

Toronto City Councillor

Chin Lee

WARD 41 E-NEWS REPORT



Call: (416) 392-1375 E-mail: councillor_lee@toronto.ca

Dear Neighbour,

My staff and I would like to wish you and your family a Happy New Year. And a Happy Thai Pongal to ALL who celebrate the Tamil Thanksgiving Harvest Festival, dedicated to Surya. At the end of January, for those celebrating the Lunar New Year, we wish ALL a Happy Lunar New Year of the Horse and a Future Filled with Good Health, Happiness and Good Fortune.

Getting down to running the city, Toronto Council will be finalizing it's 2014 operating and capital budgets. I would like to invite residents to express their views on the 2014 budget process at my Budget Consultation Meetings. The first meeting will take place on January 14, 2014 at the Agincourt Community Recreation Centre from 7 pm to 9 pm while the second meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2014 at the Milliken Park Community Recreation Centre from 7 pm to 9 pm. For more information, see the events section of this newsletter or visit my website. Information on the City Budget can be found at <http://www.toronto.ca/budget/>.

In the recent ice storm over the holidays, our community came together and weathered the power outage and severe damage of our tree canopy. Many of my staff and I were without power for many days as were many residents in Ward 41. Cleanup from this storm continues.

Although an Emergency was NOT declared by the Mayor, Toronto Hydro did operate at their highest Level 3 Emergency Recovery Plan, and the Toronto Emergency Operations Centre was operating as though Toronto was in a state of emergency. In my over 40 years in Canada, I have NOT experience this level of severe ice-storm before. In the private industry before becoming a Councillor, I had a leading role in business continuity planning (BCP) and validation, and I can honestly tell you that no one can put together a perfect plan as there are too many variables to consider, changing conditions and technology, the human factor and the high cost of contingency. And you hopefully never have to use it, just like insurance. Basically you put a framework together, ensure you identify the key areas and higher probabilities and plan these areas better. And there will always be people who think they can do better - the 20/20 hind-sight syndrome. The city will learn from this and improve their processes and procedures, and I am hoping that the residents will learn from this too.

The costs to the city and it's agencies, as a result of the ice storm, are an estimated \$106 million. Combined with the costs of the July 8th, 2013 flood, at an estimated \$65 million, the unexpected costs will put significant pressure on the City's budget. As such the City Manager is recommending that City Council request that the Province declare Toronto a natural "disaster area", so we can apply for assistance from the Provincial and the Federal Governments, to defray these unexpected costs. A special Council meeting was called for Council to debate this

matter on Friday, January 10th. I had originally not favoured this as all monies is taxpayers, but after hearing all the information, speaking to constituents, and analysing the information, I will support the recommendations. The information and presentations about this is at <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.CC46.1>.

On the public transit front, Metrolinx is finally holding their PIC (Public Information Centre) # 2 session on the Stouffville Line Expansion at Agincourt CRC on January 28th evening, and I encourage everyone to come out and provide feedback. See Events below for more information. It is only through your participation that they will build a better system to serve us and the future generations.

Sincerely,

Chin Lee

Toronto City Councillor
Ward 41 - Scarborough Rouge River

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Ice Storm & Clean Up!

I will address cleanup first. Please visit www.toronto.ca, and click on the first image to get information about the cleanup efforts, with a Questions and Answers section. There is a map of where the cleanup crews currently are cleaning up.

During the outage, I visited different communities in the Ward to determine which areas and streets did not have power. Having BCP (Business Continuity Planning) experience, I knew that this severe storm and outage exceeded Hydro's and 311's capacity.

At the height of the outage, I estimate that 70% of Ward 41 was without power. From my drive-a-rounds, and constituents informing us of their own situation (via emails and phone calls), we reported the outages to Toronto Hydro to ensure people were not forgotten. Throughout the outage, my office tracked the situation, and provided updates to my e-news subscribers and any others who contacted my office, and hoping through them, others will also be informed. Constituents complained that they could not get through to Hydro or 311, or Hydro told them their power was restored inaccurately. My own house lost power at 3 AM on Dec 22 (Sunday), and was restored just before 5 PM on Dec 28 (Saturday). Luckily, most the Ward north of Finch was restored by early Tuesday morning. The last pocket was restored on Dec 29th (Sunday) evening, although there were individual homes still without power.

Many neighbours helped each other, while city staff and volunteers helped the most vulnerable, as City and Hydro crews worked shifts together through the holidays, day and night, to clear debris and restore power. One warming (reception) centre was opened at the Agincourt CRC, and on my first visit was informed that 140 cots had been set up, I knew it was

not enough, so I suggested they increase the numbers. At the peak, 300 pp were accommodated. The staff, volunteers and Canada Red Cross did a great job here. On the first night, there was also an issue with insufficient food, so MPP Soo Wong arrange for pizza delivery.

It was a stressful time for us all but I am pleased that we were able to pull together to get through this crisis. My neighbours helped me, while I helped others, and that was happening throughout the City. Some people were resourceful and used their own improvising skills to overcome the power outage. Some were more prepared than others to outlast the power outage.

Each of us will have to review our own circumstances and see **how we can improve our own processes**. Although the City does have the Emergency Management, someone has to report that emergency and good information will have to be provided to enable them to respond and it takes time to get to the emergency location. These emergencies can be medical, fire, crime, etc.

