

Area youth centres struggling to stay afloat

By DANIEL SCHWAB

While the Harrow Youth Centre has struck a partnership with the Town of Essex that may result in financial support from council, the Essex Youth Centre remains in "dire straits."

Sandy Larivee, executive director of the EYC, said the centre is operating on a day-to-day basis and struggling to meet its payroll.

With bingo revenues at an all-time low, Larivee says the local service is "in real trouble."

The EYC is short staffed and hasn't had the time or resources to fundraise, she added.

As a result, much of its programming has been cut.

As a board member of Town Youth Participation Strategies, a support group for youth centres across Ontario, Larivee has been lobbying the province for

more funding for staffing.

TYPS sent a letter to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in October asking that each of Ontario's 100 rural youth centres receive \$60,000 annually.

"It's an issue of getting core funding to provide centres with administrators," she said. "Then they can access grants and be financially accountable. I'd love to find a grant writer but we can't get the funding to hire that person. It's a Catch-22."

Aside from a small contract staff mostly made up of students, Larivee says she is running the EYC by herself.

The site attached to Essex District High School opened in 1999 and has since been providing a variety of services including a high school transition program for Grade 8 students and a weekly visit from a social worker from the Windsor Teen Health Centre.



Sandy Larivee, executive director of the Essex Youth Centre, says a troubled bingo industry and a lack of provincial funding has the service in danger of shutting down. In the south end of the municipality, the Harrow Youth Centre has secured a partnership with Essex council in an effort to find more funding for the service.

Larivee said she met with council three years ago but was unsuccessful in securing any sustainable funding.

"They basically told us we weren't poor enough," she said. "My frustration is, there aren't a lot of things for kids in the county. They are devastated that this place may close. They need this

place." Larivee says whether or not the EYC will be able to remain open will depend on whether the bingo industry rallies.

Harrow Youth Centre given hope

In the south end of the municipality, the Harrow

Youth Centre is facing similar funding cuts but a promise from council to meet with representatives of the Youth and Family Resource Network of Essex County has given members some hope.

Council agreed Jan. 22 to meet with representatives of the YFRN, which runs centres in Cottam, Kingsville and Harrow, in an effort to find funding for the cash-strapped service.

"We got exactly what we were looking for - a partnership," said Michelle Weglarz, acting executive director of the YFRN after a presentation to council.

Weglarz said funding cuts have reduced staff members from 22 to nine at the three youth centres. As well, programs offered at the sites have been cut in half.

The YFRN is struggling to accommodate a huge increase in clientele, which has skyrocketed from about 200 users in 2002 to more than 700 in 2005.

"If we don't receive help for funding we won't be able to keep our programs open," Weglarz told council, adding that it costs \$15,000 per year to keep the Harrow building open.

She asked that the HYC become the primary receiver for funding allotted by council for services in Harrow.

Last year, council put \$22,500 into related services in the area.

Programs offered at the HYC, including those for anger management, aiding

the homeless and substance abuse counseling, drew support from representatives of both the Essex Police Service and the Harrow school system during Weglarz's presentation.

"The (HYC) is a huge crime prevention tool for Harrow and the south end of the municipality," said police Sgt. Gary Gamberta. "Police investigate youth crime every week in this municipality. In the criminal system, kids could get sentenced to seek anger management or substance abuse counseling. The HYC is set up to provide services ahead of time and prevent crimes."

Mary Catherine Langlois, principal of Harrow Sr. School, called the services offered at the HYC "a solution in the community I was proud to be a part of."

"The programs are above and beyond what the school offers," she said. "I think it's a travesty we're here asking for money. The program is so vital to our kids."

Coun. Paul Innes called programming at the HYC "vital to the growth of our youth."

Weglarz said she also visited service clubs in Harrow asking them to add the HYC to their budgets.

About \$5,800 was raised this year for the centre, with \$4,500 of that to be committed annually.

She said the YFRN's Kingsville site receives funding from the United Way, but the HYC does not.

