



CHATHAM-KENT
CHAMBER *of*
COMMERCE

October 2, 2008

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
315 King St. W.
Chatham, Ontario N7M 5K8

Hand Delivered

Attention: Mayor Hope and Council

Dear Mayor and Council:

For over a decade, the Capitol Theatre initiative has been in our local public eye in an effort to raise money, awareness and support for a very worthwhile endeavor. The original mindset was intended to enhance Chatham's downtown core by giving new life to our past by restoring the Capitol Theatre. In the early stages of this community effort, and based on a consultant's feasibility report, it was determined a simple refurbishment would not reflect what was best for the municipality. Chatham-Kent Council approved the consultant's recommendation to make the necessary enhancements that would tremendously augment the marketability to our downtown with the capacity to accommodate world-class entertainment. City Hall at that time proclaimed "go big or go home". The concept pitched by city hall to create a grandiose stage for the theatrical and musical arts inspired the spirit of a very well rounded group of capable volunteers.

As the years have passed, so too has change in our elected mayors, council members and administrative figures. Despite this, the goal of the Capitol Theatre Association to forge onward has resulted in strong support from the Province of Ontario as well as the Government of Canada. Our superior levels of government have believed in the project, supported it financially and are satisfied that investments made so far (including the Job Creation Program which contributes to the majority of Capitol Theatre investment to date) have been worthwhile.

Without dwelling too harshly on some the mistakes of councils past (who had the opportunity to set the stage much earlier), their inability to see the tremendous benefit attached to the Capitol Theatre assassinated any previously realistic vision of our being able to enjoy such today. The downtown core of the most prominent entity of our "community of communities" has appealing character and is working toward being an offering of which we can all be proud. There are many

new examples of retail, restaurants and development attracted to the downtown area in large part because of the pending opening of the Capitol. With this positive inertia in place already, logic dictates the influence will only get stronger when the theatre opens its doors. Getting the Capitol

Theatre open will be the first move forward in a domino effect paving way for the lifestyle your constituents deserve and those beyond our municipal borders desire. Chatham-Kent Mayor and CEO Randy Hope is absolutely correct when stating, “The Capitol Theatre is an integral part of the growth of Chatham-Kent.” (as found in the 2008 Capitol Theatre calendar for the month of October).

Politically speaking, it is fair to surmise that the vocal minority of the constituent base would make it easy for a councilor without vision to turn the other way. After reviewing and comprehending the report to be tabled, the Board of Directors of Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce urges council to – once and for all – put the Capitol Theatre on the map. We strongly and sternly recommend approval as presented by administration. The upside of completion profoundly outweighs the opportunity cost of the alternative. A “NO” vote will cost local trades and sub-trades and bring detriment to commerce who would benefit from completion. Voting against the proposal will cost our municipality an estimated \$7.8M in new investment (via Superbuild and MIII) while also suggesting the support we need from our superior levels of government is neither needed, nor appreciated. There has been too much invested in time and money by the Municipality, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada to let this opportunity for greatness slip through the hands of our community. The final decision is on the shoulders of council. We need leadership with the foresight to recognize the tremendous gain of this project and the tenacity to handle potential scrutiny from those who, at this point in time, do not.

Chatham-Kent is envied by many communities for what we are trying to create as public and private investment work together for prosperity. Along with many private economic drivers, the Capitol Theatre will ultimately best demonstrate council’s awareness to the benefits of a vibrant downtown core. We expect council to do what is best for the municipality and live up to achieving the goal which was born at City Hall. Any council that is in favour of increasing employment, augmenting the social and cultural appeal and – perhaps most importantly – demonstrating an ability to see a project through is a council in favour of the Capitol Theatre.

Yours in business,

Brent DeNure, Chair
Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce