

Half of Calgary's council gets failing grade: Report card

BY KIM GUTTORMSON, CALGARY HERALD JUNE 15, 2009 12:14 PM



Ward 4 Alderman Bob Hawkesworth speaks to City Council in August 2008. A group of business lobbyists have given half of city council a failing grade on a number of issues, ranging from property tax increases to closing Memorial Drive.

Photograph by: Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald

CALGARY - A group of business lobbyists have given half of city council a failing grade on a number of issues, ranging from property tax increases to closing Memorial Drive.

"We're very concerned we're not getting the leadership our city deserves," Bill Partridge, executive vice-president of the Building Owner and Managers Association, said Monday. "This is intended to draw attention to how council performed for the people they purport to serve."

Calling itself the Coalition for Tax Fairness, eight of the nine members are business lobby groups. The ninth is the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Grades for individual council members ranged from an A+ for Ald. Ric McIver and an A for Ald. Andre Chabot to Fs for Aldermen Druh Farrell and Linda Fox-Mellway. Mayor Dave Bronconnier and Ald. Gord Lowe, chairman of the finance committee, received Ds.

Other grades included: B+ for Diane Colley-Urquhart, B for Joe Connelly and Jim Stevenson, C for Ray Jones, C- for Dale Hodges, D+ for Bob Hawkesworth and John Mar, D for Joe Ceci, D- for Brian Pincott.

The groups chose a number of council votes over the first half of this term and then awarded points based on whether that vote was considered taxpayer friendly or unfriendly.

The 32 votes chosen included election donation reform, changing the curbside recycling program to allow for the inclusion of private collectors, pedestrian bridges over the Bow River, increasing tipping fees at the landfill, reducing the use of plastic shopping bags, closing Memorial Drive for a street party and last fall's setting of the three-year budget.

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