

**Maurice Brenner**



**Ward 1 regional councillor**  
Last year: A-

**Attendance:**  
Council 20/21,  
Executive committee 16/18,  
Region 36/43

**Expenses:**  
Local \$8,839,  
Region \$5,958.05

Coun. Brenner continues to be a vocal, passionate and smart representative. He spearheaded the tsunami relief effort in Durham, was supportive of residents in north Pickering during the demolitions/evictions, and as deputy mayor has represented the City well when filling in for Mayor Ryan.

Money was put in the budget to begin design work on his pet project, the pedestrian bridge over Hwy. 401. At the Region he is a consummate advocate for children and the homeless, and always brings Pickering examples to the table.



**Bill McLean**



**Ward 2 regional councillor**  
Last year: B+

**Attendance:**  
Council 21/21,  
Executive committee 18/18,  
Region 51/55

**Expenses:**  
Local \$12,169,  
Region \$1,702

Coun. McLean served as co-chairman of the Durham tsunami relief committee and is pushing to find an alternative to Pickering-Ajax-Whitby Animal Services. He took on greater responsibility this year when he was appointed to regional council but we suspect his new responsibilities have left him spread a little thin.

Last year, he worked hard to spearhead several important issues but this year was quieter. He is an effective and responsive councillor who should rise to the occasion again on issues important to him.



**Rick Johnson**



**Ward 3 regional councillor**  
Last year: B

**Attendance:**  
Council 20/21,  
Executive committee 17/18,  
Region 44/54

**Expenses:**  
Local \$20,134,  
Region \$1,886.75

Coun. Johnson continues to be a councillor who knows his ward and advocates strongly for it. After years of pushing for road-work projects in the north, some were finally added to the 2005 budget. He is working with his constituents concerned about the possibility of a north Pickering airport.

Although Coun. Johnson carries with him a wealth of knowledge and experience, he doesn't champion issues at council. Again, we would like to see him cut back on his expenses, which this year went over \$20,000.



The Pickering News Advertiser's

# Report on council



**Municipal Report Card**

A- to A+ Excellent, best among peers	B- to B+ Solid performance	C- to C+ Fair, only average in most categories	D- to D+ Weak, not up to the task, not accessible	F Awful, shouldn't be there

• Council attendance and expenses are for 2004.  
• The Report Card on school board trustees and Durham Chairman Roger Anderson appears in Friday's News Advertiser.

## Three big issues dominate Pickering politics now and moving forward

**H**ang on Pickering, the ride is only beginning. It's been a controversial 12 months since the News Advertiser last published its municipal Report Card. Then, Pickering council earned a B for its first six months on the job. In the time since, councillors have dealt with lawsuits, threatened lawsuits and plenty of talk about land in north Pickering.

Certainly topping any list of issues must be the removal of the agricultural easements on a number of properties in the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve. The two camps on the issue seem set in their ways, with the City arguing the easements were never meant to be on the land forever, despite signing a deal that they would be there "in perpetuity." The opposition has been led by a vocal group that recently filed a contempt allegation with the Ontario Municipal Board, hoping to have the easements restored.

The City's ability to plan its growth in the north has been another lengthy battle, with Pickering's plan continuing to run in opposition to that of the Province. Council has fought for the City's right to control growth within its borders. Residents expect land-use issues to be determined by their duly elected municipal representatives, not the Province.

And rounding out a big three of issues, so to speak, in the last 12 months has been the proposed airport for the federal lands in North Pickering. While it is only a proposal at this point, opposition has slowly been building from residents' groups such as Voters Orga-

nized to Cancel the Airport Lands and Land Over Landings. Still, if a need is proven, the federal lands were set aside for an airport and such a facility would be a big boost economically for Pickering and Durham as a whole.

On an individual level, Dave Ryan has taken charge more often in his first term as mayor, but the more aggressive approach has also made for several public clashes. Mayor Ryan has also been consistent in his belief the City should be doing its own planning and hasn't wavered from that message, nor his position on the legal settlement over the agricultural easements.

