

NOTL NEWS

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

Issue # 175 – July 20, 2009

COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE

Mr. John Knox of Chamberlain Architects provided a design update to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee providing background on a few minor changes in design and the recent discussions with the Urban Design Committee. He indicated that landscape drawings would be provided in the near future and it was necessary to move forward in order to finalize the design to meet the proposed October ground breaking.

Committee reviewed a staff report updating the process to date and the design changes incorporated based on community input and the need to meet Facility Accessibility Design Standards. The report also summarized the proposed room layouts and functions and adopted the preliminary drawings to move forward with an intended occupancy date of March 1, 2011.

The Committee also received an update on the Community Centre Fund Raising Committee who will spearhead efforts to raise \$450,000 for the project.

In related business, staff advised the Town was successful in obtaining two grants from the recently created recreation infrastructure fund to assist with renovation projects and upgrades to facilities. A two-thirds grant for an artificial outdoor lawn bowling green at the new community centre in the amount of \$240,000 was obtained and a grant of \$90,000 for a series of arena renovations was also received.

VISION FOR THE OLD TOWN

The Planning Advisory Committee received a presentation from representatives of Urban Strategies Inc. regarding the draft document 'Toward a Vision for Old Town'. The presentation included an overview of the process, public input, the speaker series and the rationale supporting the strategies. The document consists of the vision statement with six key directions and policy action statements designed to guide Council in achieving the Vision. A copy of the draft document is available for review on the Town's web site at www.notl.org.

Committee also reviewed a staff report regarding the document recommending Council to adopt the Vision which would act as a guide for policy development and decision making for the Old Town and suggested that direction be given to staff and the consultants to commence the Dock Area Secondary Plan process.

Ms. Gracia Janes made a deputation to Council on behalf of the NOTL Conservancy, earlier in the evening, regarding the Vision and commented on the apparent support for Project Niagara and urged Committee to take a serious look at the concept recently presented by Harmony Residents group as a preferred option for the site.

Committee questioned the consultants and staff on various aspects of the Vision and the process employed to develop the document and referred the recommendations to the July 27 Council meeting in order to provide more time for consideration.

COMPREHENSIVE ZONING BY-LAW

The Planning Advisory Committee held a further public meeting to review the comprehensive zoning by-law and receive comment on the recent changes made to the document. The staff report accompanying the draft by-law provided background to the development of the by-law and incorporated the more recent changes as directed by Council in June 2009.

A number of individuals made presentations during the public meeting process and commented on: the lands for a proposed elementary school in Virgil; the holding zone provision for the Dock Area; the mapping related to rural areas; support for agricultural operations in Niagara; recognition of 10 room inn use; and, increased lot coverage for areas of St. Davids.

Further to the public input and the importance of the document, Committee referred the draft by-law to the July 27 Council meeting for consideration.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

The Public Works Advisory Committee dealt with a number of business items including: review of the traffic incident numbers for Line 3 and Concession 2 and Concession 3 intersections, and determined to initiate improvements to pavement markings, wayfinding and guidance signage and to monitor the effect of these actions; to accept the low tender of \$735,145.74 for Johnson Street reconstruction, storm sewer installation and watermain replacement with work to commence in September; to receive the Class Environmental Assessment Study of the East and West Line Bridge Rehabilitation and Expansion and endorse the preferred alternative for the rehabilitation and widening for bicycle lanes.

CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Corporate Services Advisory Committee endorsed a number of staff recommendations related to a variety of topics including: granting sign variances for the Kinsmen Club to place a sign at King and Mary Streets, to 20Bees Winery on Niagara Stone Road for 2 ground signs and an entry sign until such time as the new buildings are complete, and a variance for Hilton Garden for a pole sign; the 2008 tax supported operating budget surplus of \$37,005 be transferred to the Contingency Reserve; following up to the recently held workshop with the business community the introduction of a 30-minute parking ticket grace period pilot program within certain parameters for pay and display violations.

