

NOTLINE NEWS

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

Issue # 186 – March 31, 2010

PETITION TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

The Corporate Services Advisory Committee reviewed a report prepared by the NDSS Strategy Committee requesting support of a Petition to the Province of Ontario's Minister of Education. The Petition is requesting the Minister's support for a new right-sized environmentally friendly Centre of Excellence in Education Campus Concept facility to replace the loss of the only secondary school in the rural community of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The initial Petition (NDSS Brief) of February 8, 2010, received several comments. After review and revisions to the document, Committee received a number of deputations from students, parents, educators, and business people expressing support for having a local high school. As well, concerns were presented regarding some of the factual content of the Petition.

Committee discussed the submissions and the content of the Petition and deferred action to the April 6, 2010, Council meeting in order to provide the NDSS Strategic Committee an opportunity to further consider revisions in light of the evening's submissions.

ADDITION TO CHARLES INN

The Planning Advisory Committee endorsed a staff recommendation to grant a zoning amendment and site plan control agreement to provide for renovations and an addition to the Charles Inn on Queen Street. The request includes an increase in the number of guest rooms to 20 and associated amenities provided for guests, including a fitness room. Committee questioned the site's waste garbage handling with further information to be provided prior to Council's final consideration of the site plan agreement.

PARKING AND TOWN VISION

The Planning Advisory Committee endorsed a Terms of Reference for the proposed Functional Parking Analysis for the commercial area of the Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District. Consultants will be invited to submit proposals, and the Town will advertise for members of the public to sit on the Technical Working Group.

Committee also endorsed an initiative directing staff to develop a Terms of Reference for a Town Wide Vision and Strategic Planning process to commence in 2011. The staff report indicated the Vision would become the basis for updating the Town's Official Plan and to develop policy initiatives to guide other aspects of development and administration of the Town. Further information will be provided through the preparation of a Terms of Reference.

2010 BUDGET

The Corporate Services Advisory Committee met on March 22, 2010, to review the 2010 Budget and to make a recommendation to Council. (See NOTL News Issue # 185). Committee reviewed a staff report which summarized the Committee's previous budget initiatives, relayed information regarding the financing method for the purchase of a Fire Department breathing apparatus, and offered suggestions relating to Council's desire to keep tax increases manageable.

Committee reviewed the staff report in detail and questioned the impact of the recommendations contained therein. Committee determined to modify one recommendation directing 100 percent of the budgeted \$115,000 Dock Rental Revenues to be transferred to the Dock Area Reserve rather than 50 percent being placed in the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve.

Committee endorsed the recommended net tax levy of \$7,303,440, meaning a 6.4 percent tax rate increase. This translates to an increase of \$42.75 on the Town's portion of taxes for a typical homeowner. The final tax rate will be established once the Regional and Educational tax rates, as well as the local utility rates, are finalized.

Council endorsed the Corporate Services Advisory Committee budget recommendation later in the evening.

COUNCIL SUMMARY – MARCH 22, 2010

Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs opened the meeting and summarized a number of recent local events. These included the Niagara Escarpment Commission's recent decision to not require an amendment to the Niagara Escarpment Plan for the quarry redevelopment by Queenston Quarries; a recent meeting of the Community Schools Alliance; the recent Heritage Council meeting; the initial meeting of Regional Council regarding a long term waste management strategy; and the availability of the draft Dock Area plan.

Council received a presentation from Mr. Art Smith of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association regarding a crisis in Ontario's horticulture sector. The concerns relate to rising costs, global market pressures, and shrinking margins having a negative impact on the sustainability of agriculture. Mr. Smith advised of the potentially negative effects on small communities such as Niagara-on-the-Lake. Council endorsed a motion in support of the government working with farmers to establish a program to ensure sustainability of the fruit and vegetable sector.

In review of the recommendations of the Committee of the Whole, Council deferred action on a request for NOTL Hydro to recommend a dividend policy to the Town by August 31, 2010. This was deferred to the next Council meeting. The balance of the recommendations were adopted without change.

Under the Notice of Motion section of the agenda, Council endorsed a motion to discontinue having Council members read the recommendations from the Committee of the Whole meetings.

Council also endorsed a motion directing staff to meet with the Chamber of Commerce to review the services they provide to the Town, and also directed staff to report back on the licensing of apartment units for short-term tourist accommodations.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for Tuesday, April 6, 2010, with regular business starting at 7:00 p.m. This newsletter, as well as information on meeting schedules and deputation procedures, is available on the Town's website at www.notl.org. Further questions may also be directed to the Town Clerk's Department at 905-468-3266.

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