At the regional level, Bill McLean has made a relatively smooth transition from local politics, offering a calming influence on City issues. Although an effective councillor this year, he was involved in less issues than last year.

Maurice Brenner remains at the head of the Pickering class, rolling his sleeves up and digging in, no matter the issue. He continues to drive forward a pedestrian bridge over Hwy. 401, a link that will bring new economic growth to the continued development of a vital downtown core. He also ably serves as deputy mayor in Mr. Ryan's absence.

Rick Johnson is no doubt in touch with his constituents, immersing him-

self and taking the lead on a number of community projects. His expenses, however, continue to be excessive when compared to other councillors across Durham Region.

Locally, Doug Dickerson is the new-old guy on the block. Since his byelection win in November, the longtime city politician has been visible and vocal. He's raised a number of issues with the proposed nuclear alerting system and continues to show he's not afraid to offer a dissenting voice.

His approach with people at times, however, is too heavy-handed. For his part, Kevin Ashe is approachable and accessible, but at times could be more vocal. Taking the lead on more issues, such as his call for a more cautious approach to this year's budget spending, will serve him well.

David Pickles is the only member of council to move up a grade this year and that's owing in large part to his diligence with the airport proposal. He's been fighting for more review of the project.

Not only is the year ahead going to bring more of the same in Pickering, but so to are a good number of years after that. Getting council on the same page and sticking to its message is a must going forward.

For its work, Pickering council has earned a B grade over the last year.



**David Ryan**



**Mayor**  
Last year: B

**Attendance:**  
Council 21/21,  
Executive committee 18/18,  
Region 32/40

**Expenses:**  
Local \$10,877,  
Region \$2,438.40

The agricultural preserve is repeatedly putting Pickering and Mayor Ryan in the spotlight. However, he has been strong and consistent in defending Pickering's position on the issue, which at times has put him at odds with some community groups.

At regional council he's careful to present the matter under the umbrella of self-autonomy.

The revelation that he attended for free a \$10,000-a-plate Liberal fundraising dinner, where a developer was lobbying for land-use changes, and didn't tell his council colleagues, calls into question his judgment.



**Kevin Ashe**



**Ward 1 City Councillor**  
Last year: B

**Attendance:**  
Council 21/21,  
Executive committee 15/18

**Expenses:**  
\$10,500

Coun. Ashe isn't afraid to express a different view than his peers — such as his belief that the City not go on a spending spree during the 2005 budget. When he makes a comment it is well thought out, but he could be more vocal at times.

He has yet to spearhead an issue of his own. Coun. Ashe is a good councillor but has the ability to be a stronger voice for his constituents.

His expenses are high for a local councillor.



**Doug Dickerson**



**Ward 2 City Councillor**  
Last year: N/A

**Attendance:**  
Council 13/13,  
Executive committee 12/12

**Expenses:**  
\$1,903 (Nov-Dec '04)

Since returning to council in November, Coun. Dickerson has pushed to reduce the number of nuclear alerting sirens. During budget meetings he campaigned for a lower tax increase than staff had recommended.

Despite the hard work, Coun. Dickerson needs to get along better with his peers and staff. The tension between he and Mayor Dave Ryan has been made public on more than one occasion and he is sometimes harsh with staff.



**David Pickles**



**Ward 3 City Councillor**  
Last year: B

**Attendance:**  
Council 21/21,  
Executive committee 18/18

**Expenses:**  
\$4,167

Coun. Pickles has taken the lead on representing his constituents' interests by pushing for funding for a peer review of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority's plan for an airport in north Pickering.

As chairman of the race relations committee, he helped initiate a student writing contest. He gets along well with his colleagues and works hard. However, Coun. Pickles comes across as low-key and quiet at times.



For council grades from around Durham, log onto [durhamregion.com](http://durhamregion.com)