

## GETTING THINGS DONE

By **Mayor Tom Mrakas**

At this past week's

General Committee meeting, Council discussed the proposed ?link? between the Library and the new addition to the Church Street School in Library Square.

Back in March, when

Council approved funding for Library Square, Council also asked staff to investigate creating a possible pedestrian link between the two buildings to provide a dry/temperature-controlled route for residents to get from one facility to the other and potentially connect them to Yonge Street.

And that is exactly what the proposed link does.

The pedestrian link is a feature that our Library CEO felt would be much needed in Library Square as it will connect residents to both facilities and enhance the uniqueness of this space.

And I agreed with him.

I believe the pedestrian bridge between the two buildings helps complete the Square and fosters the development of the unique gathering place that we envision.

The proposed link is estimated to cost \$3.5 million with 1.9 million of that coming from the Library Services Development Charges reserve fund.

As folks already know, development charges ? or DCs ? are charges that developers pay to help offset municipal costs for infrastructure such as roads, amenities, etc., that will be needed for new development.

And since we're talking about DCs, I just have to point out that DCs do not fully pay for growth ? they only cover about 70 per cent.

Councils have to find other ways to cover the remaining 30 per cent of infrastructure costs; as a result, municipalities across this country are facing an infrastructure deficit over \$60 billion. And things will get worse for municipalities in Ontario if Bill 108 goes forward in its current state.

One of the proposed changes outlined in Bill 108 is to scale back DC charges ? how and what

municipalities can collect to offset its hard and soft costs; ultimately, putting a bigger burden on the taxpayer to pay for infrastructure needs in our community. But that is for another article.

With regards to the link between the Library and the new addition to Church Street school, as the use of DCs are limited to specific municipal costs such as roads, amenities, etc., and as the proposed link is specific to the library and/or library services, its costs are eligible for DC funding.

At a meeting of the Library Board, the Board unanimously approved using the DC funds for the link.

The continued support of the Library Board and collaboration with Council is instrumental in moving Library Square from concept to reality

This is indeed exciting times for our downtown and our community!

Committee approved the above-ground link on a vote of 5-2 (Councillor Gaertner and Gallo opposed); the final vote will need to be ratified at Council.