

October 20, 2023 Blog

In September it was a pleasure to speak at the Oxford Community Energy Co-Op tenth anniversary at Innes Farms in South-West Oxford. They're bringing renewable energy to Oxford County, making a profit, and advancing our collective goal of reaching 100% renewable energy use.

I also had the opportunity to celebrate the 125th (!) anniversary of the Oxford Historical Society. You always learn something at a historical event: John Patterson was born on East Nissouri Concession 11 in the 1872 and worked in Engineering. That is now Zorra Township 23rd Line where I live and worked in engineering. One notable difference: he said engineering school wasn't "taxing"...

Whether your primary goal is to build more homes, protect farmland, or support downtown businesses the solution is the same:

More people in our towns.

More density in Oxford's serviced communities.

More homes in downtowns is more affordable homes, it's less homes on farmland, AND more customers and employees within walking distance of businesses, which means more services for all of us.

Oxford needs to lead by providing homes and supporting both our farmers and retail businesses by not only permitting, but encouraging and requiring density in our downtowns. Zorra has lead this for a while, and Oxford Council has now directed staff to pursue the necessary policy changes to build the quantity and TYPE of homes WHERE people and businesses need them.

The Provincial Government has decided to return land to the greenbelt for good reasons. For the same reasons strong mayor powers & regional restructuring are bad: reduced resident & council voice, and a strong mayor who can make land developable for the wrong reasons. They should repeal strong mayor powers, not expand them. I'm happy to say this is now the official position of the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus after they adopted my motion to that effect, and a letter has been sent to the Province communicating that.

In September I raised the "Every Child Matters" flag at Oxford County to mark the start of National Truth and Reconciliation Week. Zorra and Oxford are located on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples dating back countless generations. The land we are on we have because of treaties. Treaties take two parties to sign, so we are all treaty people. I am a proud Canadian. Soon we will gather to commemorate Remembrance Day. If we can be rightly proud and grateful of the accomplishments of Canadians who lived and died before we were born, then I think we can also be ashamed and sorry for the actions of other Canadians who lived and died before we were born.

As a person who lives on land that was acquired by treaty, I am grateful. As a member of a society who has benefited from the actions of previous governments, I am sorry.

The Truth and Reconciliation Report says that this is not about “closing a sad chapter in Canada’s past.” Rather, it is about “opening new healing pathways that are forged in truth and justice.”

When we acknowledge truth, we can grow stronger. When we reconcile with each other, we grow stronger together. And that is why Oxford’s brand new Strategic Plan has embedded in it:

“Explore Oxford’s role in the “Calls to Action” contained within the Truth and Reconciliation report”. So let’s grow stronger together.

Check in on the website, follow the Township on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, phone or email Staff or Council: we want to hear from you.

Join us and add to your community by doing your part!

As always, feel free to contact me on any issue:

Marcus Ryan

Mayor, Zorra Township (and Warden, Oxford County)

email: mryan@zorra.ca

Phone: 1.519.425.2338