



Feature

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DEAN HICKEY

### OSHAWA COUNCIL RETURNS FROM ITS SUMMER RECESS

**\*\* WHAT ARE THE ISSUES THAT LAY AHEAD? \*\***

THOSE WHO PUT TOGETHER THE WORDS in a speech, an online editorial, or a newspaper column such as this one, bear the responsibility for the message they deliver. From their construction, style, and general tone – including the platitudes which they contain or the good sense that may arise from their remarks, one cannot but be convinced that a certain element of control is exercised.

Last week, Whitby Mayor Liz Roy penned an online piece which appears to have been manifestly arranged to send a clear message to her Council colleagues – that any further attention seeking tactics on the part of some will not be tolerated. It's a bold move to make in such a public forum, even more so with the start of what Mayor Roy calls the "silly season" in municipal politics. That's the time between now and the start of the candidate registration process in May of next year, which undoubtedly seems a long way off to most of us – but not for those seeking re-election or a chance to throw their hat into the ring for the first time. That process ends in the third week of July, whereupon the focus of elected officials will almost certainly shift away from the work of governing and towards the election that will take place in October.

All of that makes for a rather interesting backdrop to a discussion I had recently with Oshawa's John Gray, currently the local councillor for Ward 5. I reached out to John in an effort to discuss the autumn sitting of Council and what we may expect as to the issues and events likely to come forward.

I began by asking John as to his thoughts on Mayor Roy's support for the provincial government's reintroduction of the Municipal Accountability Act, a bill that would give Integrity Commissioners the authority to recommend the removal of a member of Council in serious cases. We agreed that caution is the order of the day, and that such an option should never be used as a weapon to silence dissent. As to how this affects the current makeup of Oshawa Council, John was optimistic, "The scenes that have played out in other municipalities, those that ultimately led to the proposed legislation, are thankfully not part of the atmosphere we now have at Oshawa City Hall." He went on to suggest the current council is "quite cohesive, although we do have our frustrating moments."

John describes a mutual understanding among his colleagues, to avoid letting disputes of any kind "blow up on the Council floor" and he doesn't see that changing as the final year of this term draws near.

Our conversation reminded me of the efforts made by Ward 4 councillor Derek Giberson during the debate over a new Bylaw which added restrictions to social services agencies wanting to locate with the city limits. A certain degree of online disputes did occur between councillors on social media, resulting in accusations of 'irresponsible' rumours having been circulated, however several delegations were able to attend the meeting and councillors from all wards had their say – without the type of 'explosion on the Council floor' one might expect.

Readers may recall a previous column in which I detailed the new By-law which mandates an 800-metre separation between existing and any new social services 'outlets' throughout the city. John informed me that a Notice of Appeal has been filed by interested parties in July, and that the matter will proceed to a Tribunal hearing at a date as yet undetermined. That is certainly an issue worth watching for in the year ahead.

Among the list of items to keep an eye on are several new developments that have been proposed or are already approved for properties in the area in and around the downtown. One such is the Medallion Developments Inc. proposal for new high-density residential at the long-vacant Fittings land off Bruce Street. That item will soon be going before the Economic & Development Services Committee – of which John Gray is a member – to acknowledge that any financial assistance will be transferred by the City to the developer only during certain construction stages. This is hopefully an indicator that the project will soon get under way.

As to the many residential proposals referenced in the City's Development Insider Report, John is quick to remind me that the number of sales of new homes within the GTA in July totaled only 357, a downturn that will undoubtedly affect the start-date of many projects, not just in Oshawa but throughout Durham Region and the province. However, as always, there was a sense of optimism in the Ward 5 councillor's comments, "Regardless of the short term economy, the good news is Oshawa is set for an explosion in development with so many approvals now in place, and at some point soon residents will see construction cranes everywhere in this city."

On that point we agree, however, as this columnist sees it, residents of Oshawa will have to be patient with unfortunate delays on projects such as the redevelopment of the post office building, which has been a highly anticipated form of downtown rejuvenation. There will also be one or two projects that will never see the light of day – at least in my time, one of them being the proposed high-rise condo development for 80 Harbour Road. The only thing that will be standing on that site in five years' time are the series of worn out billboards that are now being slowly covered with graffiti.

Leaving construction and development aside, I asked John to update me on the efforts being made to improve the situation for residents in the Simcoe & Mill Sts. neighbourhood, which many readers may recall has been the subject of media reports on issues of crime and violent behaviour. "As to the efforts being made by the police, I am definitely pleased to be working with James Lamothe, the superintendent for the Central East Division. James is a proactive kind of cop who wants to turn the corner on local policing in these types of neighbourhoods – as we saw with his bike patrol initiative, but there are limits to what he and his colleagues can do when it comes to the courts."

On a final note – at least for now – residents and taxpayers will want to keep up-to-date on the upcoming municipal budget deliberations. The last go-around resulted in a tax increase of just under 8 per cent, and Mayor Dan Carter has so far shown no willingness to relinquish his Strong Mayor Powers that have given him the ability to exercise almost total control over the budget, rendering the rest of council as secondary participants.

There is so much more on the horizon, including the many problems and opportunities downtown, the proposed gondola transportation corridor, and the trials and tribulations of the councillors themselves.

Fun times ahead.

