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The Mayor Reflects on His Term



Mayor Charles Gosling has been in office since July 2009. Looking back at the last three years, he shares some of the historic highlights of his administration.

What have been some of the highlights for you?

Helping to make the City's activities more transparent has been a real achievement. I am very proud of the fact that Board meetings were opened to the public within four months of taking office, overturning a 200 plus year history of meeting behind closed doors.

It's great to know that people are being listened to and that their concerns are being put forward for consideration. Now they can see for themselves how the organisation operates. The public are also able to get involved with the decision-making process, ask questions, make comments and presentations prior to

the Board discussing and voting on issues.

Another highlight for me was the march on Parliament - following the proposed abolition of both the Corporations of Hamilton and St George. It was fantastic to see so many Bermudians showing their support for both Councils and as a result, the two Municipalities continue.

The last election was very different in that your team ran for election as a group. What are the pros and cons of this approach?

It was the first time in the City of Hamilton's history that Council Members were elected as a group openly supporting each other. In previous elections, city officials ran individually, each canvassing and lobbying separately with little accountability. Our team joined forces and were all successful in our bid for office.

When you form a group in this way, you are prioritising your agenda and that really does help get things done. Trying to get nine people with nine different causes to agree on anything in an operation such as ours can be challenging. You can spend a lot of time arguing back and forth without decisions going through - so this new approach can help speed up the process.

One of the negatives though is that you don't necessarily have the breadth of discussion that you should have. Having more public input is a way of getting around that situation. The majority of Members elected at that time had some experience, but there is a learning curve involved. At the next election it would be good to continue with some Members of the Board who have gained this experience.

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New Works Depot for City of Hamilton

Last May, the City of Hamilton's entire Operations arm moved to a brand new, purpose-built depot at Laffan Street. Patrick Cooper, City Engineer, who was involved in the construction of the depot, explains how the new facilities have improved the working environment for employees.

All Operations are now based at the new depot. This includes Engineering, Parks, Sanitation, Human Resources and Ports. We have a staff of just under 100 people here. We also have various workshops including vehicle maintenance, a spray paint booth for our trucks, welding and electronic repairs, space for making road signs, and pay-and-display maintenance facilities.

The old depot on Dundonald Street opened in 1965. Back then, we had a staff of just 45 people, but over time, technology moved on, trucks



“Thanks to the new depot, we are all now located in one place and as a result, communication between employees is far better.”

got bigger and the City acquired more staff, equipment and vehicles. So gradually, we out-grew that building. It had limited office space and staff were located all over the place.

There were no women's washrooms on site, or any locker space, and the small vehicle workshop we had was not able to accommodate our large, modern trucks.

Thanks to the new depot, we are all now located in one place and as a result, communication between employees is far better. The new building is 30,000sq ft and is laid out over four floors, while the yard covers 20,000sq ft and includes a fuelling station, storage bins, parking for trash trucks, plenty of accommodation for all our equipment and a spray-paint booth that can accommodate any sized truck. It's great to have a good, new, clean space for people to work in. The majority of employees are very pleased with the new building and really appreciate all the facilities. Conditions here are vastly improved and employees have access to showers, a gym and a large lunch room.

There was a slight delay in completing the new building. This was due to unforeseen problems with piling. The ground at the new site is good in some

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areas, but marshy in others. As a result, the estimates for piling were a little out, so more materials had to be shipped in to complete this part of the construction process. This meant the project took a month or two longer than originally anticipated, but I'm pleased to say the overall project still came in on budget. Initially, we were meant to



have individual offices at the new site, but we decided to have an open plan layout instead in order to create a better working environment and help improve communication between various departments. In addition, a large storage area was changed to offices so Human Resources and the Ports Authority could be accommodated in the building.

With regard to the old works depot, we're not sure what the future holds yet. It is available for rent, but in the current economic

climate there hasn't been a great deal of interest. The building needs a good deal of money spent on it to bring it up to scratch before any business could comfortably operate out of it. However, there are numerous options available in terms of future plans for the space if it were to be demolished. It's a good piece of property which could be used for parking, turned into allotments or even developed into another city park.



The new building, designed by local architects Terceira Quarterly, has been entered into a design competition. The building will be judged on its overall aesthetics. It is a great design for a light, industrial building - with a glass encased staircase and good colour combination - with vivid red accent walls to break up the external facade. We will know the result in couple of months and hope it gets the recognition it deserves.