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE – HERITAGE DISTRICT

The Planning Advisory Committee endorsed a staff report to provide directional signs to be placed at strategic locations in the Queen-Picton Heritage District to direct visitors to shops and businesses located off the Queen Street frontage. The recommendations were developed as a follow up to the discussions recently held at a workshop between Council members, staff, local merchants and business operators.

The recommendations include direction to staff to work with the Municipal Heritage Committee and the Chamber of Commerce to design and install the signs and to work with the businesses and the Chamber to consolidate directional signage on Queen Street consistent with the design of the new directional signs.

COUNCIL SUMMARY – JUNE 22, 2009

Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs opened the meeting and referenced the ceremonies held June 13, 2009, on the Rainbow Bridge, marking the 100th anniversary of the Boundary Waters Treaty between Canada and the United States. He noted Senator Hillary Clinton indicated an interest in updating this important document.

The Lord Mayor commented on the recently held parade and services marking Polish Sunday, and the important role the community played in supporting the training of the Polish Blue army during World War I.

Lord Mayor Burroughs referred to the Old Town visioning process, which many residents participated in. He advised the document is available on the Town's website for public review and the process for comment is beginning to unfold.

The Lord Mayor also advised the Town is continuing to work towards finding a solution to keep NDSS open.

Ms. Helen Kopec made a musical presentation to Council, and prior to doing so, noted her recently formed string quartet was an example of the type of musical presentation, which could be expected at the site of Project Niagara. Ms. Kopec expressed the view that any challenges to the community could be overcome given the talent and experience of those involved.

Mr. Rainer Hummel, an owner involved in the Old Winery lands located on Niagara Stone Road, attended as a deputation before Council. In responding to comments regarding the status of the lands, Mr. Hummel noted all items of the site plan control agreement had been met except for the final coat of asphalt. He explained this would be completed once all settlement had occurred and a smooth final surface could be provided. He noted by-laws were enacted to deal with a small percentage of individuals who negatively impact their neighbours or the community. The vast majority of property owners comply without issue. He questioned how the person making the comments at the COTW meeting was permitted to continue in contravention of a site plan control agreement for a number of years and called on Council to look into the matter.

Janice Thomson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, made a deputation to Council regarding a staff report on the agenda referencing the Council/Business Community

workshop regarding the tough economic times facing the community. She advised the Chamber had not received the report until the day of the meeting and some of the observations and directions contained in the report were not as they understood them at the workshop. She urged Council to implement some of the recommendations in a shorter time frame and noted some of the action items identified in the report were currently being undertaken by the Chamber.

In the business section of the agenda, including the review of the recommendations of the staff report arising from the Council/Business Community workshop, Councillors reviewed the recommendations and clarified their observations regarding the events at the workshop and the process.

Council reviewed the six recommendations and modified the initial suggestion by including 'marketing' as a function for clarification related to the roles of Council and the Chamber. Short term recommendations include developing directional signage at strategic locations in the Queen Street area; developing a user friendly booklet to clarify by-laws, including rationale, FAQ's with answers, and the staff review process; and creating a grace period as part of the parking by-law enforcement process. Direction was given to staff to provide information related to the Heritage Tax Rebate and to reconvene Council's Economic Development Committee to review the Terms of Reference and examine potential for an Economic Advisory Committee.

Council reviewed the recommendations of the Planning Advisory Committee regarding the Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law and, in particular, discussed the rationale regarding the zoning for a potential elementary school site in Virgil. Council concluded to retain the proposed residential zoning on the subject lands.

Council continued to support the Agricultural Sub-committee's recommendations relating to the Greenbelt legislation, while encouraging a meeting between the Sub-committee, Council, Niagara Region, and appropriate provincial representatives. Council modified the staff recommendation regarding the proposed zoning by-law and directed a public meeting be held on July 20, 2009.

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

Under the Notice of Motion section of the agenda, Council defeated a motion to revisit the use of the Ombudsman's office instead of the current Legal Advisory Service.

Furthermore, Council adopted a motion directing to have a letter sent from the Lord Mayor's office to General Motors of Canada in support of keeping Niagara Motors open.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for July 27, 2009, commencing at 7:00 p.m. Additional information on meeting schedules and deputation procedures may be obtained by contacting the Clerk's Department or by 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