

# NOTL NEWS

A NEWS UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF Niagara-On-The-Lake

Issue # 165 – January 20, 2009

## **PLAQUE PRESENTATION**

Acting Lord Mayor Terry Flynn presented Nancy Howse with a plaque on behalf of Council in recognition of Councillor Bob Howse's dedicated service to the community as a Councillor from 2000 to 2008. Nancy noted Bob always enjoyed municipal life firstly as a Town Clerk for a number of years, and then as a Town Councillor. Committee also endorsed a motion to name the leisure trail adjacent to Niagara Stone Road as the 'Bob Howse Trail'.

## **SZOCKYJ DRAIN BILLING**

The Public Works Advisory Committee endorsed a staff report to re-bill for the Szockyj Drain in accordance with the new assessment schedule prepared subsequent to a review by staff. The billing for the drain was the subject of a previous deputation to Council (NOTL News, Issue # 163) on December 9, 2008, by a property owner affected by the billing who raised questions with respect to the assessment schedule. In response to Committee's questions, staff advised the initial assessment schedule was based on incorrect information provided by the consulting engineer, and staff have made the corrections and, further, the concerned landowner is satisfied with the revisions.

## **RUMBLE STRIPS UPDATE**

Public Works Advisory Committee received a report from staff updating the status of the trial installation of rumble strips at the Line 1/Church Road and Town Line Road intersection. The rumble strips were installed in June 2007. Based on before and after (limited) collision data, the strips appear to be working as there has been a 60% drop in collisions. The report noted discussions with neighbours to the installation indicate no specific complaints, although some pointed out drivers tend to drive to the left of the rumble strips to avoid going over them. The report further noted the strips do not lend themselves to urban installations due to noise and vibration concerns. Installation costs and impact on cyclists can also be an issue. Committee referred the report to the Task Force on Traffic Safety for review and consideration of further applications of the rumble strips based on staff's observations.

## OFFICIAL PLAN – COUNTRY INNS

Following a public meeting held pursuant to the requirements of the Planning Act, the Planning Advisory Committee determined to modify a staff recommendation related to lot size requirements for establishing a Country Inn and to adopt certain wording changes which were suggested by the Town Solicitor subsequent to a recent Ontario Municipal Board hearing. Initially the Planning Advisory Committee endorsed the wording changes on September 8, 2008, although Council deferred a decision on the policy amendments pending discussions with the B&B Association. Staff met with the Association in November and December 2008 and arrived at revised policy requirements providing for a minimum 0.75 acre lot size for Inns of 4 to 6 rooms and 1.0 acre for Inns greater than 6 rooms provided the reduction in lot area does not negatively impact several elements being: surrounding land uses; the ability to accommodate parking and amenity space requirements; adjacent heritage resources and/or heritage resources on the property; the ability to provide sufficient buffering, landscaping, screening and separation from adjacent properties; and the residential character of the property or the surrounding area.

During the public process, Mr. Kenn Moody of the B&B Association spoke noting they supported the recommendations somewhat reluctantly as the wording seems to be more ambiguous. He advised the Association looks forward to participating in the upcoming visioning sessions scheduled for the Old Town noting it may be a way to determine the role of bed and breakfasts and country inns in the tourism accommodation industry. Mr. John Gartner of Simcoe Street, a country inn operator, suggested the inclusion of previously occupied accessory buildings for possible use in association with a country inn since it would make use of existing resources, support the tourism industry, and basically affect only two or three operations. Trish Badham of 1376 York Road also suggested the use of previously occupied accessory buildings be included in the policy and expressed concern about the 0.75 acre lot size. She also indicated the current by-laws were very restrictive and would like to revisit them in the future. Paul Shepherd of 66 King Street agreed with the tidying up of the wording, although expressed concern about the ambiguity of the wording as it related to the lot size provisions and how it could open the policy up to future challenges. Gracia Janes representing the Niagara-on-the-Lake Conservancy advised the original wording is supported by the Conservancy noting the intent of Council needs to be clear and the wording of the policy must convey their intent particular when placed before a hearing.

In response to Committee's questions, staff advised the process of subsequent discussions and development of amended policy provisions was based on previous direction and suggested Council take a position on the matter. It was noted the policy sets out criteria for the establishment of a country inn without amendment to the Plan. An application can still be made to amend the Plan, however it is an involved process requiring more documentation and analysis.

As noted, the Planning Advisory Committee adopted the original policy wording proposed by staff in September 2008 noting the visioning process for the Old Town is commencing and from that process a need to revisit the policy may arise.