I can tell you that I did have a plan myself, but it can be improved. 4 years ago I had a gas fireplace installed, when I converted my house from electric heat to natural gas heating, and I made sure that it did not need electricity to operate, for this kind of situation. I bought a battery power pack just 1 week before the ice storm to run at least some lights, and I bought a used set of snow tires for my car and installed that just before the storm to ensure I could get around without being stuck. I have a 6-year new fridge (which replaced a harvest gold fridge from the 60's) and that kept the freezer cold enough for 4 days. Lessons learned: I did not plan for a 6-day power outage, as the longest prior outage I had ever experience in my life was 2-days, and that was in the Goldhawk area, which did not impact me. The gas fireplace insert worked, but the blower fan is electric, so without the blower fan, heat output is only a fraction (in radiant heat), so did not keep my house warm enough. My battery power-pack only lasted 1 hour when I plugged in the blower fan, and it took more than 10 hours to fully charge, so I returned the battery pack for a credit and look for something better.

I reported a suspicious person to the police in a blacked-out pocket, and there was a break-in into at least one garage in that area, and I followed that person in my car after spotting him, and when I was following him, he did not do anything, he was just walking.

Will My Insurance Cover Ice Storm Damage?

The CBC has an article titled, "Insurance and the Ice Storm: Are You Covered?" It discusses in a general sense, whether or not insurance policies will cover storm related damage. "It depends on individual policies, but there are some general guidelines", according to the CBC. This past week, I called my own home insurance to see what my home insurance covers, as 3 of my large trees sustained heavy damage, and about half of the debris fell in my neighbours' backyards, and I can confirm that the information contained in the CBC article is correct.

Property insurance typically covers damage to homes caused by falling tree branches, ice, snow, rain and wind according to the CBC. When wind damage allows snow and water to enter homes through openings it destroys personal property. Homeowners with contents insurance should be covered by their policies for such types of damage.

Damage to vehicles caused by falling tree branches, ice, wind and rain are covered if the owner has comprehensive coverage.

The CBC reports that if your neighbour's tree or a City tree causes damage to your property, report the damage to your own insurance company. I was informed by my insurance company that any property damage to my property is covered under my policy, subject to the deductible. Damage to my neighbours' property should be reported to their own insurance company.

For trees and branches that have fallen on your yard but have not caused any property damage, the property owner is responsible for the costs of cleanup and removal. The CBC article advises, "potential claimants to take pictures of any damage" as soon as it happens.

To read the full article, go to: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/insurance-and-the-ice-storm-are-you-covered-1.2474389>

Budget Consultation Meetings

The Budget Consultation Meetings are a forum where residents can express their opinions on Toronto's budget process for 2014. Property taxes are expected to rise by 2.52% for home owners - 0.5% of which is dedicated to building the Scarborough subway extension. For more information on where the money will be spent, please read the article "2014 City of Toronto Budget" in my 2013/2014 Winter Newsletter. You can also access the budget article on my website. Do you support this increase? You can let me know what you think at the budget meetings.

Tuesday, January 14, 2014. Agincourt Community Recreation Centre. 31 Glen Watford Dr. 7 pm to 9 pm.

Tuesday, January 21, 2014. Milliken Park Community Recreation Centre. 4325 McCowan Rd. 7 pm to 9 pm.

Connect with me Online

I have traditionally connected with residents through my office, in-person or through my newsletter and e-newsletter. To keep residents up-to-date and to become more accessible to residents I have launched my website and Flickr photo stream. A YouTube channel is forthcoming. My staff are still in the process of uploading content and customizing these communication channels but I encourage you to take a look at the content currently available. Feedback is appreciated.

Website: <http://chinlee41.wordpress.com>

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/councillorchinlee41>

Improved GO Train and Bus Service for the New Year

Starting January 4, 2014, GO Transit is adding more GO train and bus trips to better serve commuters. The earliest scheduled GO Train now stops at Milliken GO station at 5:56 A.M., Agincourt GO station at 6:02 A.M. and Kennedy GO station at 6:09 A.M. Previously, this first scheduled GO Train by-passed these three Scarborough stations. For more information on these changes, visit www.gotransit.com.

Events

January 14th, 2014 – Budget Consultation Meeting – Agincourt Community Recreation Centre – 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Join Councillor Lee to discuss the City of Toronto's 2014 Operating and Capital Budgets. For more information click [here](#).

January 21st, 2014 – Budget Consultation Meeting – Milliken Park Community Recreation Centre – 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Join Councillor Lee to discuss the City of Toronto's 2014 Operating and Capital Budgets. For more information click [here](#).

January 25th, 2014 – Toronto Public Health Flu Clinics – Scarborough Civic Centre – 3:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

Get your free flu shot at the [Scarborough Civic Centre - 150 Borough Dr.](#) (just south of Scarborough Town Centre).

January 28th, 2014 – Stouffville Corridor Rail Service Expansion – Agincourt Community Recreation Centre – 6:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

GO Transit will be hosting a public information session on service expansion plans for the Stouffville rail corridor. The provincial transit authority is undertaking an Environmental Assessment for the Stouffville GO Train line south of Kennedy GO Station in Scarborough to Unionville GO Station in Markham. The study will identify the necessary infrastructure improvements needed to enhance the quality of service offered on this corridor. GO Transit staff will answer questions and receive comments from the public following a presentation on the project.

February 2nd, 2014 – Chinese Collective Arts Association – Scarborough Civic Centre (150 Borough Dr.) – Activity Booths 12:00 P.M. (noon) – Chinese New Year Variety Show 2:00 P.M.

CCAA is celebrating the Year of the Horse in style! Join them for their annual festivities that include a colouring contest, arts and crafts, games, Chinese calligraphy scrolls, lion dance, Chinese dance performances, singing and photos with the God of Fortune! This is a free event for all ages.