

NOTL NEWS

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

Issue # 167 – February 24, 2009

EMPLOYMENT LANDS REVIEW

The Planning Advisory Committee hosted a public information meeting to receive comments on a draft report prepared by Hemson Consultants regarding the comprehensive review of employment lands in the community. This is required by provincial policy prior to Council considering a change in zoning related to the former Cangro lands in the Village of St. Davids (NOTL News – Issue # 165). Mr. John Perry, representing the owners of lands adjacent to the Niagara District Airport, indicated these lands should be included in lands zoned for airport related manufacturing uses in accordance with the Town's Official Plan. There will be additional submissions in this regard as the review of the draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law moves through the process. Mr. Perry also represents the owners of industrial lands on the west side of Concession 7 between Queenston Road and York Road. Mr. Perry noted consideration should be given to the removal of these lands from industrial designation as they are adjacent to residential lands, are some distance from QEW exposure, are physically separated from the main Glendale industrial lands by a creek, and there is currently a 68-year supply of industrially designated lands in the community.

Mr. Mario Palumbo of Queenston Road indicated he agreed with Mr. Perry's submission regarding the change of designation for the Concession 7 lands.

Mr. Rainer Hummel, a principal in the Cangro land ownership, advised there is a lack of policy regarding brownfield redevelopment and such a policy is needed. He advised there is concern for developing affordable housing stock and for better use of existing infrastructure. He noted the existing cold storage building is currently leased and redevelopment of the existing industrial buildings must be done in a manner which will be sensitive to adjacent future residential development.

The Planning Advisory Committee endorsed a staff report recommending the comments from the public be received and forwarded to staff and the consultant for review, and for a final report to be prepared for Council's consideration.

SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

Mr. Jamie King, on behalf of the Friends of NDSS, appeared as a deputation and requested Council to endorse the draft submission to the Ministry of Education regarding school board governance. He further requested the Town to submit the comments to the Ministry as it would carry more weight coming from the municipality. He noted a submission deadline of February 28, 2009, and advised there is some urgency to move forward.

The Corporate Services Advisory Committee discussed the submission process and moved to support the request from the Friends of NDSS and asked to determine if an extension for submissions could be granted until after the March 2, 2009, Council meeting. Failing an extension for the submission, a special Council meeting could be called by the Lord Mayor to consider the Committee recommendation. Furthermore, direction was provided to share the Friends letter with the Save Our Schools group for potential additional input.

CAPITAL BUDGET REVIEW

The Corporate Services Advisory Committee received a staff presentation regarding the 2009–2013 Capital Budget and Forecast. In summary, gross project expenditures for 2009 are proposed to be \$13,520,747 (includes \$6.1M for new community centre), and for 2009–2013, the presentation identified a gross expenditure of \$37,246,365. Project highlights with estimated costs for 2009 were provided to Committee for all Town departments. Financing strategies were reviewed with Committee, including a flexible capital financing strategy which allows for maximum flexibility to accommodate financing swings while stabilizing the impact on tax rate changes. Reserve balances received extensive analysis and resulted in the consolidation of some reserves as well as steps being implemented to ensure fund balances are at the appropriate levels.

Committee reviewed the staff presentation and directed the Executive Budget Committee to report back on the possibility of adding a reserve for municipal office renovations and/or additions in the 10 year capital projection forecast.

Committee also flagged the Mary Street watermain replacement project and questioned why sanitary sewers were not included, as well as requested staff to look at the potential to move the Regional Road 55 trail extension project from 2011 to 2009 or 2010.

The next steps will include a March 2 Capital Budget report to Council; a March 9 Committee of the Whole final review and approval of the Capital Budget, as well as a Current Budget overview; and a Committee of the Whole detailed review and approval of the Current Budget on March 23.

HOSPITAL LEVY

The Corporate Services Advisory Committee reviewed financing scenarios proposed by staff to meet the Town's financing obligation of \$3.5 million for the New Health Care Complex in St. Catharines. Committee endorsed the scenario which will levy \$100,000 in 2009; \$200,000 in 2010; and \$300,000 in 2011. Between 2012 and 2021 the Town will levy approximately \$288,000 annually, and approximately \$103,000 from 2022 to 2031. The staff report noted the impact on an average home is estimated as follows: 2009 - \$10.15; 2010 - \$20.29; 2011 - \$30.44; 2012 to 2021 - \$29.22; and 2022 to 2031 - \$10.45. The report pointed out this scenario may provide future Council's an opportunity to explore other options as tax room becomes available after 2021. In response to Committee's questions, it was noted the levy will be shown as a separate item on future tax notices. Committee requested clarification on who pays for hospital equipment purchases and additional detail on the total cost of the project to the local ratepayer, after combining the costs associated with Regional contributions.

COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee received an update on the community centre project in light of the recent funding announcement by the federal and provincial governments. The report noted the Town is responsible for funding one-third of the project cost and advised funding sources are: Community Centre Reserve (\$555,000), Fund Raising (\$450,000), Development Charges (\$1,088,000). Committee endorsed the establishment of a Community Centre Steering Committee consisting of Councillors Terry Flynn, Jack Lowrey, Dennis Dick, Art Viola, Director of Parks and Recreation Clive Buist, and Director of Corporate Services Scott Tipping.

The Steering Committee will also review the suggestion to have the NDSS site considered as a location for the new community centre. The report advised this will need to be done in a timely fashion as plans cannot move forward until the site is finalized.

WINE COUNTRY POLICIES

The Planning Advisory Committee deferred consideration of a staff report related to supporting a proposed Regional Policy Plan Amendment to incorporate wine country policies to implement the recommendations of a recent report, “Energizing Niagara’s Wine Country Communities’. Committee received a deputation from John and Austin Kirkby on behalf of the Agricultural Sub-Committee. Mr. and Mrs. Kirkby expressed concern with some of the goals and policies of the proposed amendment as they may create potential serious consequences to agricultural operations. They also suggested additional policies for inclusion in the amendment, and stressed there is a current oversupply of product and action is also required from senior levels of government to address this issue.

COUNCIL SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 9, 2009

Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs opened the meeting noting two recent award ceremonies. He first acknowledged the receipt of the Niagara Community Design Award for the work of the Town’s Planning Department, with the assistance of the consulting firm Urban Strategies, related to the development of the Queenston Secondary Plan. Later in the evening Stephen Bedford, Director of Planning and Development Services, presented the award to the Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor Burroughs also congratulated Janice Thomson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, for the success of the recent awards evening held at White Oaks. The Lord Mayor noted a recent gathering in Niagara Falls of provincial politicians, which included the Premier of Ontario and various provincial ministers. Through discussions with the Minister of Education, he advised she is closely monitoring the process involving NDSS. He also advised that in the coming weeks legislation will be presented requiring school boards and municipalities to work together to find solutions for educational issues. The Lord Mayor noted there was a recent mailing to residents regarding programs and opportunities at NDSS. The package included a covering letter from the Lord Mayor’s office which was upsetting to some residents. The program’s goal was to provide information about NDSS and to encourage students and residents to consider enrolment at the high school.

Council presented plaques to players and coaches acknowledging them as the 2008 Novice Provincial Champions of the Ontario Lacrosse Association. The team was sponsored by Simpson’s Pharmacy.

Mr. Brian Hutchings, Commissioner of Community Services for the Regional Municipality of Niagara, attended and provided background to Council regarding the Department’s activities and responsibilities. He provided information and budget data related to programs involving seniors, children, community services, emergency services and social assistance, hostels and homelessness.

Mr. Jim Armstrong, President of the Queenston Residents’ Association, attended and requested Council to keep the Laura Secord School on the registry of Non-Designated Historical Properties. He provided background to the development of the school and its importance to the community. He also noted the policy direction referenced in the Queenston Secondary Plan. Later in the meeting Council endorsed a recommendation of the Municipal Heritage Committee to keep the property on the Registry.

The recommendations of the Public Works Advisory Committee were modified to provide a copy of the report regarding the Gerden municipal drain, including the direction provided by Committee, to the concerned landowner (NOTL News, Issue # 166).

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

Under Notice of Motion, a motion was adopted directing staff to create a policy with respect to a process to follow regarding in-camera materials and to report back to Council.

Council endorsed a motion in the New Business section of the agenda directing staff to provide background data regarding Regional specialized transit related to the number of trips by community residents and the total associated charges.

Reference was made to recent correspondence from the Town of Lincoln regarding the Ontario Partnership Allocation Fund and the uploading of Regional services to the Province. Council directed staff to review the letter and report back to Council.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for March 2, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. 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.

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