## **EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS STUDY**

The Planning Advisory Committee received a draft Employment Land Needs Study and directed that the draft be made available to the community through the Town's website, a public information meeting to be scheduled in February to obtain input and, subsequent to the public meeting, a workshop with Council be scheduled to review the findings of the Study. The Employment Lands Need Study was initiated as the result of the sale of the Cangro lands in St. Davids and the indicated desire of the purchaser to change the use of the lands. The Study is a requirement of the Provincial Policy Statement and the Provincial Growth Plan necessitating a comprehensive review prior to the consideration of an Official Plan amendment.

Prior to endorsing the staff recommendations Committee received a presentation from Antony Lorius of Hemson Consulting Ltd., the firm engaged to prepare the report. Mr. Lorius provided Committee with an overview of the report's initial findings. The draft report assessed the existing employment lands in Glendale, Virgil, and at the Niagara District Airport, and advises the Town has a sufficient supply of employment lands to extend beyond the 2031 planning period. The draft report provides suggestions with respect to the disposition of the current employment lands and suggests the next steps in the planning process to identify uses which are desirable from a community planning perspective to develop over the planning period. The staff report notes the public information meeting will be scheduled and advertised to the public.

## **ZONING BY-LAW UPDATE**

The Planning Advisory Committee reviewed a detailed update of certain proposed requirements for the comprehensive zoning by-law and determined to modify the staff recommendations related to certain lands and by-law requirements. Committee and staff noted the by-law process has been ongoing for some time and it is necessary to bring the process to the point of decision. Prior to considering the staff recommendations, Committee received a deputation from Mr. John Kirkby of the Agricultural Sub-Committee. He requested that Committee modify the staff recommendations in order to support a revision to the mapping in rural areas as it affects certain Natural Heritage Systems; adopt modified set-backs from water courses/municipal drains/irrigation channels and woodlots; modify requirements for an Environmental Impact Study for certain rural applications; establish a meeting with Regional planners to review Council's position; if necessary, set up a meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and continue to refine the details for development within the aforementioned revised set-backs. The staff report provided

Committee with the position of Regional planners related to the issues raised by the Agricultural Sub-Committee and similarly provided information on the previous responses from Ministry staff.

The Planning Advisory Committee determined to modify the staff recommendations to support the requests of the Agricultural Sub-Committee; deferred action on the airport provisions until February 2, 2009, Committee of the Whole meeting to allow the Airport Commission an opportunity to comment on the proposed zoning provisions; and directed staff to prepare a revised comprehensive draft by-law to include staff revisions for easier review by Committee. The Committee endorsed the contextual zoning provisions for Queenston and Old Town including Chautauqua; the Residential (R1) provisions continue to apply within built up areas of St. Davids.

## **PROJECT NIAGARA UPDATE**

The Planning Advisory Committee received a staff update on the current status of Project Niagara (PN). The report was prepared at the request of Council to keep Council apprised of the status of PN in order to insure sufficient information is available to make informed decisions, and to insure there is opportunity to gather public input related to PN. The report advised there is an Environmental Assessment process regarding the sewage lagoons that commenced in October 2008 and includes provision for public input, and a traffic impact analysis will be conducted by PN's consultants and staff will report back to Council once the public involvement process is identified. The report also noted the formation of a 'Project Coordinating Committee' is anticipated and will include, at the minimum, PN and Parks Canada staff. The report further advised the Parks Canada process has not been confirmed; however, it is anticipated it will be comprehensive and involve considerable public consultation. Staff will continue to monitor the process and provide regular updates to Council.

## **COUNCIL SUMMARY – JANUARY 12, 2009**

Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs noted this would be the final meeting for Lew Holloway, Chief Administrative Officer. He expressed appreciation for his 17 years of dedicated service to the Town and extended a personal thanks for all his assistance during the past eight years they worked together. The Lord Mayor advised the Lord Mayor's Annual Fundraising Dinner is currently in the planning stages with this year's funds earmarked to support the efforts to keep NDSS open. He advised the theme for this year's dinner is mardi gras with a date to be arranged for the end of February or first part of March. Further details will be forthcoming. The Lord Mayor reminded those in attendance there is an open house at NDSS on January 13, 2009, for parents and students to get acquainted with the school and its many programs. He further noted the promotional brochure for NDSS,

'2010 and Beyond', has been produced and will be made available to students, parents, and residents.

