

Zorra Township UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Regular Council Meetings

February 13 4:00 p.m. *Budget Information Session

Please be advised there is only 1 meeting in Jan & Feb

NEW ZORRA BRAND! Check out our new Zorra logo! We strive to make Zorra better by doing our part. In Zorra, we take great pride in maintaining our exceptional rural lifestyle, made possible by our highly engaged community and government. Our location allows residents and businesses to enjoy a small village atmosphere with abundant green space, easy and fast access to big city amenities and large consumer markets. Zorra is progressive, environmentally conscious, economically strong and prosperous. Our highly productive rural land provides a solid foundation for successful and varied agriculture and food production.

In Zorra Township, we care. Did you know... 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION is MON, OCT 22. Zorra will be utilizing VOTE BY MAIL!

Township of Zorra Hunting Regulations *Sunday Gun Hunting in the Township of Zorra is prohibited. For further information visit the Ministry of Natural Resources website: www.mnr.gov.on.ca

*In accordance with Township By-law #43-09, Municipal licenses are not required for hunting rabbit & pheasant in the Township of Zorra.

By-law Enforcement Department WINTER PARKING Please be advised that the winter parking restrictions will be enforced starting November 15, 2015 until March 31, 2016. For snow removal purposes, parking is not permitted on any road or street from 1am-8am 7 days a week during this period.

Tax Department The 2018 Interim Tax Bills were mailed the last week of January 2018. They are calculated on half of the taxes that were billed on your property in 2018; the bills will be due February 28 and May 31, 2018. WHY NOT TRY PAYING YOUR TAXES ON-LINE? Online or telephone banking is available for making monthly, arrears, or regular instalments. To setup your property taxes as a bill payment through your online banking, go to add a bill & search for Zorra. Select Zorra Township Tax and enter the Roll Number from your tax bill as your account number. Use your 15-digit roll number, excluding the dashes, starting after 3227. Example: If your roll number on your tax bill shows 011-090-25600-0000 then you would enter this as 01109025600. If an error occurs, please add the extra four zeros at the end & try again. Any tax questions, please contact Kelly Hall 485-2490 ext 222 or khall@zorra.on.ca

Township of Zorra 274620 27th Line, P.O. Box 306 Ingersoll, ON N5C 3K5 519-485-2490

or Toll Free 1-888-699-3868 Website: www.zorra.on.ca Email: zorra@zorra.on.ca

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Zorra Township News from your 4 ward councillors

WARD 2 NEWS from MARIE KEASEY - February

February, a fun month, short & sweet with Valentine's Day, a Literacy Day event at the library, Family Day events, pancake supper, and a Trivia Night being just a few ways to enjoy our community. Some events are free. Some are fundraisers with fees or donations.

Feb 13 is the Public Information & Input session for the 2018 budget. Council will start its regular

meeting at 11am and the public information session will begin at 4pm. Hoping folks can squeeze some time in before the usual evening events to attend. At this point the budget requires about a 4% increase in assessment. The actual effect on tax rates would be less than that. This will be the only meeting in Feb.

The January council meeting received annual reports from all departments, an updated budget proposal & update on the actions outlined in the Strategic Plan. Most of the actions for 2017 were completed & the remaining will be done in 2018. Thanks to Enbridge who granted \$10,000 to the Zorra Fire Services for equipment. Architectural Services were awarded to Chamberlain Architects for the design of the new Public Works Maintenance Facility which is expected to be built in 2019. A presentation by Stewardship Oxford was made regarding road side planting of trees in the rural areas. Some monies are available to subsidize this potential initiative. Staff will work with Stewardship Oxford to propose a policy.

A new bylaw will be coming forward to deal with dumping & littering and property standards. This will include snow issues. It is illegal & dangerous to move snow from your property onto roads & sidewalks. Snow removed should be confined to your own property. And I know that this year has not been easy, hence the buried Christmas trees on some of our front lawns, which the Lions will pick up when the snow melts & the weather cooperates. Fines will also be reviewed & possibly amended. Information about **Work in Oxford website** was reviewed by Bernia Wheaton from ROEDC (Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation). Many employers are posting jobs that are available in Oxford County: there are 300-400 jobs on it at any one time. This website also has postings for volunteer opportunities. Check it out at www.roedc.ca Just like the month, a short column. Stay warm & safe. I look forward to seeing you at one of the February events. Respectfully, Marie Keasey

