



Minutes of Guelph City Council Inaugural

**November 15, 2022, 6:30 pm
Council Chambers
Guelph City Hall, 1 Carden Street**

Council:

Mayor C. Guthrie
Councillor P. Allt
Councillor C. Billings
Councillor L. Busuttil
Councillor L. Caron
Councillor E. Caton
Councillor K. Chew
Councillor C. Downer
Councillor D. Gibson
Councillor R. Goller
Councillor C. Klassen
Councillor D. O'Rourke
Councillor M. Richardson

Staff:

S. Stewart, Chief Administrative Officer
C. Clack-Bush, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Public Services
J. Holmes, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
T. Lee, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Services
S. O'Brien, General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk
D. McMahon, Manager, Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk
J. da Silva, Council and Committee Assistant
T. Di Lullo, Council and Committee Coordinator
G. Meades, Council and Committee Coordinator
C. Murray-Sprague, Council and Committee Coordinator

Also Present: Tyler Bridge, Pipe Major, Guelph Pipe Band, Cynthia Collison, Guelph Fire Department, Andrew Crowe, Guelph Police Service, Ella Singh, Adele Zantinge, Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service

1. Call to Order

Stephen O'Brien, City Clerk, called the meeting to order (6:30 p.m.)

2. O'Canada

Ella Singh led the signing of O'Canada

3. Declaration of Office, Code of Conduct and Council-Staff Relations Policy

Stephen O'Brien, City Clerk administered the Declaration of Office to the Mayor and Members of Council.

The Mayor and Members of Council signed their Declaration of Office, Code of Conduct and Council-Staff Relations Policies.

4. Mayor's Inaugural Address

Mayor Guthrie presented his inaugural address.

Today we formally take our first steps as a new council for the city of Guelph.

I'd like to congratulate each member of council on well run elections that have landed you in the very seats you're sitting in tonight. You have many to thank for putting you in this position. From family, to friends to volunteers and more. Well done to each of you!

Speaking of thanks, I would like to publicly thank those who have given me a strong mandate, for a third time, to continue as the mayor of Guelph. My friends, many volunteers, many who are here tonight, alongside my parents, mother-in-law, my sister and brother-in-law and of course my kids Anakin and Adelaide and my amazing wife Rachel who has stood by me through so much these many years as both a city councillor and as mayor. I could not do what I do without you. And just so everybody knows, I was told more often this time during the election that people were only voting for me because they've known all along that it's really Rachel who's calling the shots and they like what she's done with the city! They're not wrong!

To the citizens and businesses of this city, we will be available, transparent and engaging on the issues that come before us. While the 13 of us bring new ideas to the table we know that we don't own all the ideas, that our citizens, businesses and stakeholders can offer us new ways of making our city better. When you approach us in a respectful way, we will be ready to work alongside each of you.

We have 5 new councillors. Five new voices. Five fresh perspectives on this council now. To each of you I want to thank you for putting your name on the ballot and for choosing to serve the city through elected office. I look forward to working hard on many issues to deliver positive outcomes for everyone. And those issues are not too far ahead of us, they've already arrived on our desks and our in-boxes. So buckle up. It's going to be a great but busy time.

For those returning, working alongside you, in many instances, resulted in excellent outcomes and decisions. Just to highlight a few, our credit rating is now at a AAA rating - which positions us on a much healthier fiscal foundation in which to wade through these uncertain times ahead of us. We finally did a complete third party service rationalization review of city hall that looked inward as we try to find more efficient and effective ways of delivering our services to the citizens. We continued to turn underperforming assets into performing assets such as the Farmers Market as an example. Supportive housing is happening! Master plans for transportation, waste, water and more were finished. Setting our goals for environmental initiatives and making ourselves committed to do whatever we can to eliminate racism and become an even better city for accessibility, embracing diversity and inclusion in all we do - these are things to be proud of. And we accomplished these and much more through a global pandemic. We eight, those returning this term, must also buckle up for what lies ahead.

