

## Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

### Durham Families Are Being Pushed to the point of no return— and Council Knows It

By Councillor Lisa Robinson

Durham Region residents are facing yet another property tax increase — and once again, families are being treated as an unlimited source of revenue rather than people already at their breaking point.

The Region's original proposal was a 6.04% property tax increase. That hike comes on top of everything households are already paying: municipal taxes, education, utilities, insurance, fuel, clothing, groceries — all during a cost-of-living crisis and at a time when interest rates remain painfully high. Mortgages are doubling on renewal. Rent is soaring. People are running out of room to absorb “just one more increase.”

On December 11, I addressed Regional Council directly during a delegation to Committee of the Whole. My message was simple and urgent: people cannot afford this. A 6% hike is not a rounding error — it is the difference between stability and financial distress for many families. For some, it would push them past the point of no return.

Those who follow my record know I have been consistent. I have voted against non-urgent projects, against excessive consultant spending, and against unnecessary expansions at a time when residents are drowning. A clear example is the Seaton project, currently estimated at \$266 million, but projected to cost closer to \$300 million by the time construction begins. Pickering residents alone are staring down an additional 11.71% tax increase from this project within the next 380 days.

These are not abstract numbers. These are real financial blows landing on households already under strain.

Following my delegation, Committee of the Whole debated a motion to reduce the increase to 3%, using reserve funds to bridge the difference. That motion passed. It was a responsible compromise that recognized both fiscal pressures and economic reality.

But then, on December 17, everything changed.

Just as Council was set to ratify that 3% increase, Mayor Kevin Ashe introduced a new motion raising the increase to 4.8% — and it passed. The 3% option was effectively erased.

During that same meeting, the Mayor went further, publicly dismissing councillors who supported the lower increase by calling it a “get-me-elected budget.” That comment matters, because it reveals a mindset: protecting residents from financial harm is being framed as political opportunism, rather than responsible governance.

Now, staff have been directed to return in January with a report assessing whether a 4.8% increase is feasible — or whether Council should revert back to the original 6.04% increase or higher, based on the budget they are reviewing.

Let me be absolutely clear: nothing is final.

The January meeting could result in property taxes climbing right back toward 6% or more, depending on staff recommendations and Council’s vote. Residents should not be lulled into thinking this fight is over. It is not.

This is the moment to pay attention.

Decisions made in January will affect every homeowner, renter, and family in Durham Region. Once those votes are cast, the damage is done. I urge residents to contact their regional councillors and mayors now. Make your voices heard before this budget is locked in. Demand accountability. Demand restraint. Demand that Council recognize that people are already stretched to their limits.

Budgets are moral documents. They reveal priorities. Durham families deserve a Council that understands the real-world consequences of its decisions — before more people are pushed past the point of no return.



## Kindness at Christmas Time


A Candid Conversation  
By Theresa Grant  
Real Estate Columnist

We have wonderful organizations around us all year long that require the help and donations of everyday people to keep their doors open and to keep serving the public that need them.

We all know the big ones like the Salvation Army and the Red Cross and of the Daily bread food bank, but there are several smaller ones that help locals on a regular basis. As I go along, I learn more and more about different and new ones right here in Oshawa.

Oshawa has many people that need help but there are also several places to receive the help needed. I was dismayed to hear a story on the news just this week that only 30 per cent of Ontarians plan to donate something this year to the food banks. That’s very sad when we think about how much food waste is reported every year. For as many people in our fair city that need help, there are many more that do not, they are the ones that are able to provide some assistance. There are many different ways to help and if you’d like to actually get involved with sorting and boxing food, serving up Christmas dinner, handing out care packages, those opportunities are there as well.

I hope that at this time of year anyone in a position to help others will look up these organizations and see how they can help. It really makes your heart happy to know that as you celebrate Christmas with your loved ones, that you have done a little something to make someone else’s Christmas a little brighter. I hope all of our readers enjoy a Merry Christmas and the very best of 2026! Please remember, a little kindness goes a long way.



## THE X Files

By John Mutton

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

# Karmageddon

By Mr. ‘X’ ~ John Mutton  
CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

As I write my column from my second home in Croatia, it is impossible not to see the horrible events happening across the world.

The total landscape change in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada proves the age-old theory that if you “import the Third World, you become the Third World.”

Christian values have been established for centuries, and those who think they can be watered down—or that politicians can bring the wrong type of people into our country without causing a clash of heritage and culture—belong in Fantasyland.

True leadership is necessary, like that shown by my friend Tommy Robinson in the UK, who arranged the Unite the Kingdom rally with Polish legislator Dominik Tarczyński. What is causing extreme violence is extremism or radicalism from both the left and the right.

Closer to home, Olivia Chow has introduced a luxury tax on homes over \$3 million, which in Toronto is not difficult to reach. However, her quote was that people who own \$20-million homes can afford the tax. What about those who are additionally taxed under \$20 million Sharpie?

