

Media Advisory

It is time to exert financial discipline.

Newmarket, ON, September 6, 2016 – The Town of Newmarket is set to increase property taxes, yet again, in 2017. Town of Newmarket property taxes have increased on average 3.7% per year – for six consecutive years.

The Town of Newmarket often does not appear to consider the previous year “actuals” (or what was actually spent in a specific department for a specific purpose) before setting next year’s budget. For example, each year Councillors receive a budget for discretionary spending, yet most of them do not spend the amount allocated. In fact, over the past five years Council has spent 59% of the amount budgeted. Yet year-over-year the same amount is budgeted. NTAG has found several examples of this type of inaccurate over-budgeting throughout the Town budget.

“Why would anyone consistently over budget, when it is apparent, over several years, the amount budgeted is too high? Who pays for this? You and I do, in our property taxes,” states Teena Bogner, President of NTAG.

“Furthermore, and more importantly, the Town of Newmarket is carrying a debt load of \$36.9 million. The taxpayers are paying for projects from 10 – 15 years ago,” states Bogner, citing the Magna Centre, Operations Centre, and Youth Centre parking lot as examples. “Rather than increasing taxes to decrease debt, why not decrease spending? Or, find new and inventive ways to create revenue that does not burden the taxpayer.”

In June, Toronto Mayor John Tory requested, in a letter to the City of Toronto budget committee, *“For too long, we have relied on property tax and MLTT revenues without introducing new ways to pay for the city building efforts we support. Alongside the 2017 Budget Process, we must have a serious conversation about new ways to raise revenues, especially to finance longer term capital investments like transit and housing, and we will.”*

The Town of Newmarket needs to:

- Reduce costs while maintaining services.
- Fine tune the budget process – the Town should not budget any more money than what is needed. In order to understand what is needed, they need to carefully review what was spent.
- Stop adding to the taxpayer’s debt burden, and Town debt, with projects the Town of Newmarket cannot afford (and take decades to pay).



“This is budgeting 101. Taxpayers should be demanding more,” states Bogner. “To quote Mayor Tory, ‘We owe it to the public to spend their money wisely, before we ask them to contribute more. ‘ An excellent idea – Town of Newmarket, are you listening?”

The Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc. (NTAG) is a provincially incorporated non-for-profit ratepayers group in Newmarket, ON. NTAG is a non-political, non-partisan, advocacy organization dedicated to fair taxes, less waste and transparent and accountable government in all levels of government (town, region and school boards) in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada.

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