

# Mayor casts deciding vote on over \$230,000 pre-spend

By **Dan Gray** - September 14, 2021



The council meeting held last night was rife with seeming contention well before it was called to order. One particular item on the agenda was potentially set to generate lengthy discussion for many reasons. The \$230K ask for the Plaza that has yet to be approved formally, as well as accepted in the forum of public opinion was prominent and glaring.

“Really, no matter what form the plaza project proceeds in, the work that’s being contemplated here is primarily turning this into a public space.”



That was the tone set by Deputy CAO Tom Vair, at the mayor’s request, before the conversation around the \$230,000 pre-construction spend could even be started last night.

According to Vair, the city had already factored in the work with PUC and had tentatively scheduled it to start at the beginning of September, in anticipation of the project going forward.

“Obviously, we had a setback. And we hope to come back to Council on the 27th,” said Vair, outlining the timeline for full approval of the project. The setback he is referring to is the \$2.5 million dollar hole in the budget for the project, due to failure to secure funding in this amount through NOHFC.

Five councillors, Bruni, Shoemaker, Nero, Scott and Christian voted to delay the \$230,000 spend for two weeks to the 27th, when the full report and approval is due back to council. Vair confirmed it wouldn’t put the overall project behind, if that motion was approved.

The other five councillors, Hilsinger, Gardi, Vezeau-Allen, Dufour and Hollingsworth voted to move forward with the pre-spend.

With the vote split 5-5, the head of council, Mayor Christian Provenzano, voted in favour of spending the over \$230,000 despite lacking a concrete final decision on the project.

There are many unanswered questions about this build, including whether or not the land is polluted, how parking will be structured and where the rest of the money will come from.

Stay with us as we continue to provide you with information regarding what some in the community are referring to as a “legacy project”.

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### **Dan Gray**

A native of Centre Wellington, Ontario, I have worked as a freelance journalist all over the province of Ontario. Most recently I ran a local news page in my hometown of Fergus, Ontario. I look forward to bringing my experience covering breaking news, municipal matters and general interest stories to the team at Superior Media and communities we serve.

