

Special Elora meeting raises objections

By Rebecca Ring

At Monday's regular council meeting, Reta Moyer and Roger Knapp voted against confirming the minutes from the special meeting held in Elora on March 7. Councillors John Scott and Doug Breen and Mayor Chris White voted in favour, so they were confirmed.

The meeting in question was called to replace the regular meeting scheduled for March 5, which was cancelled due to inclement weather. According to clerk/CAO Janice Sheppard, on the afternoon of March 6, her office posted notification on the township website and notified the local press of the special meeting scheduled for March 7 at 11:30 am in Elora.

Moyer said she objected to the meeting being held outside of the township, therefore making it difficult for residents and taxpayers to attend. She also objected to the set up for the meeting, saying that the information on the agenda was not available early enough. She said the meeting violated ethics and the spirit of the Municipal Act,

which she said states that the public and press will have 24 hour notice of any council meetings. She further objected to "the questionable manner in which the decision was made."

According to White and Sheppard, the meeting was set in Elora because council was already scheduled to meet at the Wellington Waterloo Community Futures office for a strategic meeting just prior. Sheppard said the original intent was to have council travel back to the township chambers for the special meeting but not enough members were able to, so there would have been no quorum.

Routine nature

Sheppard added that the items on the agenda were of a routine nature that needed to be addressed in a timely manner. One such item was the approval to put a tender out for construction of the Indian Trail Bridge. This project is partly funded by a COMRIFF grant, which requires staying on schedule. Another item was approval of accounts, which she said would incur

penalties and interest charges if not approved on time.

Knapp said he received an e-mail from the clerk's office on March 5 saying that they would discuss when to reschedule the cancelled meeting at the strategic planning meeting in Elora on March 7. He said he then received a request on March 6 to attend the special meeting at 1 pm in Elora the following day. He replied that he could not attend. The meeting was held at 11:30 am. Sheppard said Moyer replied on the morning of March 7 that she could not attend.

Knapp said there was not enough notice to the public, as it was only posted on the Internet. He added that engineering consultants were appointed at that meeting for the Indian Trail Bridge project, and he wants engineering services to be tendered.

White said this is inaccurate, as R.J. Burnside was appointed months ago when the project began. He said, at the special meeting, staff provided a report on the engineering consultant appointment history since amalgamation, as requested, and was

directed to draft a policy to review consultant appointments on a regular basis. He added that council also approved that public works send out a tender notice for construction of the bridge.

White said the township has authority under the Municipal Act to hold meetings outside the township. He quoted section 236.1, stating, "In the case of an emergency, it may hold its meetings and keep public offices within or outside the municipality" adding, "The emergency was the weather. That the meeting was illegal is simply not accurate. There was nothing secret about it. We just took care of some house cleaning. Had any councillor objected to this meeting beforehand, we would have addressed any legal concerns or simply cancelled it. It was an open public, meeting with the agenda posted on the web, and was completely legal."

Sheppard said staff will look at the procedural by-law and draft an amendment to specify how cancelled meetings will be rescheduled, so there will be no question or controversy if the situation arises again.

The ROCKWOOD Miller

Taking health to El Salvador

By Rebecca Ring

Registered nurse Marion Willms is on a mission. She is spearheading a project that will develop health care in three impoverished, war torn rural communities in El Salvador, Central America. Her initial trip will be at the end of April, when she will make contacts in the communities, learning about their needs over the course of ten days. The next step will be to form a team of health care professionals and other volunteers to work in clinics. She plans to leave with the team in late 2007 or early 2008.

For both trips, Willms is asking the public and businesses for their support. Funds can be donated to the El Salvador project in a dedicated account at the Royal Bank in Rockwood, or through St. John's Anglican Church, 112 Main St. S, Rockwood, who will provide a tax receipt for donations made out to The El Salvador Project.

Willms is taking toiletries and over-the-counter medicines with her as well. She is asking for donations of toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, etc. and drugs such as pain relievers (Tylenol, Advil, etc.) infant and prenatal multivitamins, oral rehydration salts, antibiotic ointments (Polysporin, etc.), folic acid, ferrous sulphate (iron), cough medications, antihistamines and water purification tablets. Drop-off boxes are located at many Rockwood businesses including True Value Hardware, Rockwood Pharmacy, DJ's Donuts, ESSO gas station, Four D's Pet Store, and The Village Sweet Shop.

Experienced in crisis

Willms is experienced in helping communities in crises. She worked in a refugee camp in Thailand for a year, which inspired her to become a nurse. She accomplished that goal upon returning to Canada, with an interest in providing health care to developing

countries. She then went to work in Nunavut for two years. Most recently, she travelled to New Orleans to help out following Hurricane Katrina.

In addition to this work, Willms is completing her Bachelor of Nursing degree at University of Guelph. It was there that she was introduced to the idea of going to El Salvador. The Chaplain,

Lucy Reid, coordinates the Seeds of Learning program. She takes students to El Salvador to aid in developing democracy and create awareness about social justice issues. Willms learned about their need for health care and started the ball rolling last fall when she spoke with El Salvadorian doctors and community activists.

Willms says this project is not linked with any religious organization. It is an independent, grass roots, non-profit project. Willms herself is a person of faith, who is very involved with St. John's Anglican Church in Rockwood. Her church is showing its support by facilitating charitable donations and providing tax receipts.



MEDICINE FOR EL SALVADOR: Rockwood nurse Marion Willms is asking for donations of toiletries, over-the-counter medicines and funds to establish a health care team in El Salvador. Donation boxes are located at several Rockwood businesses, including here at Rockwood True Value Hardware Store. Shown are Willms and store owner Don Wilson. - Rebecca Ring Photo



TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH/ERAMOSA

NOTICE

TRAILS COMMITTEE

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa is seeking members of the public to participate on the Guelph/Eramosa Trails Committee. The Committee generally meets once a month. The Terms of Reference for this Committee can be viewed on our website at www.get.on.ca.

Interested applicants are invited to complete the Township's required Application for Appointment to Committees, which can be obtained at the Township of Guelph/Eramosa Municipal Office, faxed or e-mailed upon request by calling (519) 856-9596 Ext. 107 or the Township website at www.get.on.ca. Please forward applications by April 6, 2007 to:

Janice Sheppard, AMCT
Clerk/Chief Administrative Officer
Township of Guelph/Eramosa
8348 Wellington Road 124 (at Brucedale)
P.O. Box 3000, Rockwood, Ontario N0B 2K0



TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH/ERAMOSA

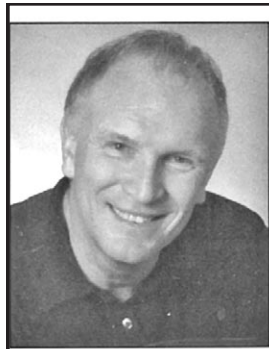
NOTICE

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa is seeking members of the public to participate on the Guelph/Eramosa Environmental Stewardship Special Purpose Committee. The Committee generally meets once a month. The Terms of Reference for this Committee can be viewed on our website at www.get.on.ca.

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