



**Inaugural Council Meeting
Remarks – Mayor Gary McNamara**

Town of Tecumseh
December 2, 2014

I would like to welcome everyone to our inaugural celebration this evening and thank our families and friends for their support during the recent election. It is largely through your efforts that we stand here before you this evening.

To the residents of Tecumseh, we thank you for your trust and confidence. As your new Council, we accept this privilege to serve you and you have our assurance that we will continue to build on the solid foundation that has been laid by the previous Council. You have our commitment to provide quality service, to tax fairly, to spend prudently and to manage wisely.

You also have our commitment to work together in the best interests of the Town. We will put our personal interests aside and work together in a spirit of cooperation - honestly and with integrity - because the residents of Tecumseh deserve nothing less.

To my returning colleagues, I say welcome back and to our new members – I look forward to your ideas and fresh perspective.

I want to take a moment, in front of the whole community, to publicly pay tribute to my family (my wonderful wife Heather, son Sean and daughter-in-law Melissa, son Ryan and daughter-in-law Anne Marie, my two amazing grandchildren, Patrick and Emily, my sister Deborah and brother-in-law Len Babin) along with friends and supporters who have stood by me and walked at my side.

Your incredible friendships, insights, unflinching humour and caring ways have carried me once again to this day and to this honour. I thank you.

I'm sure we would all agree that the economic challenges of the past years have had a profound impact on Canada, Ontario and southwestern Ontario, the full extent of which we are still trying to understand and respond to.

First and most important has been the impact on the livelihoods and financial security of our residents. I believe the public agenda for the next four years will be shaped by how well all levels of government respond to these challenges.

I can attest to the fact that past Councils have had to make some tough choices in this economic climate. Most significant was the 10 year Lifecycle program, completed this year. This program was instituted to guarantee the availability of future funding to replace, repair and maintain the Town's capital assets – our roads and bridges, parks, arena, trucks and buildings. The choice to tax for the future in challenging times was not an easy one, but I am confident the rewards of prudent planning and good stewardship will be felt for a long time to come.

Here is a telling statistic...the turnover rate in Ontario's councils following the October municipal election was 56%. The public remains angry, fearful, and is demanding that its governments respond to their needs. They are tired of finger pointing, and of one level of government blaming the other or passing the buck. Our residents are asking for something very simple - that all levels work together and put every available resource into problem solving, not jockeying for position or political gain.

They believe the top priority for governments should be to provide the best and most cost effective services while at the same time controlling tax increases.

Regional cooperation is also critical. The City of Windsor provides an important range of services to Essex County and its member municipalities, like Tecumseh. It is imperative that we have a strong working relationship and partnership with the City. The foundation of that partnership must be a fair and transparent cost and service structure. As Mayor, I am committed to working with Mayor Dilkens and his Council and Administration at the City of Windsor for the betterment of the region.

I also look forward to maintaining the excellent relationships we have with the County of Essex and its lower tier municipalities, and embracing opportunities for enhanced cooperation and partnership as they arise.

By October 2015 we will be heading into a federal election. Over my past terms as Mayor I have forged a positive and effective working relationship with both the federal and provincial levels of government, and have done so in a non-partisan way.

Both the provincial and federal governments have placed high priority on rebuilding the economy, deficit reduction/elimination, energy self- sufficiency and environmental protection. Yet I believe they must do more to work effectively with the municipal sector.

In particular, the higher levels of government need to reward, and not penalize, those municipalities that have taken full responsibility for their financial health when it comes to grant applications. The large infrastructure projects cannot be completed by municipalities alone. Having made the hard choices and having your financial house in order should not be a drawback in obtaining infrastructure funding from the provincial or federal levels of government.

There is no question our infrastructure continues to be a priority. We have completed our lifecycle plan and can now look to new capital initiatives, implementing the Lakewood Park

Master Plan, and initiating the Community Improvement Plan for the revitalization of the Tecumseh Road business corridor. We will also continue our commitment to our rural residents to provide further service upgrades.

As some of you know from experience, I could talk for hours about my vision for Tecumseh. As my time tonight is more limited, I would just like to touch on some of my additional priorities. These include:

- Continuing to put Oldcastle on full municipal services
- Enhancing relationships with key community stakeholders
- Defending the importance of keeping small neighbourhood schools open
- Working with the County to increase Manning Road capacity
- Partnering on a regional transit system
- Exploring inter-municipal services, and
- Implementing the new Ontario Provincial Police billing model, which will bring residents \$2 million in tax relief over the next 5 years.

I also believe there are numerous potential enhancements to our Parks and Recreation Facilities to explore, such as:

- The development of enhanced turf and track at L'Essor high school;
- The implementation of the next phase of the Lakewood South Park Development, including walking and bike trails, an amphitheatre and other amenities; and finally
- Enhanced indoor sports facilities such as an indoor soccer complex and walking track.

We have so much to be proud of in Tecumseh: beautiful residential neighbourhoods, a varied commercial sector, rich agricultural land, a solid industrial base, and a wealth of parks and recreational facilities.

We are blessed with a number of dedicated and hardworking volunteers that contribute greatly to the Town's quality of life.

It is now time to look to the future with a renewed sense of optimism; to build on the strengths of our community and our people.

But we can't do it alone. This is your Council. You have the right and, I hope, the desire to be part of the process. I hope you take the time to be informed and to express your views. Town Hall is always open to you and we are never more than a phone call away.

It is only by working together – informed residents, a talented and skilled Administrative staff dedicated to the highest standard of customer service, and an open and accessible Council – that Tecumseh can continue to move forward and remain one of the best places in Ontario in which to live, work, invest and play.

I look forward to the next four years. It is an honour to continue serving as your Mayor.

I will leave you with this quote by Robert F. Kennedy – “few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.”

Thank you.