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Cobourg Taxpayers Association

Making Local Government Accountable

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CTA Says “No” to Development Fee Waiver

Northumberland Medical Arts Inc.(NMAI) has requested relief from, or a donation of, approximately \$240,000 in Development Charges and \$72,000 in building permit fees for a total of \$312,000. NMAI is a not-for-profit corporation which will oversee the construction, leasing and operation of a medical arts building on land it will lease from Northumberland Hills Hospital.: [More »](#)



CTA meets with Town Staff

Lydia Smith, Paul Pagnuelo, and Dennis Nabieszko met with Stephen Peacock, Ian Davey, Treasurer, and Melissa Henke on November 12, 2015 to discuss Lydia Smith’s Letter on Parks & Recreation Staffing. All of the questions were answered to the satisfaction of the CTA. Click on the more link for the minutes of that meeting. [More »](#)



CTA Presents Recommendations on the Town Budget Process

The Cobourg Taxpayers Association (CTA) presented some key recommendations on the Town budget process.

Some of the key highlights of the CTA submission: [More »](#)



CTA holds first Supporter's Meeting November 21 at Cobourg Community Centre

The Cobourg Taxpayers Association held its first meeting for supporters on Saturday, November 21 at the Cobourg Community Centre. CTA directors welcomed a capacity crowd as they presented six key issues the group is currently working on.

CTA Advisory member Warren McCarthy gave a brief history of how the CTA came into existence and introduced President Lydia Smith who remarked, "This meeting came about when one of our supporters told us he had friends who had been to the CTA web site and had been following our activities, but they felt as if they didn't really know us. Who are the people behind the face of the CTA? And what do we stand for – really?"

Dennis Nabieszko, CTA Secretary, asked supporters to identify their issues and help to prioritize the ones the CTA is working on. He also said that the CTA is limited in time and resources, and asked for supporters to become volunteers to help out.

Immediately following were six presentations by members of the CTA Advisory Committee. They were: **1.** Transparency of Holdco operations and finances; **2.** Cost/Benefit justification for town spending; **3.** Cobourg Community Centre operating costs; **4.** Downtown Vitalization and CIVI; **5.** Town governance and Coordinator Syndrome; **6.** High cost of police and fire protection.

Visitor feedback forms were handed out and there were many questions from the crowd. Details on all the presentations are available on the CTA website at www.cobourgtaxpayers.ca.

1. Transparency of Holdco operations and finances

The operating budget for Cobourg in 2014 was \$20.75M. Another town entity had an operating budget of 50% more than the whole town or about \$32M in

2014. This company has become to be known as Holdco, but what is "Holdco"? Officially the name is "Town of Cobourg Holdings, Inc" and is 99.9% owned by the Town of Cobourg (the other 0.1% is owned by the Town of Cramahe). [More »](#)

2. Cost/Benefit justification for town spending

A CBA is defined as a systematic approach to estimating the strengths and weaknesses of alternatives. It serves to determine if a particular item is a sound investment. It compares alternatives by reviewing the total expected cost of each option against the total expected benefits. [More »](#)

3. Cobourg Community Centre operating Costs

On April 20, 2011 in the Northumberland News, Mayor Brocanier is quoted as saying, "Welcome everyone to your community centre. The centre is a gift to the community". It was a \$27.4 Million dollar project that received \$18 million from the federal and provincial governments, \$6.4 million from the Town of Cobourg via development charges and the rest coming from a \$3.1 Million dollar fundraising campaign. It is currently costing Cobourg citizens around \$800,000 a year to operate. [More »](#)

4. Downtown Vitalization and CIVI

You'll be hearing a lot in the coming months about Downtown "Vitalization" and the Community Improvement Venture Initiative (CIVI). Everyone wants a vibrant downtown but how can we make it happen and can we afford it? The Downtown Master Plan draft was presented to the public on November 18, 2015. It proposes a beautiful downtown with: [More »](#)

5. Town governance and Coordinator Syndrome

There are four Council Governance issues we are currently working on:

Changing the current structure of Coordinator-Councillors

Getting Council meetings video-recorded and archived

Getting Councillor votes in the record for non-unanimous decisions,

Having a public question opportunity at the end of Council meetings [More »](#)

6. High Cost of Police and Fire Protection

The major issue with Police and Fire is that together they consume 40% of Cobourg's total budget.

Cobourg crime rates have fallen for years; Fire incidents have declined for decades; but - according to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (not a rash group), Police spending grew at three times the rate of inflation in the 10 years to 2011. In that period, they say Police salaries increased by 40% while the average for non-Police occupations increased by 11%. It didn't stop in 2011. The Association says Ontario has 39% of the Canadian population, but pays 48% of the total Canadian Police spending. Our Fire department has pay-equity with Police. The major issue with Police and Fire is that together they consume 40% of Cobourg's total budget. [More »](#)

PLEASE DONATE TO THE CTA

The CTA is completely volunteer run with no paid staff, no funding from government or special interests. Donations will be used to pay for Freedom of Information requests, our website and other expenses to help everyone enjoy our Feel Good Town with less government waste and lower taxes.

Cheques are also welcomed and can be sent to:

Cobourg Taxpayers Association
24 Pebble Beach Dr.
Cobourg ON K9A 2C5



Contact us at: info@cobourgtaxpayers.ca

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