
From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 7:40 AM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Request to Speak - Jason Aebig and Keith Moen - Property Tax Ratio and Taxation Policy - CK 1920-1

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Submitted on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 - 07:40

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Date Wednesday, March 17, 2021

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Jason & Keith

Last Name Aebig & Moen

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Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce & NSBA

Subject Property Tax Ratio and Taxation Policy

Meeting (if known) City Council Meeting - March 22

Comments

Please accept the attached letter on behalf of Jason Aebig, CEO of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce and

Keith Moen, Executive Director of the NSBA to be included in the March 22nd City Council Meeting and as a request to speak at said meeting.

Mr.Aebig and Mr.Moen would respectfully request the opportunity to both appear on the agenda and address City Council separately. Although both organizations are submitting the attached document outlining the joint positing

on the property tax ratio and taxation policy, both organizations would like an opportunity to address priorities.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

March 17, 2021

Attention: City Council

Saskatoon City Hall
222 3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

RE: Property Tax Ratio and Taxation Policy

Dear City Council,

Over the past several months, the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce and NSBA have worked collaboratively meeting with elected officials and the city administration to discuss tax policy and what effects shifts in the tax ratio will have on the business community. In those discussions and subsequent presentation to Council's Finance Committee on March 8, 2021, we communicated the importance of avoiding a policy change that would cause our local businesses, their employees and families economic hardship at this time. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, our singular focus should be Saskatoon's economic rebound and the recovery of the jobs, income and growth we lost to COVID-19.

An increase to the commercial-to-residential tax ratio would have a negative impact on Saskatoon's economic recovery at this critical time. The businesses of the city are ready and eager to recover, but they are in a fragile state in which the ability to extract more from them is weak. Every dollar that is extracted in taxes is one less dollar that can be leveraged to rehire, reinvest in operations and reopen to their full capacity. Saskatoon's business will accelerate our recovery if given the chance.

At this point in the reassessment cycle, some like to debate the "shift in tax burden" between residents and business however, a business-friendly tax environment enables both businesses and citizens to flourish. Growing the pie – rather than debating how to divide it – should be our ultimate goal. Commercial increases inevitably always hurt the individual taxpayer in the end as increases are passed along to the resident in the prices that they pay for the products and services that they use every day. Ultimately, we all want Saskatoon to be an affordable place to live and work with a thriving commercial base.

Protecting and growing the commercial base must be a priority as all citizens benefit from a thriving commercial base. Businesses pay a tax surcharge which helps to reduce the taxes that residents would otherwise pay for city services they want and expect. On the same hand, businesses create jobs and income which will create a path to homeownership thus helping to expand the residential base too. The vibrancy and safety of core neighborhoods is sustained by business anchors that increase residential property values, increase density and make them more attractive places to live.

In December, the province lowered the Percentage of Value used to calculate taxable assessments on commercial properties to jumpstart our economic recovery. If the ratio were increased, Council would effectively erase the impact of this relief and hurt local businesses working hard to recover. Aligning efforts with the province is critical to providing this relief to businesses, giving them the means and opportunity to recover and grow. City Council's leadership can ensure that Saskatoon takes its first critical steps on the path to recovery. Partnering with the province, and finding savings in the city's budget to make it possible, will

make all the difference for Saskatoon businesses needing a boost.

By avoiding an increase to the current ratio, we can avoid a setback where we lose the progress made over the last 7 years, erode our commercial and residential tax base, and stall our post-COVID economic recovery.

In light of COVID-19 and the financial toll it continues to exact on our economy, it's the right thing to do – and it will enable our businesses to help Saskatoon rebound stronger than ever.

Sincerely,



Jason Aebig
CEO
Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce



Keith Moen
Executive Director
NSBA

