

TO: Mayor Zimmer and Members of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Clayton

FROM: Paul Webb

August 5, 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to draw your attention to the financial arrangements confronting property tax payers of the Village of Clayton, not necessarily in the order of importance:

- Residential taxpayers account for 66% of the total property taxes in the Village. Commercial taxpayers account for 33% of the total property taxes. 2/3 to 1/3
- \$179,000 for Riverwalk III not covered by grants and to be added to the tax bills.
- Purchase of Danforth property for \$310,000 (with assessed value of \$219,000 and an asking price of \$300,000.) This is to allow access to the Riverwalk which is already accessible via Village-owned property at the monument. The cost of this property will also be added to the tax bills.
- Purchasing easements for the Riverwalk III from waterfront property/business owners on Riverside Drive, then changing these properties from Riverfront properties to Riverview properties and thereby putting them in a lower property tax bracket. This will result other taxpayers having to absorb the difference.
- Burying the hydro, telephone, cable, internet and other lines along Riverside Drive and James Street involves a great deal of money and actually only benefits a very few businesses in these locations. Before proceeding, ALL options should be investigated and evaluated as to the most benefit for the most businesses AND residents. Then those gaining the most benefits should be assessed the most taxes to pay for these benefits.
- The Board should consider creating a new tax category for the business and property owners on Riverside Drive and James Street who benefit from the burying of the lines.
- Since the first places which visitors see as they enter Clayton are Route 12, 12E, James Street and Webb Street, most likely these are the places where they will form their first opinions. All of these streets have and will continue to have poles and electrical, cable and other lines. Also, both Webb and James Streets are included in the State Loop but are not receiving the originally planned and much needed reconstruction in order to spend more funds on the burying of the lines in the business area of Riverside Drive and James Streets. These, we understand, will be reconstructed at a later date at Village(taxpayer) expense. So, by the time visitors arrive at Riverside Drive and James Street businesses, they will have already formed their opinions.
- High tension lines which cannot be buried will be moved to Hugunin Street where National Grid will have to do major "trimming" of the big old trees to allow for these lines formerly located on Riverside Drive. Is that penalizing one group to benefit another?

There is a definite advantage for a village such as Clayton to take on beautification projects, but we must live within our means and not burden residents with unnecessary and unrealistic debt which due to high taxes will lower the resale value of our properties.

The amount of the total debt to be retired within the next 6 years amounts to \$119,000, a mere pittance compared to the amount that is being proposed to be added to the tax bills of residents of the Village of Clayton:

Burying the lines	\$3,450,000.00	This is an unaudited estimate.
Remaining from Riverwalk III	179,000.00	
Purchase of Danforth property	310,000.00	

	\$4,939,000.00	

I sincerely and respectfully request that you and all members of this Board of Trustees of the Village of Clayton reconsider all of these projects and the effect that they will have on the residential taxpayers of the village. I respectfully request that you allow public comment from residents before taking any action, not after. And I respectfully request that you take another look at ALL the options which are available to complete these projects in the most fiscally responsible manner possible.

I definitely realize how busy you all are and that these are not full-time positions; however, I am requesting that each of you have the courtesy to respond to this letter in a timely manner so that other taxpayers who helped me prepare this letter can realize that you are sincere in keeping our village taxes down. Further, I request time on the Monday, Aug 8, 2016, agenda to read this letter into the public record.

Thank you,

Paul Webb
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