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**BROCK MAYOR**  
*Mayor Walter Schummer*

The Township of Brock is at a key moment of history with ambitious development plans in face of lower funding from development charges, fleet and equipment maintenance expenses and rising costs due to inflation and high interest rates.

We now have the Waterfront Plan and the Recreation Master Plan. There's a lot of items, there's a lot of budget implications. This year and definitely next year we're going to have to actually make some decisions on these plans - on what we want to move forward with because there is only so much money going around.

The Recreation Master Plan has some degree of costing in it. Nothing's been costed in the Waterfront Plan. Some of the work that will be done this year is to start costing these things out. The priority is determining what would we like to do and what can we afford to do.

If something is going to cost a million dollars to complete it's going to take some time to save that money up or receive the development charges that could fund it, the mayor added.

He pointed out that last year was the start of his first term which focused on getting information and public input. This year, the township plans to cost out the project and find sources of funding.

There are some issues with the Waterfront Plan, especially the harbor, which the township doesn't even own. It's a federal property. They have discussed on and off about divestiture with us, but that would have to start up again."

Also, a lot of the parts of the Waterfront Plan for the downtown area are on private property. So there are aspects to those that have to be worked out. The boat houses are another issue because the township has to decide what to do with them.

Grants and funding are great, but you can't count on them. All you can do is make sure you're kind of shovel ready. But that takes money too. Even if a grant opportunity does arise - whether it's federal and/or provincial, you've got to spend money to be at least somewhat ready to put the shovel in the ground.

Building the funds from now on is going to be a big discussion this year – balancing affordability with collecting the money. With all the new projects, the Recreation Master Plan and the Waterfront Plan, we've got big demands on us in the coming years.

There was "quite the discussion in council about having to start planning and funding reserves so that the township can start making these purchases down the road just to replace equipment.

There is a degree of frustration in the community. But people have to understand there's a process involved with procurement and getting that design and everything done and getting it to the point where we can afford what's going to be done.

On the 2024 budget, the mayor said the council wanted to keep [the tax increase of 3.97 per cent] under 4 per cent.

We had an eye on inflation, and knowing that the region is probably going to be coming in at around 7 per cent, you could be looking at an overall tax increase in the township of maybe around 5 per cent. Water rates went up over 7 per cent, everything is going up. There's the appetite to put some money away into reserves, but at the same, we're time trying to balance out the affordability issue.

The province is certainly not helping with development charges (Bill 23). "The region is getting massively hit with decreases to development charges. It's going to come out of the taxes for the most part. Yeah, we're gonna be hit. The province isn't doing anybody any favors with some of the legislation they pass.

Brock was seeing a nice little burst of growth even after the pandemic, but then interest rates started creeping up and the township has seen a definite slowing down of those permits.

If the building permits don't get issued that money doesn't come.



**Lisa Robinson**  
PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

**EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW**

**By Lisa Robinson - Pickering City Councillor**

As I've said 100 times before we should not be segregating or discriminating against any member of the public because of the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, or their sexual preferences. This is a crucial statement that should also apply when dealing with offenders who have broken the law.

Instead, it has become evident that in many cases, the law has demonstrated leniency and has been influenced by such factors when dealing with certain individuals. Numerous special interest groups raise concerns and

claim unfair targeting when a member of their group is charged with a crime, or it simply goes unnoticed by the authorities. While I do agree that such situations do occur occasionally, it is important to note that they are more of an exception rather than the rule. This disparity in treatment has resulted in a lack of equality under the law for certain individuals even though Section 15 in The Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada specifically addresses equality rights. It states: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability."

In my humble opinion, to ensure this principle of equality under section 15 is effectively upheld, all police officers and individuals within the judicial system must be committed to its reinforcement. A crime is a crime regardless of one's racial ethnic background or sexuality and I believe it is crucial to treat all individuals equally under the law.

As politicians representing all levels of government, Municipal, Provincial, and Federal, it is our primary responsibility as community leaders to ensure the safety and well-being of the people. It is imperative that Municipalities in partnership with the police establish a comprehensive data collection system that captures relevant information about criminal behaviour, including demographics, recurring patterns, and modus operandi (method of operation – M.O.) and make it accessible to the public so they are aware of what is happening in their neighbourhood's. This can better prepare citizens by increasing their awareness and understanding of how they can be more vigilant and proactive, able to recognize the warning signs in reporting suspicious activities to the authorities.