Safer Crossings in the City

Work is underway in Hamilton to replace the City's current traffic lights which are over twenty years old. New Puffin (pedestrian user-friendly intelligent crossing) lights have been installed at the junction of Parliament and Church Streets, and at the Victoria Street and Cedar Avenue intersection.

The new lights have modern safety features which will make intersections and crossings safer. The Walk/Don't Walk icons are displayed on a screen above the push-button - allowing pedestrians to view the screen and monitor traffic at the same time.

Puffin lights crossing area have a built-in tactile surface to assist people who are visually impaired. Textured paving on the sidewalk indicates to the pedestrian that they have reached the crossing area. Located under the panel display is a



button a visually impaired pedestrian can feel which provides another safety cue. The button will spin in the person's fingers when it is safe to cross the road. Additionally, audio cues will be placed in selected locations.

Puffin lights have also been installed at two crossings on Front Street - one outside Supermart and the other outside The Beach restaurant. Eventually, all the traffic lights in Hamilton will be replaced with this new system.



New Location for City Market

Hamilton's popular City Market has moved! It is now being held in Washington Street - opposite Pasta Basta. The new location means that there is plenty of parking nearby, including Bulls Head Car Park.

"After close consultation with the organisers, we identified this new location for the Market. The space has been prepared specifically for this important event," said Chief Operating Officer and Secretary for

The City of Hamilton, Mr Edward Benevides. "This season's City Market will include home grown and home made goods. We look forward to another spectacular year and encourage people to visit and shop every Saturday from now until June, 8am until noon."

In the event of inclement weather, the City Market will be held on the second level of Bulls Head Car Park.



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Knowing what you know now – what would you have done differently?

I would probably have handled certain aspects of the Municipalities Reform differently. In hindsight, we should have pushed a little harder in terms of getting the public to participate. We should have opened the public participation section of our meetings before the Reform Act - to show just how sincere our intentions were about making operations more transparent and accountable.

How would you like to be remembered as Mayor?

I hope as somebody who helped modernise the Corporation - striving to embrace the future rather than being seen as a bastion of the past. I hope that our Town Hall meetings, (I believe we have held more meetings than all previous administrations), have shown that we are reaching out to the community and addressing the issues the public have identified.

Also one who clearly separated the functions of Board and Operations. Our role is

to set policy and to ensure it is properly implemented - and it is important that the

"I believe it is important to empower people so they can get on with their jobs and do what they do best."

operations side of the City is allowed to get on and do its job. For some reason there has been great confusion in the past as to where those areas of responsibility began and ended. If you are setting policy and then getting involved in the day to day running of operations - you are just interfering. I believe it is important to empower people so they can get on with their jobs and do what they do best.

And the best way of being remembered is to see how much further these policies can be built upon. I certainly have additional ideas on broadening the public's ability to participate at Committee and Board level as well as learn about how the City is being run.

What advice would you give to any future Mayor?

You are here to ensure the operation of the city is as seamless as possible. You

are essentially a public servant which means being open and approachable at

all times. You need to be willing to listen and if unable to respond at that moment, make a commitment to respond to any concerns or issues people may have within a reasonable time-frame and be balanced in your response.

Your term is almost up. Do you plan to run again?

I am currently considering the future and should have made a decision by the middle of February. Three years is not a great amount of time, but I am relatively pleased with the way things have gone since I took this role on.

There are some important developments on the horizon for Hamilton. Everything the City does is a shared opportunity and the next Mayor, whoever that may be, should look to being not only a team leader, but also at being part of a great team.

New Deputy Mayor Appointed

Alderman John Harvey, JP, MBE, has been appointed Deputy Mayor following the resignation of Glen Smith from the position in February.

The Mayor of Hamilton, Charles Gosling said, "John has served as Alderman since 2009 and is also the Chairman of the Property Committee. We are delighted that he has agreed to take on this additional position. He will fill this role until the Municipal election in May."

Glen Smith stepped down as Deputy Mayor in order to stand for the One Bermuda Alliance party at the next general election.

The extra-ordinary election for the position of Alderman will take place in March.