COUNCIL NEWS from MARCUS RYAN for February

I'm submitting this column Jan 19, as I prepare to go to the Rural Ontario Municipal Assn (ROMA) Conference. I have heard some people say that they see little value in Councillors going to such conferences. I STRONGLY disagree. I have found the learning sessions excellent, the connections useful, the opportunities to collaborate on common issues invaluable, and all of that says nothing about the opportunities to make Delegations to Ministers to lobby on specific issues. I always go with specific objectives in mind that are aligned with our Township's Strategic Plan. I feel that a lot has been achieved at ROMA/AMO by organizing with other Municipal Politicians on Rural Education & lobbying for changes to education policy. It was partially as a result of connections at ROMA & AMO Conferences that a moratorium on school closures was announced last June along with additional funding for rural & northern schools. I could not imagine doing this job effectively without the annual AMO & ROMA conferences.

At this year's ROMA Conference, Mayor Lupton has allowed me to present the Delegation on behalf of the Township of Zorra & the Community Schools Alliance to the Minister of Education in order to ensure that the policies in place after the Moratorium ends are better for our communities. Also, I have been asked to speak at a learning session on "Keeping Community Schools Open". I plan on letting them know ALL of your secrets from how we saved AJ Baker! Updates will come via Facebook & Twitter & in the March Village Voice.

Last month I reported to you that I made a Motion at Council that Zorra support the Community Schools Alliance's input to the Ministry of Education's current review of the guidelines for considering school closures & the Funding Formula. Zorra Council passed this unanimously, and Oxford County Council also passed it unanimously. Councillors Molnar, Lupton & Deputy Warden Martin all spoke strongly in favour of it.

On Dec 15, Zorra's CAO had a meeting with Ministry of Transportation staff about high speed rail. It was reported that it was a very open & constructive discussion. More meetings will be needed, and unfortunately our request for a Delegation to the Minister of Transportation at the ROMA Conference

was denied.

2018 is a Municipal Election Year. I think it's important to get the widest representation we can get, so I submitted the following Motion to Council: "... the Township of Zorra's Strategic Plan states ...actively encourages involvement, engagement, openness & transparency.", and; ...children requiring supervision can be an impediment to residents seeking to hold Public office ...staff be directed to investigate the feasibility, of the Township providing some level of childcare supervision for Council meetings" Staff will investigate & report back.

The Jan 16 Council meeting was primarily spent on year end department reports. Prior to the auditor's review, in comparing the 2017 budget to actual figures, the Township present surplus is sitting at \$239,504.52. At first this may seem like a good thing, and it is better than a deficit, but it is 5% of the 2017 budget. When Council passes a Budget there needs to be an expectation that the items are appropriately prioritized & should happen in that budget year. Emergencies aside, if this does not happen we need to re-look at the Budget Plan and figure out what happened: taxes were collected in 2017 for specific projects in 2017.

As part of the budgeting process staff are required to report on Council remuneration (total pay & compensation). The total cost to the residents of Zorra for all 5 Council members was \$101,473. My total was \$18,076. This term of Council has not had a Strategic Plan that sits on a shelf, staff have worked diligently to implement the priorities set by Council.

There will be a March Break Day Camp in Embro Mar 12-16, check the Township website for more info.

At the Dec 19 Council Meeting the Township's branding exercise launched the new Brand: #doingourpart. The intention of the new brand is that it be an honest reflection of what is unique about Zorra: that all of us, in our own way, "do our part to make Zorra a better place".

Finally, Uniondale District Fire Chief Paul Mitchell has resigned from Zorra Fire & Emergency Services. Paul has been on the end of a pager for 37(!). Paul's leadership at the hall will be missed. I cannot thank Paul enough for all he has done for our community.

I hope to see you at Pickle Ball in AJ Baker Feb 8, 7pm (and Mar 8 & Apr 5), this time it will be pickle ball & family games night!

As always you can contact me on any issues at: Marcus Ryan, Councillor Ward 3, Mobile: 519-301-1634, mryan@zorra.on.ca, FB: Marcus Ryan - Zorra.

COUNCIL NEWS from MARCUS RYAN - January

I'm submitting this column on Dec 14, so I hope you have all had a great holiday! By the time you read this Zorra's CAO will have had a meeting with some Ministry of Transportation staff about High Speed Rail. Check social media or wait until next month's column to find out if there is any news. If you are trying to see EXACTLY where the HSR line will go, there was some correspondence from the Ministry of Transportation: At this point in there is no detailed route for high speed rail through the Toronto to Windsor corridor. The map generated in the Special Advisor's report includes a concept-level route that is being treated as "representative" as planning, design & environmental assessment work is done. This route will be subject to further study.