Pickering is becoming a cesspool for crime, and I believe it's time that we as leaders in the community initiate a formal review examining potential patterns and implement targeted strategies to protect our community from the devastating impacts due to crimes. Pickering has seen an influx not only in white collar crimes (non-violent offenses), but in juvenile crimes, organized crimes, drug crimes, property crimes, and violent crimes. We have homicides, shootings, attempted murders, violent gun crimes, car thefts, break and enters, robbery, gangs, drug trafficking, and human trafficking and it's time that we develop an action plan and awareness plan that will put an end to this.

Now is also a good time to ask our governments to review our current bail reform and mandatory sentences, so we can restore faith in our justice system as this "catch and release" so to speak program is clearly not working.

It is essential to implement or reinstate stricter laws that not only will act as a deterrent to potential offenders, but it will also help ensure that those who have committed multiple offenses face appropriate consequences for their actions.

Our current program allows many offenders to be released back into the community the same day they were arrested, without adequate consequences. Without consequences, some of the individuals who are released continue to engage in criminal behaviour, including an escalation to more serious and violent crimes. This process potentially undermines the principles of justice and fails to provide any kind of deterrent for many, leaving our communities vulnerable to further violence that could have easily been avoided.

I humbly ask elected officials at all levels of government, to join in demanding that offenders be treated equally under the law regardless of their skin colour, religious beliefs or sexual preferences. To review the current bail reforms and mandatory sentences, and that all Municipalities in partnership with the police establish a user-friendly comprehensive data collection system that captures relevant information about criminal behaviour, including demographics, recurring patterns, and modus operandi. And lastly, to make this information accessible to the public every month so that not only the people of Pickering are aware of what's happening in their neighbourhoods, but people throughout Durham and the GTA as well.

I truly believe that better communication and awareness between law enforcement, municipalities, and the public, will lead to faster response times, increased apprehension of offenders, and ultimately, create safer communities for everyone.

**"Strength Does Not Lie In The Absence Of Fear, But In The Courage To Face It Head-On And Rise Above It"**



**Empowering Workers and Navigating Legal Changes**

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Empowering Workers and Navigating Legal Changes:  
What Ontario Employers Need to Know

In the ever-evolving landscape of employment law, Ontario businesses find themselves at a crossroads. The recent passage of the Working for Workers Four Act, 2023 signals a seismic shift in workplace regulations around recruitment and selection strategies. Employers, buckle up – it's time to adapt or face the consequences.

**The Key Changes**

AI Transparency: Employers must now disclose the use of artificial intelligence (AI) during hiring processes. No more hidden algorithms – candidates deserve transparency.

Salary Ranges: Job postings must include expected salary or wage ranges. It's a small step toward pay equity, but a giant leap for workplace fairness.

Canadian Experience Myth: Ontario becomes the first province to ban Canadian work experience requirements in job postings. Let qualifications speak louder than passports.

No More Unpaid Trials: Service and restaurant workers rejoice! Unpaid trial shifts are history. If you test skills, you pay for them.

NDA's Under Scrutiny: Consultations loom on restricting non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in workplace sexual harassment cases. Employers, tread carefully.

**What Lies Ahead**

These changes aren't isolated incidents; they're harbingers of a new era. Here's why:

AI Accountability: AI bias is real. Employers must now grapple with transparency and liability. Discrimination? Prepare to answer.

Pay Equity: Public salary ranges hint at a fairer future. Compensation secrets are out – skeletons, meet daylight.

**Takeaways for Employers**

Embrace Transparency: Be forthright about AI use and salary expectations. Trust builds stronger teams.

Update Policies: Review your practices. Banish unpaid trials and understand NDAs' risks.

Stay Informed: The legal landscape shifts – stay ahead. Seek counsel when needed.

Employers, the winds of change blow fiercely. Adapt wisely, and your workforce will thrive. Ignore them, and you'll find yourself in a legal storm. The choice is yours.