As we continue working on these issues of the past term, we collectively know that certain issues are rising to the top at present. In no particular order:

Housing

Safety

Affordability

and The growing Social Services crisis

I was interviewed lately by the media and was asked if I thought the councillors elected would be councillors that would work with me on these issues, pointing to some in the community that believed that I would have a

difficult time enacting my vision and my platform. I answered, firmly, that I believe we will address these issues because they're not my issues to begin with. They're OUR COMMUNITY'S ISSUES.

Every single successful candidate talked about housing and acknowledged we need to do better when it comes to creating more units within our city. Each one around this horseshoe addressed safety, affordability and social services issues during this campaign.

The thirteen of us are not starting tonight at odds with each other to move the dial on these issues whatsoever. In fact, we have a common foundation to start discussing and sharing ideas to tackle these issues for all.

Over this past weekend we had our first two full days of council orientation. To the citizens of Guelph, let me tell you, you have elected a team of caring and thoughtful people to this place. I was so impressed with the relationships built, renewed and restored over this weekend.

One area I wanted to highlight that I took away from this weekend, was our learnings around creating better governance through a commitment to become a more mature decision body. I believe that can only be accomplished by three things:

Effective meetings

Efficient use of time

Trust- between us and city staff. With no surprises and no gotcha moments.

In my one on one talks with each new councillor to date, I've been encouraged by indications that we need to become a team that embraces these points.

I want to encourage all of us, that as we start to move into our meetings over the next few months that if you find ways, or think of new ideas to make us more efficient and effective as decision makers - that you bring that to my attention. I am committed to listening and exploring ways to govern better.

The next couple of years are going to be some of our greatest challenges. Coming out of the height of the pandemic and lockdowns (we hope) we now know the affordability crisis is upon us and that a recession is more than likely. This will mean we must pull together to live within our means. And more accurately, we must make decisions here that help our citizens live within their means. Because it's their money. Not ours. We will be faced with spending decisions that will impact those paying for it. We need to remember that.

Yet speaking of spending, I believe this is a good time to highlight something for our community in this, my inaugural speech for the 2022-2025 term, that our city needs to understand and potentially brace for.

Not even 24 hours after the municipal election, the Provincial Government tabled new legislation intended to help with housing. Now I won't go into each detail here but I wanted everyone to hear it as plainly as possible from me first. Cities are creatures of the Province. What they impose on us, what they force upon cities must be adhered to, but in many cases they must be paid for. It can often be referred to as "downloading". And in this case there may be massive requirements and resources forced upon us that will require more money being spent on the hopes of creating more housing.

But sometimes, it's not new legislation or new regulations that spur on new spending requirements from cities such as ours, but a lack of funding on existing issues that can cause our cities, and our very own citizens, to face extreme difficulties and urgent decisions. And on this point I'm specifically referencing the mental health, addictions and homelessness crisis in our city. When the proper funding isn't provided we are left with choices to either ignore, which may make things worse, or to start funding sectors and initiatives that are supposed to be funded by upper levels of government so they don't get worse.

I've asked new councillors to buckle up. I've asked returning councillors to buckle up. And

Now I'm asking the citizens of Guelph to buckle up as well.

Don't get me wrong, I always believe in looking inwards first, finding the funds required, or reallocating what's needed from one place to another. But in all we do financially, we cannot undercut our city infrastructure or investments to appease some with a few dollars of savings now that will end up costing taxpayers, or at the cost of our citizens well-being, down the road.

Overall, we must be a council that commits to affordability but balances affordability while providing value, positive outcomes and results our community needs.

When it comes to safety, we are on the right track, but this is a big issue that will need more resources and investments. Each of us sitting here today knows full well that almost 50% or more of the doors we knocked on during the election had RING doorbell's, video cameras and security systems in place. There's a reason for that. Safety isn't just effecting our homes or businesses but our downtown core as well. We have a thriving and wonderful

downtown. It's a great place to be. But we must do better. And we will do better.

