

BOUNDARY ALTERATION – 2014 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Good evening City Council, Members of the Public,

My name is Chad Novak, and I am the founder of the **Saskatchewan Taxpayers Advocacy Group**, which is a grassroots organization that is intended to bring a level of accountability and transparency to our Municipal Governments. You can find more information on our efforts at www.chad4regina.com.

This evening, you have before you a recommendation to approve Property Tax Exemptions to the tune of ***\$686,077.28, just for the 2014 year alone***. This is due to annexation of lands that many Regina residents have raised concerns about, given that it has not been demonstrated to them that there is an actual need for these extra lands. We are very cognisant of the fact that we have an affordable housing and homelessness crisis in our fair City. However, that is not intended to be used as justification to simply annex lands at your free will, nor is it an excuse to encourage further housing development, regardless of the market price, or considering the very real barriers to entry in our current housing market. I reference the Housing First initiative that is proven worldwide, and is only now being implemented in Regina, due to a requirement by the Federal Government to do so. Many other jurisdictions also have the province and municipalities assisting with the Housing First initiative financially, but it appears as though this is not the situation here in Regina, or in Saskatchewan.

Upon a detailed review of the list of properties included in the report before you this evening, it seems as though this is not being done in a fair and equitable manner with the rest of the citizens of Regina, and it is our genuine concern that these exemptions are being offered to individuals, companies or organizations that simply don't financially require the exemptions. Of course these land owners would argue that they are entitled to the exemptions, given that they aren't being provided the same level of services as other serviced lots in Regina, but this is also the same concern that your very administration have raised with the desire for Wascana Village to be built to the Southeast of our City Limits. If it can be demonstrated that these land owners are actually some of the parties that formally requested that the City of Regina annex their lands in the first place, then it would be reasonable to assume that they should have been cognisant of the potential financial implications of such a request. Surely the City of Regina would have provided them full disclosure of the pros and cons of annexation, during the due diligence process of the annexation.

It is our genuine concern that this is unfair to other taxpayers in the City of Regina who have requested similar tax exemptions or other assistance by the City of Regina and been refused for a number of different reasons. Other perceived unfair exemptions, most notably, of course, would be the Saskatchewan Roughriders, Regina Airport Authority and the Royal Regina Golf Course. The latter of which was, thankfully, denied by your administration.

We currently have a situation in Regina that is unacceptable to many taxpayers, on a socially responsible level, but also on a moral level. We have crumbling roads around us, core infrastructure that needs desperate attention, and a pension deficit in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Yet, our administration doesn't seem to bat an eye at approving record debt for a stadium, tax breaks for those that have failed to demonstrate the financial need for these breaks, and taxpayers being told they must pay thousands of dollars to get their basic infrastructure restored to the condition it was when the properties were built some 50-75 years ago. I don't know about you, but I would consider yourselves lucky that taxpayers of Regina haven't started a tax revolt, similar to how businesses did back in the 1980's, which led to the elimination of the business tax. This is a democracy that we live in, and **all taxpayers deserve fair and equitable treatment**, and I would respectfully request that this be considered this evening when you vote on this recommendation before you, and **deny every single request in full**.

Thank you for your time, and I would gladly answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Chad A. Novak, CMA

Saskatchewan Taxpayers Advocacy Group

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CHAD NOVAK FOR TAXPAYERS OF REGINA

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Founder of the
Saskatchewan Taxpayers Advocacy Group

PROUDLY STANDING UP FOR REGINA
-- INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYER RIGHTS --
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