

November 21, 2024 Blog

Zorra and Oxford are both in budget deliberations.

I told you previously about the “new deals” the Ford Government gave to Toronto and Ottawa but not other municipalities. If Zorra or Oxford got the Toronto or Ottawa deal it would be 4-12% of total budget. Why are YOUR provincial taxes paying bills in Toronto and Ottawa, but not in Oxford and Zorra? Municipal services and expectations have changed. Property taxes were never intended to address social services like mental health, addiction, and homelessness. Oxford ambulance calls are up 10% on 2% population growth. This is now primary health care for too many people. The province needs to do their part: deliver the health care that’s needed to address mental health, addiction, and homelessness, and fund municipalities for what we’re already doing. We need to return to more reasonable property taxes that pay for municipal services, not subsidizing provincial services that are not being delivered. Residents of Zorra and Oxford are doing MORE than their part already.

I expect both the Zorra and Oxford budgets to be reasonable this year. They need to be. People can’t afford to keep paying with their property taxes for services the Ontario government should be providing. But I want to be sure, so I’ve introduced a Motion at Oxford County Council to eliminate development charge exemptions for industry so that you don’t pay for their development. If Council supports this, it would reduce the property tax burden by about \$51 per property. From the draft budget of 12.6% down to approximately 7% (after this change and subtracting assessment growth). From a \$137 increase to a \$75 increase.

Did you know that the Ontario government gives Oxford growth numbers every year that we are required to accommodate? I submitted a motion to Oxford Council suggesting that we push back on the growth, and the cost in services and your tax dollars of that growth. Oxford County residents are already experiencing consequences of the current high rate of growth such as: Homelessness, Mental health supports, Addiction supports, Encampment responses, Housing availability and attainability, Lack of primary medical care, Lack of adequate school spaces, Growth pressure on green space and agricultural land. Many of our community partners are already struggling to meet service demands. Continued growth pressure, combined with insufficient resources and Provincial support is diminishing the safety and well being of residents. Oxford County is already struggling to continue to provide services at a level residents expect, without unsustainable property tax increases resulting from the growth directed by the Province. We need to only grow in a way that is sustainable for our communities. Toronto and Ottawa got new “new deals” for funding from the Province. Oxford residents are now subsidizing their property taxes. Council agreed, so I’m writing a letter to the Premier to tell him Oxford won’t commit to his growth numbers without increased Provincial support and funding.

As always, feel free to contact me on any issue:

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