I must admit, this year’s budget process at the Region and in some of the local municipalities has brought about some of the most interest and activity I’ve seen in years. Some great debate from the anti–tax-increase side was led by Regional Councillors Brian Nicholson, Tito-Dante Marimpietri, Maurice Brenner, Steve Yamada, and Chris Leahy.

The need to change the governance of Regional Council has never been more evident, given the plethora of non-mandated services we are providing. I have said it before: tax decreases can be achieved when we focus on what we are supposed to fund and exit funding and taxation for services we are not mandated to provide under the Municipal Act.

The sooner we turn the Region into a services board—drop the regional councillors and make the Chair a Speaker of the House with no voting power—the better. Let local municipalities purchase only the services they require from the Region.

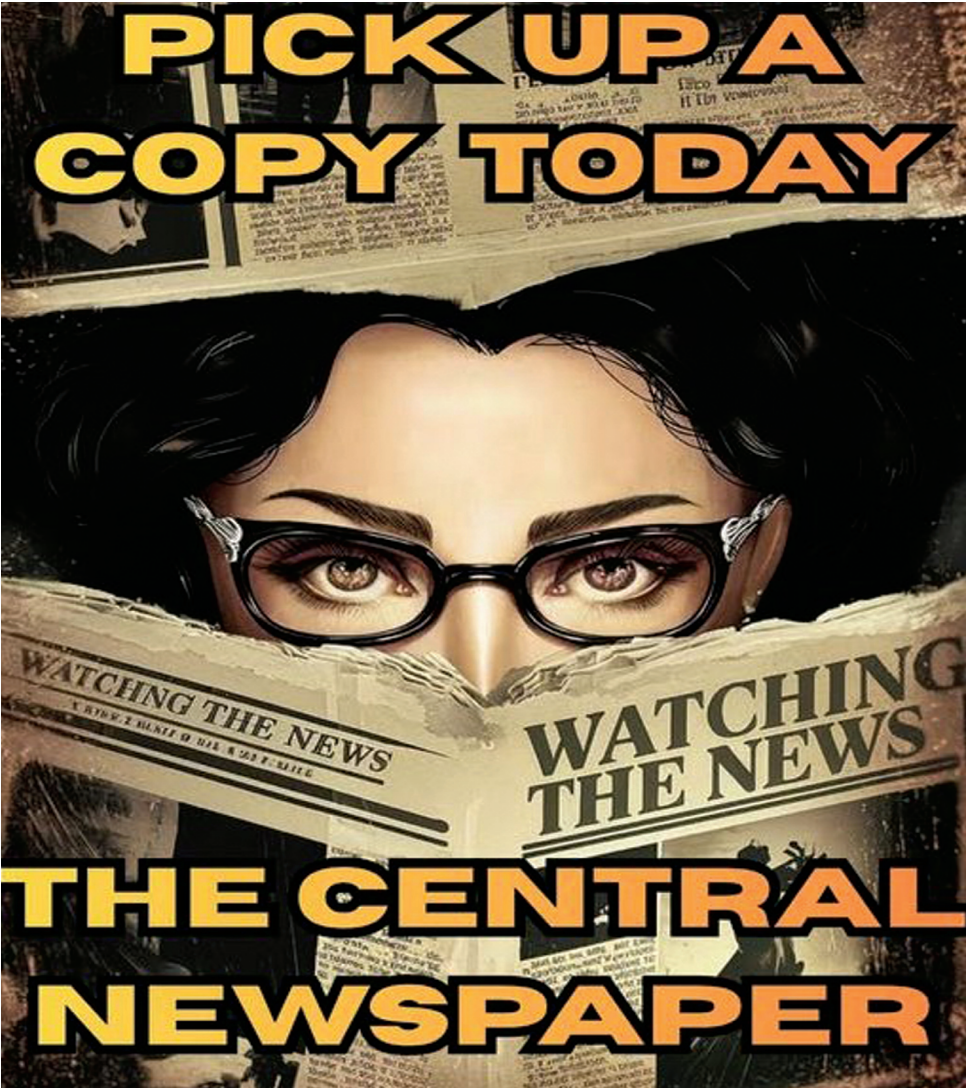
At the provincial level, Doug is “Captain Canada,” taking on Florida Governor Ron DeSantis by claiming tourism in Florida is down. Ron pointed out that tourism has actually increased. I don’t think this one was researched by the kids running Doug’s communications—much like the flow regulator that wasn’t removed from the Crown Royal bottle during that stunt.

Listen folks, I know both Doug and Ron, and I consider them both good people looking after their electorates. That said, if I had to bet on either one in this debate, I’m taking Ron DeSantis. He is brilliant, and his staff would not make rookie mistakes like Doug’s.

So this week I was thinking about which rock stars our local politicians resemble. Here’s what I came up with:

John Henry looks like Henry Rollins  
Olivia Chow like Yoko Ono  
Dan Carter like David Lee Roth  
Brian Nicholson like Chris Stapleton  
Jennifer French like Katy Perry.

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