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION (MTO) AND THE COUNTY OF ESSEX CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PRELIMINARY DESIGN Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving Strategy COUNTY ROAD 19 (MANNING ROAD) AND COUNTY ROAD 22 IMPROVEMENTS NOTICE OF STUDY COMMENCEMENT

THE STUDY

Dillon Consulting Limited has been retained by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the County of Essex, to complete the Preliminary Design and Environmental Assessment (EA) to improve County Road 19 (Manning Road). These improvements include 13 km of County Road 19, from Highway 3 to the VIA rail line and 3 km of County Road 22, from the City of Windsor boundary to Lakeshore Boulevard. The study will also include improvements to the County Road 19/ Highway 401 interchange.

This project is part of the *Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving* (LGWEM) strategy, a joint commitment by the federal and provincial governments to invest \$300 million at the Windsor Gateway. Funding is being provided under the Canada-Ontario Border Infrastructure Fund.

THE PROCESS

This study is subject to Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act* and will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of both the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (June 2000) and the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000). The proposed improvements to County Road 19 and County Road 22 are classified as a Schedule "C" undertaking in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (June 2000). Improvements to the County Road 19/ Highway 401 interchange have been categorized as a Group "B" undertaking in the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000). The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)* also applies to the study.

The EA process involves the collection and integration of input from various engineering, social science and scientific studies, as well as public and agency consultation. When completed, an environmental study report/preliminary design report describing the preferred preliminary design and the environmental mitigating measures and provisions that will be incorporated into the design will be prepared for public review and comment.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRES

Public consultation is an important part of the environmental assessment process. We encourage everyone who has an interest in this project to provide input. Two Public Information Centres (PICs) will be held to obtain public and agency input on the study, with the first scheduled for Spring 2007. Notices of the PIC will be placed in the local newspapers and sent to any individuals on the study mailing list.

COMMENTS

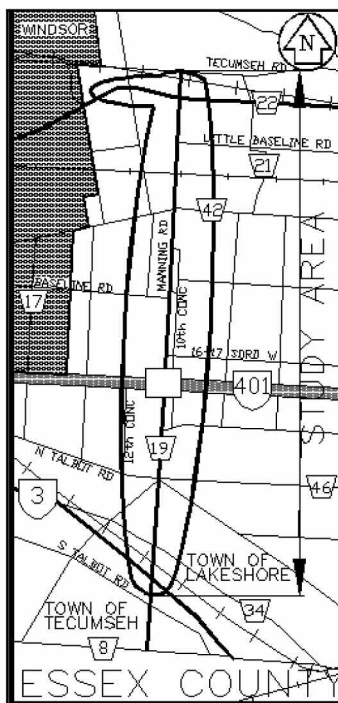
Information collected will be used in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Access to Information Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

For further information or to be added to the mailing list, please contact:

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KEEPING TRACK OF THE PROJECT

The Ministry of Transportation and The County of Essex websites are valuable sources of information on the project. Additional information can be found online at: www.mto.gov.on.ca and www.countyofessex.on.ca.

Disponible en français.



NOTICE OF 2007 BUDGET MEETINGS FOR THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex will be commencing their deliberations of the proposed 2007 Budget on Wednesday, February 7th, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, Essex Civic Centre, 360 Fairview Avenue W., Essex.

THE FINAL proposed budget will be considered by Essex County Council for adoption on Wednesday, February 21st, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

THE 2007 Essex County Budget, as proposed, reflects total gross expenditures of \$117 million, with offsetting non-taxation revenue estimated at \$55 million, resulting in a net operating requirement to be raised from taxation in the amount of \$62 million. The impact of the proposed 2007 Budget would be an increase in the residential County Tax Rate of 1.9%. A home with a current value assessment of \$200,000 would experience an increase of \$14 on the County portion of property taxes for 2007, for a total tax bill of \$789 for County purposes.

COPIES OF the proposed Budget will be available beginning Wednesday, January 31st, 2007, at the County Administration Office, Essex Civic Centre, Suite 202, 360 Fairview Avenue W., Essex between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or downloaded from the County website at http://www.countyofessex.on.ca/general/home_news.asp.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS relating to the proposed Budget will be accepted until 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 14th, 2007 by the undersigned.

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