

Toronto Budget Committee
November 6, 2013

Re: Waste collection fees for non-profits and charities

My name is Lois Griffin and I am here to speak on behalf of Our Saviour Lutheran Church, 2705 Islington Ave. in Etobicoke. I am the head trustee at our church. I am here to ask you to not reinstate the fees for charities.

Our church, like most churches, is conscious of our responsibility in the community. Besides meeting people's spiritual needs, we also endeavour to help look after the social needs of people. To that end we operate a weekly food bank, in affiliation with the Daily Bread Food Bank, and we provide weekly ESL and computer training classes, all of this done by volunteers. Until recently, we have been providing our facilities free of charge for a local Scouts Group. (They unfortunately have had to withdraw due to a lack of enrolment.) In addition, we operate a senior's apartment next door to the church, with our members on the board offering many hours of volunteer time.

According to your staff report, the estimated revenue from these fees in 2014 will be about \$.3M (or less if more recycling is done.) On that basis, in 4 years the revenue might be \$1.2M, about 0.3% of this years' gross garbage budget of \$354M. In other words, it will never be a major revenue generator. **But it will have major impact on the charities.**

You may not understand why imposing garbage fees on churches is such a big problem. Our church, like many churches these days, is struggling to make ends meet. We are reliant on the contributions of our members to pay our bills. As members age, die, move out of the city, our revenue base is shrinking. In our area, the majority of new members tend to be recent immigrants, who themselves are struggling to find work, and have limited incomes. We are already having difficulty meeting our budget needs. (We have run a deficit for the last few years.). We cannot do as businesses do and raise the cost of our products. We can't raise taxes as government can. And we can't continue to squeeze more money out of our members.

It would be unfortunate if the result of reintroducing fees would be to force charities to reduce their community services. You can prevent that from happening by voting to not reinstate these fees.

Lois Griffin, Head Trustee
Our Saviour Lutheran Church
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