Tree Planting for a Greener City

Hamilton is set to look even greener this year thanks to the City's new tree planting program. "The City-wide tree planting and rejuvenation scheme has been

trees at the Jubilee Park nursery on Parson's Road. Once planted around the City, the young saplings will be protected by tree guards. This is to help

"We have put a schedule in place, identified areas that need additional trees and locations where trees have to be replaced."

planned for a couple of years," said Chief Operating Officer and Secretary for The City of Hamilton, Mr Edward Benevides. "We have put a schedule in place, identified areas that need additional trees and locations where trees have to be replaced. The process involves removing trees that have become overgrown or diseased and replacing them with young trees that are ideal for the location."

City horticulturalists nurtured all the replacement

ensure that the trees are not damaged by motorists parking nearby. "We ask car drivers and passengers to use caution as they park and exit their vehicles, so as not to damage their automobiles or the trees."

The tree planting program will take several months to complete. Over time, fruit trees will be introduced to Hamilton parks. Once ripe, the fruit can be picked and enjoyed by members of the public.



Members' Highlights of 2011

Last year was a significant year for the City of Hamilton. Exciting changes and developments were introduced to help set Hamilton on course for a positive future. Members of the Council reflect on some of the highlights of 2011.

Marshall Minors



Seeing the Corporation's new works depot completed was a real highlight for me. The entire Operations department is now located under one roof at Laffan Street. As well as

having a vastly improved working environment, the team also have brand new facilities at their disposal. These modern, purpose-built premises include offices, workshops, storage and vehicle parking. The new depot is helping the Corporation to better serve the City. There has also been a lot of positive feedback from employees about the new location.

John Harvey



We have developed a better rapport with the Bermuda Government. This has resulted in

on-going meetings to address issues that are important for the City, our merchants, residents and Bermuda in general. This really stands out as a highlight for me.

Pamela Quarterly



I'm extremely proud of the fact that we were able to complete the new works depot for the City of Hamilton. This state-of-the-art facility allows a more efficient operation for the City. I'm pleased that it has been designed with the health of employees in mind, offering a gym

facility in which to improve their general fitness and well being.

The Corporation continued with its pledge to provide transparency to our citizens. Procedures are now in place to allow presentations and questions from our citizens during our monthly open Board meetings.

We have also introduced additional festivals and events to help increase the vitality of the City.

Dennis Tucker



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Without a doubt, the highlight of 2011 was giving the public the ability to make presentations to the Council. Holding open meetings shows that we are completely transparent and not operating in secret. Giving people the opportunity to get involved and have a say on issues affecting Hamilton is important. I am very happy with the new initiative the City has adopted.

J. Nicholas Swan



I was particularly proud of the fact that we were able to balance the books, despite the economic adversities. We also maintained our independence from Government encroachment, to some degree.

Pamela Ferreira



I think that the greatest accomplishment that the Members of the Corporation achieved since our election in 2009 was the oversight and protection of the assets and finances of the Corporation of Hamilton. Diligently protecting our finances allowed us to secure jobs for our staff during these very tough economic times.

Secondly, even though the Corporation was restricted severely financially, we completed the new works depot on budget. We were able to progress the Hamilton Waterfront as far as we could and developed a good relationship with Government to continue this ongoing project.

Finally, the Members voted to light up the City of Hamilton on a permanent basis. This sounds like a small decision, but it is one that will not only brighten up Hamilton but also sends a message of 'welcome' to our visitors. I look forward to seeing a brighter Hamilton in the future!

Walter Cross



My highlight was hearing that the Premier, the Hon. Paula Cox, JP, MP, wants to work with the private sector, tourism and the City of Hamilton to partner on the Waterfront Development. That's outstanding news. We didn't have this level of co-operation with the previous administration.

2012 City Events Schedule

City of Hamilton Car Show
Feb 25th 2pm - 7pm

City Scavenger Hunt
Mar 5th - 31st 4 weeks

City Food Festival
Mar 19th - 25th various

City Art Festival
Apr 28th - May 5th various

Summer Sundays
Tribute to the Legends
May 6th 3pm - 8pm

Summer Sundays
Queen's Diamond Jubilee
June 3rd 3pm - 8pm

City Fashion Festival
June 4th - 9th various

Summer Sundays
Rockin' de Rock
July 1st 3pm - 8pm

Summer Sundays
Lift Your Voices
Aug 5th 3pm - 8pm

City Family Festival
Aug 19th 2pm - 7pm

Summer Sundays
Island Vibes
Sept 2nd 3pm - 8pm

City Scavenger Hunt
Oct 1st - 26th 4 weeks

Please visit our website regularly as new events are added constantly - www.cityofhamilton.bm

