

Waverley West Fire Paramedics Modular Station Speech – May 24, 2024

(Express thank yous to all for attending)

This is a long awaited day for the residents of the Waverley West ward!

As you may know, this southwest corner of Winnipeg - has been the fastest growing area in the City for the past 10 years –

According to stats Canada 30% of Winnipeg’s entire population growth has moved here and settled.

- The sad fact of the matter is, we should have been standing here 5 years ago doing a sod turning for a firehall

I’m going to share a few more facts today that should concern each and everyone here.

I dare say - No one has felt the ‘heat’ – or taken the heat – for not having a fire hall for residents more than myself and the good men and women on the front lines delivering fire and paramedic services

I am a Councillor very connected to the residents – and I am constantly saying – its coming – its coming its coming. That’s why I’m wearing my red jacket – I’m still on fire over this issue! So bear with me!

I want to thank Mayor G – who was Councillor at the time – for listening to me and for including this funding in a past budget -

This Firehall is a critical piece of city infrastructure this is direly needed to support growth – just like other pieces of infrastructure needed to support growth –

- Quality roads for transportation and goods movement
- Recreation facilities
- And sewer treatment plants

But here is another fact – there is only one tax payer – and the allocation of that one tax dollar is shocking:

- 10 cents comes to the City
- 40 cents goes to the Province
- 50 cents goes to the Federal government

So think about this –

We – the City - takes our 10 cents – and we try very very hard – to support growth to build those

- Quality roads for transportation
- Recreation facilities
- To build fire stations
- And to build sewer treatment plants sewer treatment plants

And deliver all kinds of other services to support a growing city.

Municipalities / cities manage and maintain approximately 60 percent of the public infrastructure and amenities that drive our economy and quality of life in Canada.

So- what does this mean –

The current tax allocation – the funding model for cities – absolutely will not support Canada’s current immigration policies – and that does not bode well for the future.

And each and every one of us should be very concerned about that.

The federal government has committed to 500,000 immigrants a year, each year, for the next 3 years.

1.5 million people are coming – and my 10 years of experience in this rapid growth community clearly tells me Cities simply won’t be able to accommodate this rapid growth.

Now – to be clear – Canada NEEDS immigration – we need young families, we need a workforce.

And I am very pleased to see that the federal government is providing funding for housing –

- BUT For every home built, there must be corresponding infrastructure.

We can’t even build in parts of the city because we just don’t have sewer capacity – St Norbert – Whyte Ridge – parts of downtown – and more.

But – cities have their 10 cents – and are expected to build all this corresponding infrastructure – which is virtually impossible with the projected growth we are going to be experiencing.

And to bring it home – to the grass roots – where city councilors work – this is what we are seeing here in Waverley West – our long over due fire station –

and once Council increased our debt load by another \$23 Million - we will be able to fund the recreation campus. But this model isn’t sustainable.

I want to thank the Premier – for putting out a budget – with many good things – but – IMO - the BEST SENTENCE in the entire budget is:

- *Over the coming year, we will work with municipal stakeholders, including the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities and the City of Winnipeg to develop a reliable and flexible multi-year funding model that works for all Manitobans.” Page 50*

We need a new funding model for municipalities – because we are ALL partners in building our City, our Province and Canada!!

We have to do a better job of being partners - we need change – we need to change the model.

I love growth, I love Immigration – but when it comes at such a rapid pace from Canada’s Federal immigration policies, I don’t think is fair to new – and to ALL Canadians.

And we need to work together to fix this.

And I look forward to that

And after a long long journey – I am very happy about today!