

# Eden Mills proposes to go Carbon neutral

Eden Mills is aiming to become North America's first carbon neutral community. The plan is in response to the growing problem of climate change, or global warming, in which carbon dioxide plays a major role.

## A Canada First

The village plans to emit no more of the gas than it absorbs. It was inspired by the village of Ashton Hayes in England, which implemented its plan to go carbon neutral last year.

The project, spearheaded by the Eden Mills Millpond Conservation Association Inc., will involve the entire community, with a focus on education, communication, measuring results, and good, clean fun. To begin, participating households will have their individual carbon footprint measured in a baseline survey by University of Guelph students early next year. Then, with carefully targeted research, effective and simple ways to reduce household carbon production will be laid out for all residents along with long-term projects to benefit the entire village.

To continue, the footprint will be re-evaluated every year. Organizers expect participants will reduce energy costs as well as carbon emis-

sions as they result primarily from energy use.

The little village with the big plan caught the attention of CBC Radio. Charles Simon, resident organizer and one of Canada's pioneering green architects, was interviewed by Shelagh Rogers on Sounds Like Canada last Tuesday. They commented on the unseasonably warm weather this Thanksgiving weekend, with Simon saying it was absurd to see people swimming in the millpond this late into autumn.

Rogers mentioned the power outages Toronto experienced due to air conditioning demands. "Our plan is important to create awareness about global warming. It is an acute and serious problem. We are very concerned about the future, and the futures of our children and grandchildren, because of the potentially disastrous effects. We must tackle this single, most serious problem," said

Simon.

"Eden Mills is a community that works together. When we see a need, we do something about it." He says nobody will be pestered, there will be no finger pointing or "carbon cops." They will lead by example, which is how the village of Ashton Hayes has been so successful.

Simon outlined the plan as having three broad categories: first is to reduce the amount of energy consumed by using compact fluorescent light bulbs, adjusting the thermostat, turning off lights and electronic devices when not in use, etc.; second, is to use renewable, clean energy such as wind and solar power; third is to ensure adequate tree coverage to absorb the same amount of CO2 that is emitted.

Simon and his fellow organizers have no doubt that this grass roots approach will have a huge ripple effect, saying, "We can't wait for big business and government to solve this. We are part of the problem, so we need to

be part of the solution. If our tiny village can do this, anybody can." Quoting US anthropologist and author, Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Simon mentioned how Guelph/Eramosa council unanimously agreed to support the project "in principle." He and fellow organizer Libby Little presented their plan at last week's meeting. The formal launch will take place Thursday, November 8 at 7 PM in the Eden Mills Community Hall, where specific plans for the first year of the project, partners and projects already underway, and information and guidelines for taking the first steps to reduce the village's carbon footprint will be announced.

For more information, visit [www.goingcarbonneutral.ca](http://www.goingcarbonneutral.ca).

-By Rebecca Ring

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## Guelph/Eramosa

## Council Chips

by Rebecca Ring

Sharing fire protection services

Council unanimously agreed to extend its fire protection agreement with the Town of Erin until 2010. Since 1999, Guelph/Eramosa has provided fire protection service to the western portion of Erin at a cost for \$500 per response, of which there have been 15 since 2002. The agreement is usually renewed annually but this time, Erin requested that the agreement be extended. According to the Clerk's office, there have been no problems

with recovering costs from Erin. The Fire Department had no concerns with extending this agreement.

### Organizational review

Council agreed to take proposals to conduct an organizational review. This will include reviewing the functioning of council with a view to identify where to make improvements, to assess the organizational structure regarding goals and service requirements, assessing department staff numbers in relation to responsibilities

and population number, to identify services and standards and determine if they are appropriately defined, communicated and evaluated and if improvements are needed.

### New remuneration by-law

"We needed to tighten the by-law to reflect new provincial legislation and to formalize the expenditure process for council members, for attending conferences, etc.," said Mayor Chris White. The new by-law was adopted at their last meeting. It includes reference to existing legislation, confirmation that one-third of council's remuneration be for expenses related to duties, definitions for remuneration for attending meetings above and beyond regular meetings, penalties and rules for missed meetings, and rules for meals and other expenses while attending pre-approved meetings.

### Township helps with Parade

The Public Works department will once again help make Rockwood's annual Parade of Lights a reality. It will provide signs, vests, radios and other equipment to help with parking and traffic control. This year's popular Christmas parade takes place on Thursday, December 13.

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