Lord Mayor Burroughs advised Council met earlier in the day for a workshop session with Urban Strategies, the consulting firm coordinating the process for the Old Town and Dock Area Vision and Secondary Plan. He noted the consultation process provides a number of opportunities for residents to become involved in developing a vision for the Old Town and to provide their input into the plan. It is important to provide a framework for Council to arrive at decisions to retain the quality of life for the residents in the community.

Council was advised by Councillor Collard that NDSS has been chosen as a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate program and now allows the application to move to the second phase of the process. He advised this is an important step to the success of NDSS as all other IB schools in Ontario experienced an increase in enrollment once designated. Appreciation to the Virgil Business Association, Friends of NDSS, and others was offered for their support in achieving this important step.

Ms. Dale Davis, Executive Director, Big Brothers Big Sisters St. Catharines-Thorold & District, made a presentation to Council regarding their upcoming fundraising event 'Bowl for Kids' Sake Challenge' to be held on February 21, 2009. Ms. Dale reviewed the history of Big Brothers Big Sisters and their association's goals noting they assist over 500 children and youth annually, they must raise \$180,000 annually to support their program, and they do not receive government assistance. Their upcoming event provides for bowling teams to raise financial pledges for support. Teams can challenge other teams for the highest fundraiser and prizes are available for top individual fundraiser and top team fundraiser. Further details are available at [www.bowl4kids.ca](http://www.bowl4kids.ca).

Lew Holloway, CAO, made a presentation to Council regarding Corporate Excellence (How We Do Business). In January 2007, Council established one of their nine priorities as 'How We Do Business' with a purpose to establish a corporate culture to improve external and internal communications, to respond to residents and businesses, and to better define the roles of Council and staff. Initially an employee survey was undertaken to sample the thoughts of staff. The results of the survey were evaluated by the CAO and led to the formation of 'The Employees Survey Team' representing all Departments of the Town. The Team met several times between July and November and provided six recommendations which are incorporated into the Corporate Excellence Plan and outlined in the CAO's report. The CAO continued noting the Senior Management Team (SMT) developed four pillars to provide the foundation for the Corporate Excellence Program being: an enabling corporate culture; engaged employees; appropriate and sound human, financial and physical resources; and inspired leadership. SMT, with the assistance of a facilitator, provided a number of attributes for each of the Four Pillars. During the process, SMT identified several obstacles which needed attention in order to achieve success and provided strategic directions to address each obstacle. Based on the

foregoing discussions and analysis, and incorporating the recommendations of the Employee Survey Team, four specific action plans with detailed direction steps were formulated in order to move the Corporation towards the achievement of Corporate Excellence.

Council endorsed the recommendations as follows: Council approve, support and endorse the corporate excellence strategies and action plans, the Senior Management Team be directed to develop a detailed implementation plan including budget implications, and the CAO provide Council and the Employees Group with a semi-annual update on the implementation of the plan.

Following the presentation of his report, Mr. Holloway expressed his thanks to Council and staff for all their support during his time with the Town. He commented it is with mixed emotions he leaves the employment of the Town, as Niagara-on-the-Lake is a unique community and he has thoroughly enjoyed working with Council and staff.

The recommendations of the Committee of the Whole were adopted without change.

Council considered the recommendations of a staff Planning Report regarding the disposition of a Heritage Permit regarding the property known as 507 Butler Street. In November 2008, Council initially deferred a decision on a Heritage Permit pending a decision by the Committee of Adjustment regarding a proposed severance. The Committee considered the application on December 18, 2008, and denied the severance noting in their comments the proposed new lot and remnant lot will be out of character with the existing lotting pattern in the area and the William Stewart Homestead should be maintained on the existing lot. Council endorsed the recommendations of the staff report to support the decision of the Committee of Adjustment to deny the severance, that a Heritage Permit for the new lot not be approved, and the Niagara Foundation be advised of Council's decision.

Under New Business Council received information regarding the need to support the funding for the inclusion of the golf academy program at NDSS. Subsequent to discussion on the multiple uses for the equipment, and the potential sources for funding (as it appears funding is eminent), a motion was endorsed indicating Council is committed to finding funding for equipment for the Golf Academy and directed staff to present options to Council to assist with financing for the NDSS Golf Academy.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for January 26, 2009. Additional information on meeting schedules and deputation procedures may be obtained by contacting the Clerk's Department or visiting the Town's website at [www.notl.org](http://www.notl.org).

**Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs, Councillors: Jim Collard, Dennis Dick, Terry Flynn, Andrea Kaiser, Jack Lowrey, Martin Mazza, Art Viola, Gary Zalepa**