

NORTH BAY TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

Published: North Bay Nugget

Date: July 23, 2014

REALITY GETS IN THE WAY OF REDEVELOPMENT

Dear Sir:

At the July 14th meeting council approved a study to assess the commercialization of the waterfront facilities. The Friends of the Waterfront have estimated that the total cost of these changes could amount to \$25 million.

Most can agree that the waterfront is one of our main tourist attractions and money spent on it could be a benefit to the City. Unfortunately, the reality is that current taxation levels and the overall tax burden on residents do not allow Council the luxury of this discretionary spending.

According to the latest BMA report, North Bay has the highest tax burden of all northern municipalities and the lowest average family income. North Bay's average family income is \$18,000 lower than Sudbury's and our average tax burden is above that of Sudbury.

A 2012 report by Stantec indicates that City infrastructure funding must be increased to almost \$50 million a year for the next 20 years in order to catch up to and maintain needed repairs and infrastructure replacements.

In addition, City staff has suggested that City reserves need to be increased by over \$55 million to meet current standards.

In passing this motion, the following are some of the comments heard around Council table: Councillor Vrebosch indicated that Council, by proceeding with the study, was being proactive. Using this reasoning, continuing to dig when one finds oneself in a hole could also be considered being proactive.

Vrebosch also indicate that the waterfront was part of the infrastructure shortfall mentioned in the Stantec report and therefore this expenditure contributed to reducing the \$50 million infrastructure requirement. This is totally false and an example of how little research is being done by some when making public remarks.

Councillor King, who recommended continuing with the needed repairs on King's Landing, was the lone dissenter on this motion.

Other councillors suggested that they supported the study as a way to get more information on the project. The study will indicate either that the suggested changes would not be beneficial or that it is feasible to make the suggested changes. In the former instance the project won't go ahead and the study will be a waste of money and in the latter the study will gather dust because of fiscal restraints on City finances.

King's Landing is in need of repairs and money has been set aside in the capital budget since 2011 for that purpose. Let's take Councillor King's suggestion and make those repairs before spending money on a study that will only allow Council to entertain the idea that we can spend more money that we do not have.

D.D. Rennick