



ALMOST FINISHED: Construction of the new Wellington OPP headquarters in Rockwood is almost complete. According to Andrea Ravensdale, Communications Officer for the county, occupancy should begin in mid to late August and the grand opening is planned for September 8. - Rebecca Ring Photo

The Rockwood MILLER



County developing policies to protect groundwater

By Rebecca Ring

Wellington County invited the public to comment on its proposed amendment to the Official Plan regarding groundwater protection policies at an open house meeting at Rockmosa Community Centre last Thursday. County councillors, staff, and study consultants were on hand to answer questions and receive comments.

The proposed amendment is designed to conform to the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), which replaces the 1997 version. The 2005 PPS places a higher priority on directing development to "focus growth within settlement areas to achieve efficient development patterns and optimize infrastructure; meet the full range of long term housing, employment and public service facility needs; and direct development away

form significant or sensitive resources."

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to implement a groundwater management and protection strategy for safe drinking water, sustainable groundwater use, and sustain stream flows and ecosystems that are maintained by groundwater. New policies will be added to protect groundwater resources and municipal wells from "high risk land use activities."

According to Conservation Ontario, source water protection plans must include "water budgets, technical data, inventory of water resources and watershed features that impact those resources, identification of current or potential sources of contamination, high risk land uses and vulnerable areas."

To satisfy these re-

quirements, the county commissioned a groundwater study in 2003, funded by the Ministry of Environment and conducted by Golder Associates Ltd. The purpose was to build on studies undertaken by each municipality and develop a protection strategy for the entire county. As a result, wellhead protection areas, as well as consistent mapping products and methodologies have been established across the county to meet MOE requirements.

The next phase is to hold a formal public meeting before bringing the proposed amendment to county council for a vote.

Parents want Board to add more school buses

By Rebecca Ring

Parents of Rockwood Centennial Public School students want the Upper Grand District School Board to transport elementary school aged children. Township councillor Chris White, also co-chair of the Rockwood Centennial School Parents Council, said the board removed grade five students from its "courtesy transportation" bus routes, meaning the children who live within the 2.4 km cutoff for that age group. Next year, the board plans to drop grade four students from the bus route.

According to White, there are future plans to drop grade three students. The changes were made to make room for kindergarten students that were added to the school last year.

The problem White and other parents have with this plan is they think the route along Hwy. 7 is not safe for young children to walk, especially in winter. Traffic is heavy and fast, despite the posted 50 or 60 km speed limits, and includes many transport trucks. In some areas between the school and the southern subdivisions, there is no sidewalk at all, or only on one side of the road. There is no pedestrian crossing in that area either. They want the school board to add a third bus trip to the route so that elementary school aged children are not forced to walk.

White said, "Everybody involved recognizes the potential safety problem, and is willing to be flexible to find a solution." School board trustee Jennifer Waterston maintained that safe access to schools,

including safe sidewalks, is a municipal responsibility. White asked township staff to report on the validity of this claim.

Further Study

School board trustees passed a motion to further study the issue and find out who has the responsibility to resolve it. White said that the board promised to look at the capacity of the current buses to see if more students can be added. The board maintains that funding is not available to add buses for students within prescribed walking distance. White said trustees expressed concern about setting a precedent in busing these students.

Greg Seguin, manager of transportation for Wellington Dufferin Student Transportation Consortium, said, "Two years ago, as Rockwood grew, courtesy riders began to be displaced by eligible riders. First, grade six students were displaced, then grade five and next year, grade four. We cannot back down from the walking distance policy. However, we will look again at the number of students using the bus at the end of September and see if there is room for more courtesy riders. Our goal is to work with

Guelph/Eramosa Township and the parents council to see if we can improve the walking route."

The transportation issue is expected to grow as the population of Rockwood grows. White said that 300 to 400 new homes will be built in the next few years. He plans to form a Highway Seven Committee to address this and other issues regarding the highway through town, such as downtown revitalization, trails, sidewalks and lighting. The province may add this route to its ten-year capital plan to widen it and rebuild the bridge. If this happens, White wants the municipality to use the opportunity to implement improvements in conjunction with the Ministry of Transportation.

For now, short term solutions include asking the MTO to paint lines on the road and post signs warning drivers to slow down for school children, investigate adding a crosswalk with a light or crossing guards, and asking the OPP to increase enforcement on the route.

White hopes that the completion of the OPP headquarters in Rockwood will help to slow traffic. Winter busing only was another option discussed.

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*West Nile Virus is a mosquito borne illness. Check the areas around your home. Remove any type of standing water (old tires, wheelbarrows, tin cans, etc.) Drill holes in the bottom so water can't collect. Change your birdbath water every few days. These are areas where mosquitoes can breed.

*Mosquitoes are very hardy. They mature from egg to an adult in one week. Male mosquitoes usually mate and die within a few weeks while females can survive several seasons with hibernation. Mosquitoes are more prevalent at dawn and dusk. Protect yourself with light coloured, long sleeved clothing and insect repellents containing DEET. Don't forget to reapply if swimming.

*Although most people who are infected with West Nile Virus have no symptoms, about 20% will develop flu-like symptoms. In rare cases (less than 1%) more severe complications can occur.

*Just a reminder about using insect repellents for children. Do not use DEET containing lotions in children under the age of 6 months. For children aged 6 months to 2 years, use one application of lotions with 10% or less of DEET. Don't use on face, hands of small children so none of the lotion get into the eyes.

*There are many different ailments that can affect people during the summer months. Consult with our pharmacists Maija & Mary about treatment. We'd be happy to advise you.

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