On Nov 27 there was a Special Budget Council meeting. The focus was on Assessment Analysis, 2017 Capital Projects Recap, 2018-22 Capital Budget Plan, Reserve & Reserve Funds, the 2018 Operating Budget potential impacts, challenges, grant requests & 2018 survey results. The 2017 Capital Projects Recap is important because when Council debates items in the budget, it sets the tax rate. Council adopted a 5 year Capital Budget Plan in an attempt to get better control over long term spending. There needs to be a strong expectation from Council that those items will be completed in the year that they are planned, budgeted & taxed for. And an equally strong expectation that Council will be responsible & accountable for the plan.

Five years ago when the TVDSB began considering the closure of AJ Baker PS, a day like the 2017

Rural Education Symposium was unimaginable. I know because people told me: they said there's nothing you can do to keep a school open once it's got a target on it. But our community pulled together. Not just the AJ community, but the ZHPPS & TPS community, all of Zorra, including Council & then all of Oxford. At AMO in August it was my pleasure to thank the Minister for the school closure moratorium AND challenge her: I pointed out that I thought the reason they had rightly identified the need for the moratorium & policy change was the engagement they carried out last spring in Rural Ontario. I asked her to continue with more of that engagement to develop the policies to end the moratorium. And 2 senior members of MOE Staff came to little old Zorra Nov 25 to attend the symposium & hear our input on how to make better policy for rural schools. And it went better than I could have imagined. Special thanks to the Zorra Local School Committee (Leeanne Hopkins, Stacey Van De Kemp, Jim Gillespie & Daniel West) and Meghan Aarts for helping to set up the event & Zorra Staff who did a fantastic job organizing. I followed up the Symposium by making a Motion at Council that Zorra support & submit, the Community Schools Alliance's input to the Ministry of Education's current review of the guidelines for considering school closures & the Funding Formula. Council passed this unanimously.

While the Township's Recreation Arts & Culture master Plan is ongoing Recreation Programming is not waiting around for it. A successful shinny hockey program has begun in Thamesford & Embro. Plans continue for the spring & summer programs such as returning camp & pool activities, and new items such as March Break camp & a ball hockey league!

Watch the Township website & social media for more news & details.

Pickle Ball in AJ 1st Thur of each month returns Thur, Feb 8!

As always you can contact me on any issues at: Marcus Ryan, Councillor Ward 3, 519-301-1634, mryan@zorra.on.ca, FB: Marcus Ryan - Zorra, Twitter: @marcusryanzorra, Blog: marcusryanblog.wordpress.com, communityschoolsalliance.ca, FB: Community Schools Alliance.

WARD 2 NEWS from MARIE KEASEY – January

I hope everyone got through the December holiday season safely & were able to cope with the snow & wind.

Late November, Council had a special meeting that received information from staff on the 2018-2022 Capital Budget Plan, the assessment analysis for 2017, balances in the reserve funds & challenges for the 2018 Operating Budget. It was noted that the budget estimate for work on North Town Line, which was managed by Ingersoll (it is a shared road), submitted in 2015 for 2018 work was underestimated by over \$600,000. Council has directed staff to investigate how to ensure this does not ever happen again. For a small municipality, this is a significant difference & may affect the ability to pursue other road works. This will result in a need to increase the monies being put into reserves. Once again, the Township's grant from the province will be reduced by \$160,000 which represents approximately 3.3% of the tax levy. Council considered grant requests received by the deadline & approved those who met the criteria. There is still much work to be done. Please check the Township's website for upcoming Council agendas that include budget deliberations for more information. Meanwhile the value & number of building permits increased by about 40% over 2016, with the same number of new houses built in each year (25) throughout the Township.

There is now **"No Stopping" along Brock St**, both sides, along the curve & going west for 90 metres. The fine is \$100. Safety is of prime concern & Tim Horton patrons who cannot or don't use their lot should be aware that there is a municipal parking lot next to the RBC on Dundas St.

Township Staff & Council continue to follow the **High speed Rail issue** and the Environmental Assessment. The Province did not include the potentially affected municipalities, that is, rural ones, in their consultations. We are trying to change that. Some of Council will be attending the Rural Municipalities Association Convention in Toronto late January & will be meeting with various

Ministers to present information about the possible effects. Please check the Township's website for links & information that has been released to date.

