

Hi folks:

Welcome to 2009! This Bay Ward e-Newsletter will cover such items as the 2009 City Budget, the status of the Interprovincial River Crossings EA Study (*still here!*), the ATU bus strike, and the issues we can expect in Bay Ward for 2009 (*see attached*).

As our last Bay Ward Community Council meeting in December was cancelled due to conflicts with the City 2009 Budget process, we can expect a busier meeting at our Wednesday **January 7 Bay Ward Community Council meeting** (7:30 pm at the Ron Kolbus-Lakeside Centre in Britannia` Park) - more about that below!

And yes, it's true - I did start the New Year with a *refreshing* dip in the Ottawa River at Britannia Beach on January 1, 2009 (air temp -14, wind chill -20!). The water was g-r-r-e-a-t ! My thanks to Speedo Steve and the PC Children's Charity for organizing this first Polar Bear Dip at Britannia Beach.

2009 City Budget:

Earlier in December City Council approved the 2009 operating and capital budgets for the City of Ottawa, following weeks of public consultations. The \$2 billion operating budget covers a range of City services from road maintenance to public transit to social services, libraries and police. The capital budget (at \$306 million) will fund infrastructure projects for existing roads, sewers and facilities as well as accommodate new growth.

The 2009 budget was initially tabled in early November and proposed a 4.9% tax increase to accommodate the cost of inflation on goods and services the City buys to deliver services (i.e. asphalt, road salt, etc.), the increased costs of policing, and investing in maintaining our aging infrastructure. This was accompanied by \$24 million in management efficiencies and \$35 million in program cuts in order to balance the budget. The proposed cuts included cuts to public transit, child care, arts & heritage, and to recreational programs such as outdoor rinks.

During November members of City Council conducted public consultations on the proposed budget (*in Bay Ward this was on November 18 at the Ron Kolbus-Lakeside Centre - 125 people attended*) and in early December Council heard public delegations at City Hall. It became clear during these consultations that the majority of the public were not willing to accept many of these program cuts. As a result a majority on City Council found a way to avoid these program cuts and bring in a balanced budget with modest increases in user fees and a 4.9% tax increase that did meet our goals of accommodating inflation, supporting our police, and investing more into our aging infrastructure. A 4.9% tax increase will cost \$130 on the average home assessed at \$279,000.

Interprovincial River Crossings Study EA:

The saga of the NCC Interprovincial River Crossings EA Study is moving to its next phase, which is to examine placing a new interprovincial bridge from Ottawa to Gatineau in the east end, by Kettle Island. At least, this is what the EA Study Consultants are recommending. Currently the Consultants recommendations are being reviewed by both the NCC, the Ontario and Quebec Provincial Governments, the City of Gatineau, and the City of Ottawa. For the City of Ottawa, Transportation Committee will be reviewing these recommendations at a special meeting on Monday January 12 (at 10 a.m.) at Ottawa City Hall.

What is important for Bay Ward residents is the Consultants recommendation not to proceed with the identification of a river crossing in the west end for the foreseeable future. You will recall that 4 west end candidate crossing locations were initially proposed in this Study - 2 crossing Lac Deschenes (one to Holly Acres Road (*through Andrew Haydon Park!*), the other to Moodie Drive), and 2 crossing the Ottawa River to Riddell Drive/March Road. While the Consultants recommendations regarding deferring possible river crossings in the west end were welcomed by communities in Bay Ward, the final decision has yet to be taken by the NCC and its study partners. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that, as far as the west end is concerned, Ottawa City Council endorses these recommendations.

ATU Bus Strike:

At the time of writing OC Transpo bus drivers (represented by ATU 279) are on a legal strike, following months of contract negotiations that started last spring. This, understandably, has created hardship for many in our community. While 4 issues have emerged - wages, sick days, contracting-out and work scheduling - the sticking point appears to be over work scheduling, where drivers, based on seniority, can choose their routes and work schedules. OC Transpo (backed by City Council) is seeking to better control the costs related to work scheduling, particularly overtime - a costly item for taxpayers who pay for half of this public service - while the union prefers the status quo. The City, in my view, has made a fair offer to the union representing the bus drivers and has asked the Federal Minister of Labour (the Hon. Rona Ambrose) to order a supervised vote by the union members on the City's offer. This is expected to be taken by January 9. I am hopeful that a majority of union members will find the City's offer fair and vote to end this strike.

Bay Ward 2009 Calendar of Community Issues:

Attached you will find the Bay Ward 2009 Calendar of Community Issues, covering both Bay Ward local issues we expect to deal with in 2009, plus initiatives being undertaken by my office, plus City initiatives we will need to deal with in 2009, plus other issues (like another federal election?). Am I missing

something? Let me know! Come out to our January 7 Bay Ward Community Council meeting (7:30 pm at the Ron Kolbus-Lakeside Centre) to discuss this, or send me an e-mail at alex.cullen@ottawa.ca or call me at 613 580-2477.

Alex Cullen

Councillor, Bay Ward

City of Ottawa

110 Laurier Ave. W.

Ottawa K1P 1J1

(613) 580-2477 fax: (613) 580-2517

e-mail: alex.cullen@ottawa.ca

www.alexcullen.ca