

CLOSING THE REVOLVING DOOR OF JUSTICE

WHEREAS the City of Brantford has experienced a substantial increase in criminal activity leaving residents fearful for their personal safety and losing confidence in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS the increase in criminal activity is due in part to the failure of the justice system to hold in pre-trial custody many of the likely-to-reoffend individuals, including those who are in serious breach of prior bail conditions, a situation commonly referred to as the “revolving door of justice”; and

WHEREAS those involved in the justice system, from Justices of the Peace to those who have been arrested, acknowledge the “catch and release” bail system contributes to the increase in crime. One individual in particular, who plead guilty to several break and enter charges, together with breaches of probation and release order charges, advised the court during sentencing that he had been arrested 8 times in the previous year and felt that the system bore responsibility for failing to keep him in custody; and that being released repeatedly without the appropriate supports made it all but impossible for him to discontinue the criminal activity he engaged in; and

WHEREAS concerns continue to be raised by businesses, post-secondary institutions in the downtown area and their student bodies, neighbourhood associations, and citizens regarding the increased criminal activity; and

WHEREAS there is a pressing need for common sense bail reform that gives priority to the dignity and safety of victims over the wellbeing of criminals;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Kevin Davis, Mayor of the City of Brantford, on behalf of the Council of The Corporation of the City of Brantford, correspond with the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, insisting that steps be taken immediately by his government to strengthen the bail system, including:
 - a. imposing more demanding and stringent surety and supervision requirements; and
 - b. imposing more substantive and effective consequences for continued breaches of a judicial interim release order (as known as “bail”) resulting in pre-trial incarceration,

which changes are required to safeguard law abiding citizens and to restore the citizens faith in the criminal justice system; and
2. THAT the City Clerk BE DIRECTED to forward a copy of this resolution to Brant/Brantford MP Larry Brock and MPP Will Bouma; and
3. THAT the City Clerk BE DIRECTED to forward a copy of this resolution to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM); and

4. THAT the City Clerk BE DIRECTED to forward a copy of this resolution to the heads of all Ontario Municipalities with a request that those municipalities consider adopting a similar resolution.
5. THAT the City Solicitor BE DIRECTED to send the letter to be sent to the Honourable David Lametti to Brant County and the Six Nations of the Grand River to determine if they are willing to be signatories to the letter.