

Zorra Township News from your 4 ward councillors

COUNCIL NEWS from MARCUS RYAN

Regarding the intersection of 31st Line & Rd 74. The Township is waiting for OPP reports on both the recent accidents before proceeding with action. A number of low risk remedies are now in place: stop bars have been painted, oversized stop/stop-ahead signs have been installed & rumble strips have been ground in. **An overhead beacon has been ordered.** Trees on the south west corner will be removed. Sam Kirwin spoke at Council & many of you know the work he has done with his Facebook Page sharing information in the community. He delivered a petition to me before Council & I presented it. As a result of the excellent proactive work of Public Works & Sam's work, this motion passed. Thanks Sam.

I think the pendulum has swung too far in making severances too difficult & needs to swing back bit. I'm still very much in favour of protecting prime ag land, but sometimes the rules don't make sense. At the July 25 Council meeting Philip Kerr (Chair of the Harrington & Area Community Assoc) made a delegation to Council on the Harrington Dam Environmental Assessment (EA). At the same meeting Council received info from the CAO outlining the potential costs to the Township of the Harrington & Embro Dam EAs. Both EAs will next be considered by Council Sept 5 & by the UTRCA Board Sept 26. Zorra, does not own the dams, it is a question of a recommendation to the UTRCA. Are we willing to pay the costs of anything above the recommendation of the Environmental Assessment (EA), which is removal? Extra time, consultation & formal Public Meetings were added to ensure all factors were considered. If you have more input, please do not hesitate to talk to Council.

By all accounts the Harrington 150 Heritage Festival on Aug 12 was a stunning success with larger crowds than expected & a great time had by all! This is an amazing feat for the community. This year's Lakeside Triathlon will take place Sept 9 & 10. Watch your mailbox for the usual mail out, some of the routes have changed.

At the Aug 8 Council meeting Daniel West's delegation asking Zorra to support Elgin's resolution that the TVDSB retroactively apply the Ministry of Education's school closure Moratorium was unanimously passed by Council. The TVDSB should reconsider the closures of Sparta, New Sarum & Springfield. There's a good chance that at least one of those closures would have a different decision under the potential Funding Formula & Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines the Ministry is working on.

From Aug 13-16 I was in Ottawa at the Assoc of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2017 Conference for the first time. I made the trip for a few reasons: firstly, rural issues are not decided on, in a purely rural setting, we live in a province with a variety of municipalities & I want to understand all the issues & contexts. Secondly, Zorra made a delegation to the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry on Aggregate resources (gravel pits primarily). Councillor Doug Matheson did a great job & thanked the Minister for the increase in tonnage fees from \$0.06 to \$0.12/tonne which basically is a doubling of nothing: it covers the cost to rebuild a single kilometre of gravel road. He asked for an increase in the provincial levy for aggregate. He also asked the Ministry to better enforce Haul Routes. I think we need to explore the possibility of charging our own tonnage fees & requiring haul routes. Our residents have subsidized urban growth more than enough with damaged roads.

Thirdly, one of the main reasons I decided to run for Council was the unfinished business left from the fight to Save AJ Baker. In particular, a school closure moratorium to develop better policies & funding formula, and that on June 28 the Minister of Education announced a school closure moratorium until an "overhaul" of what she called a "flawed Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline" (I still can't believe

that happened...), but that there was still more to be done. At the AMO Conference I sat down with the Education Minister. It was a much more open & positive discussion than I expected. Did you know that of all the taxes Ontarians pay (income, property, sales, etc.), only 9% goes to Municipalities? By the time you read this school will be starting so please watch out for school buses, cars dropping off and picking up, and of course our community's most precious resource: our children.

Just a thought from the last month of activity: I love the informal "meeting after the meeting" where you hang out with resident(s) to talk about issues & how to make our community better for 3 hours(!). I'm always willing to hang around after a meeting with those people.

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COUNCIL NEWS from MARIE KEASEY

It is hard to believe that autumn is just around the corner. The Township's 150 Committee is planning the Oct 20 Volunteer & Senior Thank You breakfast in Embro. This free breakfast is to thank anyone in the Township who volunteers: as a driver, coach, committee members, church volunteers, school volunteers, service club volunteers... (you get the idea); all are welcome. A head's up to the Township office would be appreciated to ensure there is enough food.

Council's August meeting had a delegation from a resident who lives near Rd 31 & 74 where this year there have been 2 serious accidents. Council has supported public works in the preventative actions to bring this intersection to drivers' attention. A contract for a red/amber flashing light is in the works. All of this will improve visibility but it is a driver's responsibility to make sure that they are not distracted, stop & proceed with caution at any intersection.

Zorra is blessed with a great volunteer fire department & there will be an opportunity to explore being a part of it. Recruitment open houses will be held at the Embro Fire Station Sept 20 & in Thamesford Sept 21.

Council approved an ice rate reduction for the Thamesford Trojans & Ingersoll Minor Hockey. The consultants for the Recreation Master Plan will recommend ice rental fees, which will help set fees for the next season(s).

The Holding (H) designation for Thames Springs, Phase 5C was removed so that the developer can be issued building permits. Signage is to clearly indicate that construction vehicles use the construction road from Banner & not Seldon, nor Sloan.

In August, I attended the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) in Ottawa. The Township participated in 3 delegations to Provincial Ministers: Minister of Education to request reversal of school closure decisions that were announced but not completed & to support changes to the accommodation review process & the funding of rural schools; the Minister of Natural Resources & Forestry about the still low fee for gravel tonnage & to request that haul routes be part of the licence so that the Ministry's inspectors can monitor & enforce these "approved" routes; and I was part of the County's delegation to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to support & move the Sustainability Plans for the province & County forward. Also announced was AMO's request for a 1% increase in HST to be dedicated to municipal infrastructure. There was no support for this by any of the provincial party leaders. Since there is a Provincial Election next year, you can be assured this suggestion will not be implemented. Nonetheless, the issue of how to pay for all the infrastructure is a major one. Zorra Township alone will need an estimated \$10 million between 2018-2025 just for asphalt rehabilitation. This does not include maintenance of gravel roads, bridges, culverts, dams, etc, which costs about \$2 million per year.

Updated numbers will be brought back to Council as we start the 2018 budget process.

There are still Canada 150 events to fill in your Bingo card— the Uniondale Fire Station BBQ (7th), the Embro Fair (15-17th) & the Women's Institute Book Launch (30th) or visit Thamesford, Embro or

Harrington public library, or Thamesford or Embro Community Centre.

Hope to see you at one of them.

Respectfully submitted, Marie Keasey.

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MARIE KEASEY Councillor Ward 2