

***The following letter was submitted to local Councillor Kevin LePage
by Kevin Frankish the host of Breakfast Television
and 20 year Barrie resident***

Kevin,

I do not know what side of the Park Place debate you find yourself on, but as long time Barrie resident I have to let you know my view and hope you pass it on to the rest of council.

I have lived in this city for more than 20 years. I have watched Barrie grow. I am very aware of what makes this city great and also what mistakes have been made to hinder its healthy growth.

I realize that some members of council are painting Park Place as an evil empire that will destroy the downtown, cause businesses to close their doors and create low paying jobs. It is time this city changes its thinking to come into line with realities of the 21st Century. A city, in this day and age, is very much a business. We are in competition with all the other towns and cities for miles around. We want to attract residents and business here. We want to give them a reason to live and shop here...not in Newmarket...not in Vaughan...not even in Toronto...but in Barrie.

I am very sad to say that the days of a Central Business District have passed.

Don't get me wrong. A vibrant downtown is still essential for the survival of any community. (I am disgusted and embarrassed with the current state of our downtown...but that is another letter) The dinosaurs of the past fought projects such as Park Place.

Car dealers are a good example. There was a time that they would build as far away from each other as possible. Now...we have auto malls! Car dealers build right next door to each other. Why? DESTINATION! It soon became obvious to those in the know that competition didn't kill business, it created it. Wasn't our slogan a few years back "DESTINATION BARRIE"? Ask yourself the question why we used that word -- DESTINATION.

I see Park Place as a reason to bring people to Barrie. Many will continue their journey into our downtown...many who would otherwise never have ventured north of Highway 9.

As for potential traffic problems...they are already there! Molson Park drive will not become worse with Park Place, it will become better...how? It will finally force this city to stop ignoring simple solutions:

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- a new exit at Big Bay Point and Hwy 400 (allowing access to and from the highway and an alternative route to Molson Park with the joining of Big Bay Point Road and Harvie Road. This would take a lot of pressure off of Molson Park)
- the cutting through of Bryne Drive (which should have been done years ago)
- alternative routes in and out of the Bryne Drive commercial centre (perhaps joining with Veterans Drive or with Salem Road with access under the 400 to Lockhart)
- Double left turn lanes added to the current Highway ramps as well as Barrie View Drive
- proper coordination of traffic light timing on Molson Park Drive
- changes to the parking lot in the Wal Mart power centre to allow faster entrance off of Molson Park Drive

As for the question of jobs. Certainly a big factory may bring in higher paying jobs. Don't fool yourself into thinking that all these workers will live and spend their money in Barrie. If we were by some miracle able to land a large operation...there is still the question of 'Destination.' I would bet that many of these workers would spend the money they earned in these high paying jobs on a home closer to the shopping and lifestyle of Newmarket or Vaughan.

Barrie is at a crossroads. We can continue with planning put into place a hundred years ago or realize that our world has changed.

This entire process has taken too long. Years ago this city was fighting to keep malls out...things changed despite the council of the day.

I biked down Bradford Street and then through downtown yesterday. I was saddened at what is becoming of the city I used to brag about. There is no reason that current revitalization plans for the core would have to suffer under Park Place. If anything the two projects compliment each other.

Please don't let my city wither away as time passes it by.

How does this council want to be remembered...as a roadblock to success or the authors of it.

Kevin Frankish
Host Breakfast Television
Barrie Resident

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