

The ROCKWOOD Miller

Guelph / Eramosa COUNCIL CHIPS By: Vivien Fleisher

Three Public Meetings. No. 1: Development Charges

“Growth must pay for growth” is the premise of development charges (DC’s), which are a one-time fee charged to developers for residential and non-residential development, in order to pay for future infrastructure needs resulting from that growth. Guelph/Eramosa last changed their DC’s in October 2013, which are set to expire this October. They retained Watson and Associates to incorporate changes to the process resulting from Bill 73, the “Smart Growth for our Communities Act” passed in 2015, which was drafted to: help municipalities fund growth; give residents a stronger voice; make things more transparent/predictable/accountable; etc. Monday’s public meeting was part of the mandatory process ahead of the bylaw’s adoption on May 22 and received zero public input.

No. 2: Building Permit Fees

The second public meeting, regarding changes to building permit fees, followed a Feb. 21 draft report and also received zero

public input. Watson was retained for this review as well, having concluded in 2008 that the Town would need to raise fees to cover—among other things—a built-in reserve to “mitigate the impacts of any future economic downturns on operations.” The latest updates were described by Mayor White as “kind of a historic change. We used to hire outside consultants to do building inspections but a number of years ago brought it in-house...to be self-funding...we’re one more step toward the ultimate goal of a 100 per cent funded, fully-reserved department,” and since deck fees actually went down—marginally—he finished with the quip that it was “nice to see decks (fees) going down. Decks will be going in all over the place.”

No. 3: All of the Lands in Guelph/Eramosa

The third meeting was a “housekeeping amendment” which concerned all lands in the township via accessory second units in eight different zones from agricultural (A) to highway commercial (C4). Under the current bylaw, second units are

confined to the primary dwelling. The new bylaw will allow them in ancillary buildings, such as over garages, etc., with a list of criteria to be met. However, Mayor White emphasized that such units cannot become second houses, as enforced by three main rules: the unit may not be severed; it must be located within the main building cluster; and, it must be screened or buffered to the Town’s satisfaction. In Village Commercial (C1) and Village Service Commercial (C2), the number of units over a main-floor commercial space is based on square footage, meaning that the limit is not on the number of units, but the number of units that can be built based on a maximum square footage. Residents Rosemary and Lucas Coombs praised the rural residential (RR) bylaw, saying it fit perfectly with their plan to live with their children and grandchildren when they retired. They were overjoyed at the separation the new bylaw would allow “so we don’t drive our kids nuts in the future by living in the same house with them.”

OMB Prehearing heralds new season of fundraising for CRC



Joe Gabriele of DJ’s Diner hosted the CRC’s meet and greet. The public was invited to come and ask questions in the wake of the recently rescheduled OMB hearing, set for May 2019.

In Guelph/Eramosa Council Chambers last Thursday, the drama continued unabated for the proposed Hidden Quarry. What started as an application in 2012 by James Dick Construction Ltd. (JDCL) for rezoning and a license to extract aggregate from below the water table has morphed into an epic battle full of twists and turns, starting with JDCL’s decision to appeal to the OMB. If JDCL did not grasp the depth and sincerity of local opposition to the quarry six years ago, it surely does now. Thursday’s prehearing kicked the can down the road yet again to May 21 2019, contrary to their lawyer’s repeated appeal to outgoing OMB chair Stephen Stefanko for a hearing “as soon as possible.” With the OMB now disbanded, and the Land Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) in its place, cases like Hidden Quarry are tangled up in the overlap between an

old and new body—The burden on municipalities in disputes such as this in part precipitated the change. Because it was in the queue before this, Hidden Quarry is processed under old rules. However, a backlog of cases filed in the lead up to the change means Hidden Quarry has to jostle for time with many others. Eight consecutive weeks are allotted for the hearing, which must accommodate many lawyers and municipal elections this fall to boot.

The original hearing in October 2016 was derailed by a technicality: the township had repealed and replaced its entire set of bylaws, forcing JDCL to reapply, while subjecting their application to new rules at the County level. Additionally, the GRCA—which had previously stated no objections—requested more time to study the situation. A lot can change in a few years.

To that end, the non-profit Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC)—which sprang up in 2013 in response to the proposed quarry—launched what will be the final leg of their battle to fight it with a meet-and-greet at DJ’s Diner in Rockwood two days later. With their 3D model of the Sixth-line site on display, members were on hand answer questions, and get the fundraising machine fired up in the hopes of getting as many citizens on board as possible. With an already hefty legal bill to contend with, they still need to raise in the thousands of dollars, given their lawyer has been on idle at times as the lumbering OMB process slotted the case into a packed schedule. CRC President Doug Tripp acknowledged the dubious advantage of getting more time to fundraise, while soliciting suggestions from the crowd for how to go about it.

WORD IN THE VILLAGE

with Vivien Fleisher

You’ve just been given \$100 and told to spend it solely on yourself. What are you going to buy?

Marion DeSouza: “A gas card. I drive a lot.”

Jonathan Hernandez: “New brake pads. That would take up \$50. I’d save the other 50.”

Sandra Littler: “I’m a bit of a food hoarder, so I guess I’m going to say some really nice beef. A beautiful roast, the stuff you look at and go ‘\$45!’”

Richard Latour: “If it were a million dollars, I’d have a better answer. But with a hundred dollars, I’d buy some fishing gear.”



Jennifer, Henry, David and Simon Brink tuck into a hearty “all-you-can-eat” pancake breakfast at Rockmosa Sunday morning. Hosted by the Rockwood Lions Club, the annual event raises funds for community projects. – Vivien Fleisher photo