturing, processing distribution, sales and servicing. Between them, 136,500 square feet of space was leased in the community and 54 new jobs have been created.

Commercial investment in the City continued on a robust pace in 2009, with 132,977 square feet of new space constructed in the community, creating 116 new jobs and retaining 47.

- **Crime and Drug Agenda**

The **Community Safety and Crime Prevention Task Force** initiated and currently chaired by Councillor John Bradford was started in early 2009 with a mandate to investigate multi-jurisdictional crime – including drugs. This partnership of Council, the Police from Brantford, Hamilton, Halton, and Niagara and a broad cross section of the community has proven to be a valuable crime-fighting tool for Brantford.

With its mission statement to make Brantford an inclusive City where everyone works together to create a safer, healthier and more supportive community to live, learn, work and play it is focusing its efforts on:

- Transient criminals from the GTA and surrounding areas
- Monitoring the downtown core and
- Educating community partners

The task force has provided the leadership to foster teamwork and partnerships among individuals, neighbourhoods, organizations, service agencies and government that will increase community safety.

I would like to congratulate Councillor Bradford and his committee members for this much needed initiative.

- **Waterfront Master Plan**

One of the most anxiously awaited studies in Brantford's recent history is the completion of a Waterfront Master Plan. A Council task force was formed chaired by Councillor Marguerite Ceschi-Smith and includes Vice Chair Councillor Jennifer Kinneman, Councillors John Sless, Dan McCreary and Richard Carpenter.

Staff advisors include General Manager of Community Development, Ted Salisbury, General Manager Engineering and Parks and Recreation, Sandra Lawson.

Study objectives are:

- Develop a Waterfront Vision Statement that articulates the City's vision for the lands within the Study area;
- Develop and recommend a comprehensive Waterfront Master Plan, including an Official Plan policy;
- Develop and recommend an implementation strategy for the plan along with a prioritization list, a timeline and a cost estimate.

The anticipated completion date is June 2010.

## **Physician Recruitment Task Force**

In the 2009 budget, the City of Brantford committed \$110,000 towards the Physician Recruitment with the goal of finding five new family doctors this year.

Our representative on the team, Councillor John Bradford reports that we have not only met our goal of five new family doctors but recruited eight medical specialists as well – one Dentist, five Emergency Physicians and two internists.

## **Conclusion:**

As we come to the end of the third year of our term of office, this Council has made significant progress on most of the priorities we identified at the beginning of our term. There is no argument that there is still much to do and for this Council just ten months to work on our agenda.

So while we are going through a somewhat challenging time right now I remain very optimistic about our future. We have the location, the community, the skills, the attitude, in short the right stuff to make Brantford as **Walter Gretzky said, truly the “centre of the universe”**.

To my colleagues on Council, a sincere thanks for your advice and support over the past three years, considering what we have achieved, every one of us should be proud of their accomplishments during this Council.

We have managed to remain focused on our priorities and in spite of a few challenges along the way, achieved nearly all of our objectives.

The Mayor’s Address next year will be to a new Council, and I am confident that this Council will pass on the torch brightly lit; we will indeed leave them “something to build on”.

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In closing, I would like to take a moment to thank some people. All of the staff that prepared and decorated City Hall for tonight's Address. It really helps to get into that Christmas spirit.

Thanks as well to Greg Dworak, Manager of Policy and Procedures, for his help in putting my notes together for tonight's Address.

My thanks to Shirley Gates, Executive Assistant to the City Manager and Carol Demeer, our Administrative Assistant for all their help over the past years.

A special thanks to my Executive Assistant Josie Mannen who runs the Mayor's office better than anyone ever could. For the past six years, Josie has been my right arm and often my left, her dedication and hard work has always been beyond anything I could ever ask.

I would like to wish everyone in Brantford a Merry Christmas, a joyous Holiday Season and a Happy, Healthy and prosperous New Year.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Mayor's Levee January 1<sup>st</sup>.