

Councillor opposes base rate increase

Orléans EMC - April 16th 2010

EMC Editorial -

Dear Editor,

Recently the city of Ottawa proposed changes to the way that the city bills for water and sewage service. Under the changes proposed, part of residents' water bill would be a fixed amount every month.

On top of the fixed rate, a volume-based rate would apply, which is based on the amount of water that is used. Currently, residents who use city water are charged solely on the amount of water that they use.

By adding a fixed base rate, part of the water bill that residents will be charged will not reflect the amount of water they consume or conserve. Residents who conserve water and others who have low water usage, will find that they will pay \$5 per month more on their water bills than they do currently. While the amount of \$60 per year seems like a low number, the message it sends to residents who have worked hard to lower their water consumption is, in my opinion, a wrong one.

Under the Toilet Replace-

ment Program, we have asked residents to use low flush toilets, we have asked residents to switch showerheads to low flow models and in fact, as part of Water Efficiency Kits, we give showerheads away to residents at no charge.

The city promotes the use of water barrels and modest use of city water to water our lawns. We have asked all of these things from our residents and now, under the proposed changes, the city wants to charge them an additional \$5 per month for doing so.

I believe that we are

sending a contradictory message to residents. The current billing system rewards people who conserve water. Under the proposed changes, they would be punished. Residents, like those who are on fixed pensions, who minimize water use will targeted by these changes.

Until staff is able to address these concerns regarding low consumption users of city water, I cannot support these changes and I will vote against them.

Bob Monette
Councillor, Orléans ward