



## Media Advisory

### NTAG gives 2016 Town Budget Failing Grade

**Newmarket, ON, January 19, 2016** – Town of Newmarket Council unanimously approved the 2016 Operating and Capital budgets which represent a 2.19% tax increase along with a 0.8% infrastructure levy. The overall impact to taxpayers is a year-over-year increase of 2.35%

The Town of Newmarket has introduced new initiatives and projects to justify the 2016 tax increase, such as investment in a new Town-operated fitness facility, and an increase to staffing levels. However, these new projects fail to provide the whole story.

Adding to the tax burden are failed initiatives, such as the Old Town Hall, currently several million dollars over budget. "The Town has failed to provide any disclosure or plans for dealing with the Old Town Hall in the 2016 budget, including the increasing cost to the taxpayers, and the loss of anticipated program revenues" states Teena Bogner, President of the Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc. "However, the Town now plans to invest in a new fitness facility. This despite a multitude of private gyms in Newmarket offering the same fitness options, and many are unable to thrive or succeed. Why are taxpayers paying for new initiatives when the Town has clearly demonstrated their incompetence in managing current initiatives?"

NTAG cites an additional 10 new full-time staff members as indication the Town of Newmarket is out of touch with the current economic climate. "Corporate Canada continues to respond to the current economic reality by carefully managing staff and downsizing, yet Town of Newmarket staff continues to grow, enjoy generous health and retirement benefits, and endless perks such as meals, parties, and incentives" states Bogner.

In 2015 NTAG consistently raised the issue of internal spending to Town of Newmarket council, specifically their unwillingness to curb unnecessary spending, manage costs, or attempt to save the taxpayers from annual tax increases.

The City of Sudbury is an excellent example of a municipality that cut costs to the benefit of taxpayers. Sudbury's P6M project challenged all town departments to find \$6 million in savings. Sudbury exceeded its goal of \$6 million in savings, resulting in zero tax increase to residents.

In Toronto, Mayor John Tory has committed to keep property tax increases at or below the rate of inflation.



"The Town of Newmarket has shown minimal effort or leadership to reduce taxes, to demand productivity gains from their delivered services, or to simply cut costs. NTAG respectfully suggests that if municipalities such as Sudbury and Toronto can find internal cost cutting solutions and reduce wasteful spending obviously the Town of Newmarket can do the same. Yet again, the budget fails Newmarket taxpayers", states Teena Bogner.

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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