

A Motion in Support of Local Journalism (Councillor J. Kovac)

**Whereas** a healthy, professional news media is essential for the proper functioning of civil society and democracy at the local, regional, federal and international levels;

**Whereas** the Public Policy Forum declares — on its website for the 2017 report *The Shattered Mirror: News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age* (commissioned by the federal government) — that “real news is in crisis” in this country;

**Whereas** the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) cited eight “critical information needs” the media help to provide including emergencies; other public risks to health; education; the environment; economic opportunities; civic and political knowledge of policy initiatives; and the conduct of public officials, and candidates for office (*The Shattered Mirror* p.4);

**Whereas** Canadians have lost the essential services provided by roughly 3,000 media workers across Canada due to temporary and permanent layoffs from the time the COVID-19 pandemic began — a time it became clearer to the public how important it is for Canadians to receive accurate information — and advertising revenues have plunged, prompting an emergency \$30-million advertising-buy by the federal government;

**Whereas** residents of 190 Canadian communities lost 250 established news outlets due to closings or mergers between 2008 and 2018;

**Whereas** two thirds of Canadians agree or somewhat agree that because of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak the federal government should treat widespread media bankruptcies and layoffs as an emergency, according to a Nanos Research poll of April 2020;

**Whereas** the federal government allocated nearly \$600 million in aid for Canadian media over five years in its 2019 budget, including a 25-per-cent tax credit for newsroom salaries; a 15-per-cent tax credit for digital media subscribers; and charitable tax status for non-profit news outlets;

**Whereas** Canada’s federal government acknowledged in its 2019 budget (p. 173) that “A strong and independent news media is crucial to a well-functioning democracy”;

**Whereas** at least 28 municipal councils in nine provinces have already passed resolutions similar to the one proposed below;

**Whereas** the news media in the Mississauga area have been instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring local citizens have accurate local information;

**Therefore Be It Resolved** that the City of Mississauga Council recognizes that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in our city; urges nearby municipal councils and across Canada to recognize that a robust news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in their jurisdictions; endorses legislation and regulations to support and rejuvenate news outlets across Canada; and urges the federal government to move quickly to pass legislation to ensure an ecosystem for a healthy news media to serve all Canadians.

**And** that the resolution be forwarded to the area municipalities, local MPs and MPPs and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Korac". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.