

Mon Dec 18th 2017

Good Evening Mayor Lehman and Members of Council

I'm here this evening to speak in opposition of item 2 & 3 in the motion set out before Council tonight.

YEAR ROUND DOWNTOWN PUBLIC MARKET

1. That the Downtown Barrie Permanent Public Market Technical and Financial Validation Study conducted by LETT Architects and attached as Appendix "A" to Staff Report FCT006-17, be received.

2. That Option C as set out in the Downtown Barrie Permanent Public Market Technical and Financial Validation Study, and the phased approach for Barrie Transit through a Multi Modal Transit Hub Study, be endorsed in principle, subject to future capital prioritization and approvals and subject to a report back to General Committee with options to reduce the overall project budget by \$2M and \$4M through design savings, with the proposed transit building being the first priority for reductions, and further, with options to shorten the overall project timelines by at least one year.

This entire project feels like a virtual project, endorsed in principal every step of the way.

3. That funding for the Multi Modal Transit Hub Study that is being requested within the 2018 capital plan totaling \$100,000 to be funded from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve, be expedited and approved to commence immediately, and staff report back to General Committee with the results of the Study. (FCT006-17) (File: R00) This matter was recommended (Section "F") to City Council for consideration of adoption at its meeting to be held on 12/18/2017.

I take issue with funding for the Transit Hub Study coming from the Tax Reserve instead of our Capital Fund Reserve. Seemingly we have a major deficiency in this fund based on best practices. I'm not saying don't do the study, this needs to be done but find the funding elsewhere.

Concepts, Vision and Ideas are they viable? Only with public participation. The Devil is in the details!

I applaud the collaborative efforts and stakeholder's time spent on being so creative for the Barrie Public Market Vision

I too would love to see this project come to fruition, be successful and perhaps even be profitable. I enjoy and participate in our Barrie cultural events and festivals.

Funding – Who will end up paying for this adventure? Where are the numbers at this point? We understand the total cost of the capital expenses but not the ongoing operating expenses, rental fees or profitability.

Only with the potential for Government Funds, Private Sponsorship and Public Participation will we have the funding.

I would like to say that I did watch with anticipation last week's open discussion on the Staff's Report on the Year Round Downtown Public Market. I must admit I have the same concerns with respect to the economics, business plan, model and funding that some members of Council did. Councillor McCann, Shipley, Ainsworth and Trotter made some very valid points as did you Mayor Lehman. Councillor Shipley I can relate to your comments about an 80 page staff and consultant report to review in a short period of time and the fact you didn't have all the detail you thought you needed, where was the 360 Report!

My question to Council is, if you don't have the details you need or don't understand what you have before you, how can you make an informed decision on behalf of the residents. The potential to spend approx 9.5 million on 7500sq ft of new space and another (approx) 5 million a new transit hub how much will come out of the tax payer's pocket?

I have read through the many staff reports, and consultant's reports and consultant on consultant reports and don't see the answers I am looking for. What I do see are many challenges ahead.

Moving the Bus Terminal, Barrie Police Services, What of the Convenience Store (no mention) would that move with the Bus Terminal? Soil Remediation costs not included.

I have for more than 25 yrs shopped and continue to be a regular shopper at our existing Barrie Farmer Market. I support, shop and want local. My hair salon is Dunlop St, I eat and drink at our local establishments on a regular basis. I would be one of the weekly and maybe by- weekly visitors.

However, the lack of information still outstanding makes it very difficult to buy into the idea, vision, or concept at this time.

Where is the funding coming from? Council has not approved the 2.9 million in the 2018 budget or the 3.9 million for 2019. Money would potentially come from the Tax Reserve Fund, not Capital Reserve where it should come from because of deficiencies in the fund. Currently our reserve fund has 4.9 million when best practice says for a City of our size we should have close to 30 million.

Business Case Studies

As presented in the business case studies, none were full time and profitable and in a City owned building. The Kitchener area has a much larger population 233,000= more visitors to support it. The hope through Urban Planning to meet the same or similar population in the years to come does not guarantee visitors to market.

The London Market was also mentioned as being the only Market that makes a profit. This market is not a City owned building and had underground parking which is where the profit comes from

Reports show that this new market in Barrie is not expected to make a profit either.

Challenges

Can we sustain a market of this size? How many visits per day, week, month and yearly will it take to be sustainable or break even? Would any of you visit the market daily...even if you work downtown you may not attend weekly. More visits throughout the spring summer and fall but what about winter? Shopping patterns and affordability play a huge role. Who can afford to shop daily or weekly at public market. As mention in the presentation by the BIA they would not be in competition for the cheapest products. Mayor Lehman mentioned we do in fact have a grocery store downtown, really? Where? The natural organic health food store is not affordable shopping for all, nor does it carry all grocery type items.

What happens to this if vendors pull out and are not profitable? What are we left with.

I also read in the reports that over the past 25 yrs downtown Barrie vendors have been struggling to make a profit. How is this going to affect existing business?

Why has no vendor rented out the space in the Barrie Bus Terminal, yes systems needed upgrading but that could have been completed long before now. Space on the second floor was vacant, why did we do nothing with that space?

Where will patrons come from to support our market? With so many small local farmers markets in and around our region...what makes Barrie special? Our Waterfront! But, is that enough. Farmers Markets typically are more expensive to shop. Orilla has Markets, point North have markets

Public Engagement – While I see a listing of groups associated with participation, most seem to be City of Barrie groups with a few (7) business stakeholders. The only public participation results I was able to find, were results of the on-line survey which had 1200 responses, about 10% of our population. I was one of the 1200. 22% said they would visit daily. A small sampling of the Barrie Farmers Market Patrons was also taken on Saturdays over a 6 week period. Is this really enough analytics to determine if a permanent market is viable?

Move of the Transit Terminal – main transit term should remain in downtown Barrie, there are no facilities/amenities for a main hub in Allandale. No shops other than The Farmhouse, and a small Café across Essa Rd. What City doesn't have a main terminal in the downtown core? Folks in transit can get off the bus and have a choice of services currently on Dunlop St.

The Allandale Go Station was never planned to be a main transportation hub. It was built as an add on after the train came to Barrie South. Allandale does not have enough parking for the current usage, let alone when all day service is available.

If the transit study reveals Allandale is a suitable location, rather than build a new transit building, why not use part of the existing Heritage Train Station assets. Having said that, why not use the train station as your Farmers Market location as was discussed years ago. Many of the general public spent time in workshops talking about uses for the Station Buildings. Fine Dining, small train museum (including engine 1531), farmers market, fountain, skating rink, café, ice cream shop etc. Why are we not looking at that space? Obviously we are currently working on Archaeological studies being completed. But once completed that space should be vacant and ready to go.

Thank you for your time this evening.

Cathy Colebatch