The Township is committed to supporting the County's Zero Waste Plan & to that end a number of staff and Council attended a workshop on zero waste for events. An Event Planning Guide is available on the County website & printed copies are available upon request. Township facilities all have dishes & cutlery which can be washed; green cones for food waste (including bones) will be installed at municipal facilities; large recycle bins can be made available to event organizers - all of which will reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill. Anyone hosting events are encouraged to check out the Guide.

The January Council Meeting is Jan 16, 9:30am. May you all have a Happy New Year & a healthy, prosperous & peaceful 2018. Respectfully submitted, Marie Keasey

COUNCIL NEWS from MARCUS RYAN - September

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.

Marcus Ryan, Councillor Ward 3, Mobile: 519-301-1634, mryan@zorra.on.ca,

FB: Marcus Ryan – Zorra

COUNCIL NEWS from MARIE KEASEY - November

This is the last month to fill your Zorra 150 Bingo card. Visit the thamesford, embro and / or Harrington Libraries, attend the Thamesford Fire Fighter Breakfast Nov 12 or take in one of the thistle theatre's performances of "Queen Millie of Galt" (Nov 17-25) at embro town Hall. Prizes will be drawn early dec.

Council held its October meetings at Zorra Highland Public school (oct 3) & Thamesford Public school (oct 17). student delegations presented to council at each of the schools. Zorra Highland informed council about their work on a community Garden, acquisition of green cones which takes food waste, their pumpkin patch & hoping for buddy benches & more trees at the school. students would like to see an empty building used for a community café in embro, where young people could meet for activities. And, there was an presentation about high speed rail & the concerns the students have. these concerns are shared by council.

the presentations at thamesford Public school included having drop in/pick up hockey, soccer & baseball with a fee of \$2 each time or \$10 for a season. Another delegation was for the township to consider asphalt space for such activities as road hockey, tennis, and/or basketball, with sites in thamesford & embro. the other request was to start a "Red Light Awareness" campaign so that people know there is a possible red light ahead. Almost all of the students had seen red lights being run, accidents or experienced close calls. council & staff will be considering all of the delegation requests. it was a pleasure to be in the schools & work with the students.

Many thanks to the students, school staff & parents, and township staff who worked so hard to make these meetings happen.

The last school "council" meeting will be at AJ Baker Nov 7 at 9:30am. As with all council Meetings, this is open to the public.

An update about the southwest Landfill Proposal was provided to council. the proponent is conducting field studies in accordance with the terms of reference of the required environmental Assessment. these studies should be completed by the end of 2018 & reports will be submitted to the province. A final decision by the province would likely be made in 2019 or 2020.

council approved that staff and the Water & Wheels committee submit a grant proposal to trillium Fund. A decision on the grant would happen early in 2018. in the mean time council has approved the

committee to work on tender documents to be ready to move forward if successful with all the fundraising. there is still time & many opportunities to financially contribute to this exciting project. in kind contributions are also welcomed.

Please see the ad in the Village Voice. the 2018 Budget Process will begin in earnest with a **special council Meeting Nov 27 at 9:30am**. A 1st draft will be presented. A 2nd draft is anticipated in January with a public information session on Feb 13, 4-6pm. Budgets are a challenge as the Provincial Government continues to reduce its grants to rural municipalities & other costs continue to rise (such as OPP, hydro, etc.).

council will receive a draft of Phase 1 report of the Recreation Arts & culture Master Plan at the Nov 7 council Meeting. this will include a summary of the public consultations.

Additional ideas, comments or questions can be forwarded to racmp@zorra.on.ca. if you are interested in offering any activities at township Facilities such as art, crafts, exercise..., please contact stephanie starchuck ([sstarchuck@zorra.on.ca](mailto:ssstarchuck@zorra.on.ca)).

A big thank you to everyone who worked on the Volunteer & senior Breakfast, held oct 20 in embro. thanks to all those who contributed to the grab bags & door prizes, the decorations & yummy cookies. thank you to those who attended. Phillip Kerr led us in a professional rendition of o canada, followed up by a Happy Birthday to councillor Ron Forbes. i hope everyone who came enjoyed the food & community gathering. And thanks to all of you who volunteer in any way throughout the township who were not able to attend. Your contributions to the community is what makes it a great place to live. Watch for the 4th edition next year.

Lest we forget, there will be **Remembrance day services** in thamesford on Nov 5 and embro & Beachville Nov 11. these are opportunities to show respect & to remember those who have served & the sacrifices that they made during the World Wars and other military conflicts. it also recognizes those who continue to serve canada in the military.

The clock goes back on Nov 5, please be even more aware of traffic & pedestrians as it gets so dark so early.

September

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.

Councils 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 recommendation 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