

Municipal Council Update

By Steve Ferguson, Councillor for South Marysburgh

I realize that much of the information I have included below is available through the Internet or local papers so please excuse any redundancy. Here are some of the issues council is dealing with including some background information that may not have been reported elsewhere.

Size of Council

On April 16th, Mayor Quaiff called a special Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss the issue of size of council. I won't delve into the whys and wherefores of the meeting other than to say there were several very good deputations followed by reasonable comments from the members of council as well as the mayor. The agenda for that meeting can be accessed through the County website. It contains the plans for a reduction of council presented by Gary Mooney and John Thompson as well as Mayor Quaiff's plan for two wards consisting of five councillors each. We are at the point now where those three plans are on the table for consideration, along with leaving council size as is.

On May 6th, council will gather at Shire Hall to discuss the three options. Based on the outcome of that meeting, the public consultation will begin. The exact timing and format has yet to be developed for the consultation process, however, I would anticipate town hall meetings of a somewhat formal nature involving registration, comments, addresses to be provided at the door followed by presentations and comments. As I learn more, I will keep you apprised. Additional information about the plans is also available at this link:

<https://princeedwardcounty.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=95155>

This is a very important matter and deserves your attention and consideration. Please go to the link and read the deputations and plans, consider the merits and obstacles of each, including those of keeping the current council size.

Property Standards By-Law Enforcement

I have received numerous complaints from residents concerning property standards in South Marysburgh. These have been compiled and submitted to the municipality for by-law enforcement.

I think it is fair to consider that dis-repair of property can have several effects:

- Impact on real estate values;
- Effect on nearby or adjacent businesses;
- Safety hazards;
- Effects on tourist traffic in the ward and subsequently the local economy.

If you have a complaint related to this issue or any other, please contact me.

The Picton Splash Pad

The knives have been drawn about this issue for quite some time but here are some facts to consider about Council's approval of the plan to fund operating costs estimated at \$70,000 per annum:

- The Splash Pad Committee is undertaking raising a minimum of \$250,000 to get it built. Any surplus above that amount is to go to future annual operating costs;
- The Committee's fundraising initiatives, including applying for provincial and federal grants, could not begin until it had municipal support;
- The timing for construction of the Splash Pad – *if* fundraising is successful – is estimated for 2017 or 2018;
- The entire idea of a Splash Pad may appear to be a vanity project but such investments are sometimes necessary to attract younger families to the municipality, particularly if members of those families create employment and broaden the tax base;
- The Splash Pad Committee's perseverance to do the fundraising themselves, rather than seeking the capital costs from the municipality, sends a message to other groups who rely on municipal grants. Frankly, I like the idea of pointing to the Splash Pad Committee as an example of fundraising grit.

The Lieutenant Governor

Council and the mayor had the privileged opportunity to meet with The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell on May 1st. As Lieutenant Governor, it is her job to listen to Ontarians and engage them in meaningful dialogue about what they can contribute and learn from others. Her Honour's aim is to bring multiple perspectives to the table, encourage innovation, and cultivate new ideas for the betterment of Ontario and the world.



She is a very interesting and engaging person who is interested in the activities within Prince Edward County. At one point during her remarks she was asked where else she was going to visit in the County. "I'd like to visit the cheese company," she replied,

to which I pointed out that "it's in South Marysburgh, the ward I represent!"

Contact Me!

My municipal business card with my contact information is included in each edition of the South Marysburgh Mirror; it's on page two this month. I have a Facebook page at **Steve Ferguson for Ward 9** that I update as time allows and issues warrant.