

ARTICLE – Midtown Crier – June 2007

Councillor Michael Walker

## **NEW TAXES TO PICK OUR POCKETS**

At a time when the Mayor and City Council is spending on bad policy and extravagances like renovations to the Mayor's office, City Hall and its public square, as well as expensive irrigated flower arrangements in our boulevards, new taxing powers are being contemplated to keep this spree afloat. Additional taxes to be collected by the City are proposed for Land Transfer (home-buying tax on top of the Provincial home-buying tax), vehicle registration, alcohol, cigarettes, entertainment tickets, parking, road-use ('road-tolls'), and billboards. The only tax in that list that may be palatable to residents of St. Paul's is the tax on billboards that create sight-pollution – all the other new taxes further erode our quality of life by significantly increasing our cost of living at a time when our cost of living is increasing constantly by so many other forces.

I held a wardwide public meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup> to consult with you on these new taxes the Mayor is proposing. Residents filled Elliot Hall to capacity at Christ Church Deer Park to ask questions and convey their views to the City's Chief Financial Officer, the City's Director of the Finance and me. I listened to rebuke after rebuke of these new taxes – not one resident nor business person spoke in favour. Many feel that City Council is not managing taxpayer money efficiently, effectively, nor responsibly. I agree, especially with irresponsible deals such as last year's sole-sourced purchase of new subway cars for the TTC (we could have saved \$100 million plus) or the \$160 million City Council just approved to subsidize a business staying in Toronto, to name two.

I will vote No to these proposed new taxes as I did for the issues noted above. I appreciate the time residents took to voice their opinions at the public meeting and by also corresponding with my office on this important issue.

### **Robertson Davies Park Dedication:**

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the Avenue Road Playground (Avenue Road, just north of Dupont Street) was renamed "Robertson Davies Park" in recognition of the giant of a Canadian literature, Robertson Davies (author: Fifth Business, etc.). On a warm, sunny afternoon, the event was well attended and we had the honour of meeting Mrs. Davies who spoke with eloquence and grace. This park will now serve in remembrance of a great role-model for our children and an influential contributor to our society.

I continue to push the issue of Property Tax Reform so that we can be free of Current Value Assessment and MPAC's maladministration. We need to implement a more equitable, predictive and stable system to collect property taxes. As shown by their disinterest and aversion, the Mayor does not see this reform as a priority and neither does Premier Dalton McGuinty.

With the Provincial election coming this fall, St. Paul's residents should question the candidates on Property Tax Reform including capping assessment, abolition of the Ontario Municipal Board; Election Campaign Finance Reform; and real Rent Control legislation.

I hope you have a good summer and please feel free to contact my office at *councillor\_walker@toronto.ca*, 416-392-7906, or [www.michaelwalker.ca](http://www.michaelwalker.ca).

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