

**NEXT WEEK:**

Away I Go is the first single off of London singer/songwriter Rose Cora Perry's upcoming solo album, *Onto the Floor*. She speaks openly about how a difficult breakup formed the basis for the video and the album.

How long is too long?

**WARD 15****LINCOLN McCORDLE**

In my humble opinion, city council's recent decision to extend Jared Zaifman's leave of absence and saving his ward seat for him, while compassionate, sets not only a dangerous precedent but quite frankly sends the wrong message and opens the door for future problems.

In terms of full disclosure, I've met Mr. Zaifman on numerous occasions and consider him a really nice guy and perhaps even a friend of sorts. He has spent much of his life working for amazing organizations and community groups in London and proven himself a capable and dedicated councillor for Ward 14. So I get it, waiting for some undisclosed date of his return makes some sense. That being said, there are procedures in place and reasons for replacing an individual unable to represent their constituents. And while I admire his peers' compassion and support in extending his medical leave — three months is quite frankly long enough, if not too long already.

The issue, as I see it, is not in the other councillors' ability to pick up the slack, for while it may be a burden on them I have the utmost confidence in their abilities. Far more sinister is the empty place at the council horseshoe itself and the multitude of issues associated with unoccupied spaces. Trespassers, arsonists, thieves or other criminal activities all must be considered. Sure, we could simply ask his neighbour Tanya Park to maintain a security presence — you know, keep an eye

on the place in his absence. However, given the full dockets at council meetings as of late one could argue she might already have her hands full. No, it's a half-measure at best.

Occupying a council seat already has a multitude of risks associated with it and the logical thinking might be that a vacant seat might present fewer hazards. This thinking is fundamentally wrong. Over and above the issues previously listed we must also consider the idea that undesirables may choose to set up shop there. Persistent rumours (started by me) suggest that a local medical marijuana dispensary is already eyeing the site as a possible location. Equally concerning Uber has also been mentioned as considering the location as a regional office but that cannot be either confirmed or disproved at this time.

Lastly, there is no shortage of proof that leaving places vacant exponentially increase its deterioration. The term 'demolition by neglect' is one that is likely familiar to most of us and we must consider this vacant seat amongst one of our local heritage treasures, along with Camden Terrace and the old Central Branch of the London Public Library. Let us ensure Mr. Zaifman section of the horseshoe doesn't meet the same unfortunate fate as our beloved Talbot Block and no, a commemorative monument to maintain a public view of him is simply not going to cut it this time.

I suspect many of you think this is some sort of joke. Board of Control anyone? That's what I thought. Few hope for the Ward 14's councillor more than I, but we need to consider the costs and risks associated with playing this waiting game. Let's remember that ward seats are not a renewable resource and strive to protect our existing political environment.

And Jared, get well soon.

Zaifman must reply

**LONDON CALLING****SCOTT TAYLOR**

If city council is going to do something extraordinary, then there should be clearly stated reasons as to why they would choose to do so. In this case, they have voted to extend the medical leave of Ward 14 Coun. Jared Zaifman, who has now been absent for more than three months of council meetings.

Under municipal law, three months is the limit before the council seat must be vacated, but Zaifman asked his colleagues to grant him an extension, which he is also permitted to do. They voted unanimously to give him that extension.

Although I live in his ward, I can't remember seeing Zaifman either during or since the election nearly two years ago.

Frankly, that's fine with me. There aren't a lot of complaints, at least among the people I meet on a day-to-day basis. While Meadowgate Park could use another garbage can or two, it's a jewel of the south side. The splash pad introduced last year is well used (especially during this blast furnace of a summer), the soccer fields are pristine and the Canadian geese and ducks in the area add to the beauty.

For all her foibles in council meetings, I think Sandy White did a fine job looking out for her constituents and Jared Zaifman was carrying on that tradition until he fell ill.

However, issues pop up every day, some with more gravity and timeliness than others, but all are important to somebody. It's been reported one or two other councillors have been stepping in to deal with some of those issues in Zaifman's absence. Though their goodwill and extra efforts are appreciated, that's not we voted for in 2014.

Things happen — life happens — and it's not always fair. Good people fall ill through no fault of their own and when that happens all their efforts and all our hopes and wishes should focus on their recovery.

On the other hand, much as it might seem unfair, the world continues to turn. A fair resolution to this situation would be for Ward 14 constituents to be given more information as to the nature of Zaifman's illness and when or if he hopes to return.

Yes, even elected officials are allowed their privacy, but in this case the public has a right to know.

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