



Thursday, January 7, 2016

Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation,
The Public Service Alliance of Canada,

On December 15th, 2015 approximately 125 slots workers were locked out of the Rideau Carleton Raceway and Slots due to a contract dispute with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). I understand that the OLG has the legal right to lock out its employees and that subsequently, the employees have the legal right to protest. I am writing to you to express concerns regarding this lockout and ongoing protest which are negatively impacting the lives of City of Ottawa residents, particularly those in my Ward. I have received numerous calls and e-mails from many residents, local businesses and the Osgoode Ward Business Association, all indicating numerous concerns. I hope the following issues outlined below will help enlighten and encourage both sides of the bargaining table to come to a swift resolution.

The primary entrance into the Rideau Carleton Raceway is located on Albion Road, a major north to south corridor that services over 9,500 vehicles per day. The lockout and subsequent protest has caused significant traffic delays along this road. The protesters have become a distraction to both drivers along Albion Road and patrons of the Rideau Carleton Raceway. Initially, the protest was peaceful but protesters now often harass patrons. I have firsthand experience of protesters banging on vehicles until the drivers agree to roll down their windows and a petition is forced onto the driver which they are told to sign before they are allowed to pass.

Additionally, picketers have chosen a nearby road (High Road) to park their vehicles as it is not safe to park along Albion Road. High Road is very narrow and a high volume of parked vehicles has caused safety concerns for local residents as well as businesses that operate along the road. Residents exiting their laneways are now dealing with large blind spots. The safety of the protesters themselves is put at risk as this rural road does not provide them with a safe walking corridor to the site of their protest. Instead, they are forced to walk adjacent to parked cars or, more frighteningly, in the middle of the road. Also, Albion Road intersects with High Road at an awkward angle, thus increasing the risk posed to those walking as well as the many commuters who use Albion Road. After repeated calls and e-mails from my residents about High Road, the City was forced to use resources including the Ottawa Police and the By-Law and Traffic Departments to improve these safety issues.

I have no objection to the protest or the lockout, as they are within the legal rights of both parties. I extend this letter asking that the negotiations come to an urgent resolution and while negotiations continue, request that both the lockout and protest be performed in a safe manner for those involved and all residents of my Ward and the City of Ottawa.

Sincerely,

George Darouze
Councillor Osgoode Ward