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Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

### 16% - What Starts in City Hall Shapes the Nation Migration and the Disappearing 16%

By Councillor Lisa Robinson

There is one number that should stop people in their tracks: sixteen percent. That's the share of the world's population that is white. Sixteen percent. And yet, it is this small fraction of humanity that is constantly told to open its borders, erase its culture, and diversify to the point of disappearance.

Nowhere is this pressure more visible than in Canada. Our population grew by more than 744,000 people in 2024 alone, almost entirely from immigration. While Canada has always benefited from responsible, legal migration, mass inflows at record levels are straining housing, hospitals, and classrooms. Meanwhile, ordinary Canadians are struggling just to pay for groceries.

The answer from our political class? Bring in more people — often without proper controls or limits. There must be a zero-tolerance approach to illegal immigration, while ensuring that legal, responsible migration continues in a way that works for Canadians.

The moment anyone dares to raise concerns — to suggest that perhaps we should care for our own citizens first — they are shouted down, silenced, or branded with labels meant to end debate before it begins. But here's the uncomfortable truth: no one else plays by these rules. You cannot move to the Middle East, Africa, or Asia and demand that the culture, religion, and traditions of those countries change to accommodate you. Those societies defend their identity and their people. Only in the West are we expected to apologize for our existence.

I've seen this erasure play out firsthand in Pickering, where I serve as a city councillor. For years, certain voices have pushed to remove Christmas trees from community spaces — first in our recreation centre, then in the main lobby of City Hall. It may seem small, but these decisions are part of a larger pattern: traditions quietly pushed aside, culture chipped away piece by piece, all in the name of "diversity and inclusion." In reality, it's the deliberate sidelining of Canadian identity at the local level encompassing DEI into every decision we make.

This isn't just about economics or social services — though those pressures are real. It is about survival. Sixteen percent of the global population is not an endless supply. Once erased, it cannot be rebuilt. If Western nations fail to defend their culture, their people, and their future, then that sixteen percent will continue to shrink, and with it will vanish the freedoms, institutions, and way of life that generations sacrificed to build.

This conversation is not about hate; it is about truth. It is about fairness. Every people on earth has the right to protect their culture and existence. Western nations should be no different. Canadians deserve leadership that prioritizes Canadians, that defends our heritage, and that ensures our children inherit a country they recognize.

What starts in City Hall — decisions about traditions, culture, and inclusion — ends up shaping the nation. If we allow our identity to be quietly chipped away at the local level, there is no reason to think the rest of Canada will be spared. It is time for Canadians to recognize the stakes and act accordingly.

"Strength Does Not Lie In The Absence Of Fear, But In The Courage To Face It Head On And Rise Above It" - Lisa Robinson 2023



Avoiding Common Financial Mistakes in Retirement

By Bruno M. Scanga

Deposit Broker, Insurance & Investment Advisor

Retirement is a milestone many eagerly anticipate – a time to relax and enjoy the fruits of years of labor. However, for some, this dream can turn into a financial nightmare due to poor money management. While every retiree's situation is unique, several common mistakes can derail even the most carefully laid plans. Avoiding these pitfalls is crucial for a secure and comfortable retirement.

**One of the biggest errors is underestimating longevity.**

People are living longer than ever, and a retirement that initially seems well-funded can be stretched thin over 30 or more years. Outliving retirement savings, force difficult choices and the potential of relying on limited government benefits. A sound retirement plan should project expenses over a potentially long lifespan, factoring in inflation and unexpected healthcare costs.

**Another frequent misstep is overspending in the early years.**

The initial excitement of retirement can lead to a surge in spending. Travel, hobbies, and home renovations are tempting ways to enjoy newfound freedom. However, this "go-go" phase can deplete savings quickly, leaving insufficient funds for later years when health issues or other unexpected expenses arise. A balanced approach is key, allowing for enjoyment while maintaining a sustainable budget throughout retirement.

**Ignoring inflation is another critical oversight.**

The cost of living steadily increases over time, meaning that the purchasing power of your savings decreases. What seems like a comfortable nest egg today might not cover essential expenses a decade or two down the line. Retirement plans should incorporate realistic inflation projections and adjust spending accordingly to maintain a desired standard of living.

**Failing to diversify investments is a risky strategy.**

Putting all your eggs in one basket, whether it's a single stock or a concentrated real estate holding, can expose you to significant losses. A diversified portfolio across different asset classes, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate, helps mitigate risk and provides a more stable return over the long term. Regularly reviewing and rebalancing your portfolio is essential to ensure it aligns with your risk tolerance and retirement goals.

**Not planning for healthcare costs is a major oversight.**

Healthcare expenses tend to increase significantly in retirement, particularly as people age. Unexpected medical bills, long-term care needs, and rising insurance premiums can put a significant strain on retirement finances. It's crucial to research health insurance options, estimate potential healthcare costs, and explore long-term care insurance possibilities to protect your savings.

**Finally, procrastination is a common enemy of sound retirement planning.**

Putting off saving and investing until later in life makes it significantly harder to accumulate sufficient funds. The power of compounding, where investment earnings generate further earnings over time, is most effective when started early. The sooner you begin planning and saving for retirement, the more time your money has to grow.

Retirement should be a time of relaxation and enjoyment, not financial stress. By avoiding these common mistakes, retirees can significantly improve their financial security and enjoy a comfortable and fulfilling retirement. Seeking professional financial advice can also be invaluable in creating a personalized retirement plan that addresses individual needs and goals.