I'm so thankful that council approved the new Mayors Task Force for the Downtown Advisory Committee- which has both councillor Goller and Klassen as members, ready to find solutions to helping those in need yet helping business owners thrive! And giving good reasons why customers and tourists tell others that our downtown is a fantastic place to visit and spend money!

This council will also have the privilege to set our first four year strategic plan aligned with a four year multi-year budget. This means, that although we should commit to working hard on the upcoming budget, in reality it is the strategic plan that will set the course for the next four years. It is through that process that we will determine much of the pace in which we move on capital projects for our community. Do we keep the "pedal to the metal", back off a bit or perhaps even consider coasting or setting the cruise control during these uncertain financial times? We'll need to pull together, listen to each other and the community as we figure this out.

And to our phenomenal staff. We cannot get things done, implement new ideas and get to positive results without the heavy lifting of our staff. We will rely on your partnership, your advice and your collaboration. Keep us informed, don't surprise us and feel free to let us know when we deviate from our governance lane of "what" we want done - and swerve into the "how" lane. And nudge the mayor when he talks too much.

As we declared and signed our oath of office, making you a councillor, or me a mayor, let us take a moment to reflect on the great privilege we've been given to create positive change for our city. Leadership comes with obligations and responsibilities to each other and to others. Guelph'ites expect us to show up, to work hard and demonstrate respect for all. Our actions - and our votes - will define the next four years.

We can and we must stop rhetoric and instead reach together for results. I'm tired of polarization. And guess who else is? You. Staff. And our citizens. They put an X beside our names to get to work and show others how we do it in Guelph. By talking, by compromising, by respectful dialogue and choosing to trust each other as the starting point.

Let us choose today to not allow outside influences or voices only focused on wanting to tear each other down. I've got your back. I ask that you have mine. Let them know this council, #TeamGuelph, stands together and will not be divided. Because we will never lead if we are divided.

Now look, we all know disagreement is unavoidable.

This is true at work, perhaps your marriage, true in any number of organizations and more than likely true right here in city hall at these very chairs we are currently sitting in.

But division is different. Division is a choice. Our ongoing goal is to choose to NOT give into division.

We all want the same thing, a city that will thrive for all Guelph'ites regardless of background, belief or orientations.

So let's get to it. Let's build on the ideas presented during the election in each of our platforms. Not just mine. Let's never forget what we heard at the front steps of the homes we talked to, or from the people and businesses we ran into, and remember there are voices we perhaps didn't hear from - those experiencing homelessness or a new refugee family or immigrant that only arrived in Guelph the day before the election, and in collaboration with our professional staff, ensure that when we hit the yes or no button on each issue we vote on we can look back after four years together both individually and collectively and say we did the right thing and we created a better future for those here and for the next generations that will call Guelph home.

Thank you.

Moved By Councillor Caron

Seconded By Councillor Busuttil

Adoption of the Mayor's Inaugural Address

Voting in Favour: (13): Mayor Guthrie, Councillor Allt, Councillor Billings, Councillor Busuttil, Councillor Caron, Councillor Caton, Councillor Chew, Councillor Downer, Councillor Gibson, Councillor Goller, Councillor Klassen, Councillor O'Rourke, and Councillor Richardson

Carried (13 to 0)

5. Adjournment

Moved By Councillor Klassen

Seconded By Councillor Gibson

That the November 15, 2022 Guelph City Council Inaugural meeting be adjourned. (7:00 p.m.)

Voting in Favour: (13): Mayor Guthrie, Councillor Allt, Councillor Billings, Councillor Busuttil, Councillor Caron, Councillor Caton, Councillor Chew, Councillor Downer, Councillor Gibson, Councillor Goller, Councillor Klassen, Councillor O'Rourke, and Councillor Richardson

Carried (13 to 0)

Mayor Guthrie

Stephen O'Brien - City Clerk