

Scott Hennig

From: Jon Lord <jonlord@shaw.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 05, 2010 9:48 PM
To: shennig@taxpayer.com
Subject: survey results
Attachments: O&E energyconservation#1.doc

Jon Lord for Mayor of Calgary

Scott: I believe if you check you may find that back in 1996 or so, I was nominated as Canadian Taxfighter of the Year for the Canadian Taxpayer's Federation. I believe that was related to my work of more than a decade of fighting against small business taxation in Calgary and elsewhere, and for my initiatives to fight high costs at City Hall including a motion that ended up reducing costs by over \$100 million dollars (changing lightbulbs) . I have attached documentation on this, above. This is just part of the many issues I worked on that were instrumental in freezing business taxes for several years while I was on Council, and getting them reduced Provincially while I was an MLA.

1. Rate of inflation? Almost zero now, maybe going negative. I'd love to keep the business taxes on a reduction mode, no increases, only decreases. That would take some doing politically, but I did get into it before and did succeed at it, as part of the Tax revolt I was instrumental in organizing, BEFORE I was ever in politics. Council did support our initiative to FREEZE the taxes, effectively lowering them given inflation rates in the '90's – so this can be done I believe. YES, limit property tax increases to the rate of inflation only.
2. Your questionnaire has 2 questions that might sound simple, but in fact are quite complicated. The first is the phase out of the business tax..... which of course, if that is what happened, I would be supportive of. However, in all discussion of this, they have never talked about "phasing out" of the tax (\$200 million) they have only talked about "eliminating" the business tax" by "consolidating it" which means the business tax goes away, but business (non-residential property tax) goes up by \$200 million. In fact, given that the reason for the "business tax" was that it was only levied against tenants of leased premises, the business tax on top of the non-residential property tax, was a neat way to deal with vacancies. Consolidating the business tax into the business property tax, would then leave the question of vacant premises unanswered....and the City would in fact collect MORE taxes as tenants in properties would be paying MORE taxes to pay for Vacant properties next door. So, unless you have a way to deduct collecting property taxes on vacant space, so that existing tenants don't pay MORE taxes as a result of the City collecting more taxes now on vacant spaces – it would appear that the least evil is to continue with the business tax. I will not be supporting any initiative that ends up with business paying MORE taxes, regardless of how well-meaning the initiative was. So YES, I support eliminating/phasing out the business tax and NOT consolidating it.
3. Do I support using tax dollars to fund the construction of a replacement for the Saddledome? Boy, they'd have to make one heck of a case for that, given the current state of affairs the City is in financially. I can't see it happening at all, that is for sure. What would be the business case? Answer NO.

Question 4 YES Totally support an independent Auditor, with sweeping powers of requisition. Complicated however, to ensure they don't become a growing bureaucracy of their own, with too much power uncontrolled by Council or anyone else, such as what has occurred elsewhere in the US. Suggest careful implementation by someone experienced only, such as myself.

Question 5 This would dramatically change democracy in favour of incumbents. Simplistic solution that is playing with fire. You may remember I brought Bill 207 the Municipal Councilor Disclosure and Protection Act as the MLA – the most comprehensive and encompassing disclosure Bill in decades. You can read the debate in Hansard, where I was forced at the last minute to water it down, and even then it still lost - although only by a few votes. It would have fixed everything that we are seeing happen now, and I note that my former colleagues are wrestling with a new version of it that is much more watered down now that they see the problems that I saw back then.

Since I have no choice, I will argue the reasons why we DON'T want to do this later. So YES, I am forced to disclose, prior to the election, that I have hardly raised anywhere near as much money as the front runner, leading to me not being able to raise any more money at all as soon as I disclose that – since no one will contribute to a campaign that doesn't look like the one that has collected the most money and is therefore likely to win. Everyone wants to be on the winning team, and the earlier they can find that out, the better. Developers, can't afford to NOT be on the winning team, for they fear retaliation. In fact, when the front runner disclosed he had raised \$700,000.....virtually all other candidates saw their fundraising efforts dry right up instantly. What a DUMB idea, forcing Challengers to have to disclose. Front runners, love to disclose. This pre-disclosure idea of Naheeds, could hurt democracy by making challenges virtually impossible, and causing possible contributors, to reconsider, given that they might be subject to "pushback" from incumbents enraged that supporters gave money to their opponent.

I am all in favour of INTELLIGENT DISCLOSURE. I am NOT in favour of DUMB DISCLOSURE, that favours incumbents and makes it impossible for challengers to raise money. Forcing people to disclose, prior to election? Kills all challengers off instantly, unless they have already raised more money than the favoured front runners/incumbents. You may wish to discuss this with me sometime.

Jon Lord
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The Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) is a non-partisan, non-profit advocacy organization committed to lower taxes, less waste and more government accountability. We have 74,000 supporters nation-wide, with 16,000 of them here in Alberta.

During elections, we regularly provide information to our supporters as to where various candidates stand on issues important to them.

As such we have prepared a five question survey for you to complete. Your response will be released publicly on our website: www.taxpayer.com as well as sent directly to our supporters in Calgary.

Please complete the following survey and fax it back to 1-877-482-1744 or e-mail it to shennig@taxpayer.com by Tuesday, October 5th.

1. Do you support limiting annual property tax bill increases to Calgary's inflation rate?

Yes No Undecided

2. Do you support phasing out the business tax in Calgary?

Yes No Undecided

3. Do you support using municipal tax dollars to fund the construction of a replacement for the Saddledome?

Yes No Undecided

4. Do you support the creation of a truly independent Auditor General for the City of Calgary that would report to the public and would be able to set their own audit priorities (ie. not set or approved by city council or an audit committee)?

Yes No Undecided

5. Will you pro-actively disclose publicly a list of who contributed to your campaign and in what amount prior to the October 18 vote?

Yes No Undecided

Candidate information:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Ward/Position: _____

Jon Lord

"...says People first.."

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