

January 21, 2024 Blog

As I write this, I'm at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in Toronto. I'm talking to municipal counterparts throughout Ontario, and MPPs and Ministers about the issues that matter most to Zorra & Oxford like housing, mental health, addictions, workforce, and provincial municipal funding and cost sharing.

Through extensive work by the Township over the past decade with its partners in the Top Aggregate Producing Municipalities of Ontario (TAPMO), Zorra has achieved a reassessment of gravel pits. This means that gravel pits in Zorra will be paying an additional \$275,250 in 2024 that other property tax classes (including residential and farm) don't have to pay. Zorra Council has already allocated this to the Public Works budget for roads. Many thanks to past Councils, and especially former Mayor Margaret Lupton, for beginning the long work of forming TAPMO and lobbying the Provincial Government and MPAC for this change.

The city of Toronto has got a new financial deal from the Ford Government. It's a pretty sweet deal. \$1.2 billion in provincial operating supports for transportation and homelessness response. \$7.6 billion in capital relief for transportation and debt financing. The goals are to advance housing, transit, and infrastructure opportunities to support economic development and growth, advancing Transit-Oriented Communities, and Community Safety. All admirable and needed, and well done to Mayor Chow for negotiating it. However...

In Oxford, property taxes pay more than double what the Provincial and Federal governments combined pay for housing. We get a small amount of gas tax for transit and infrastructure. And our Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, Safe & Well Oxford, gets no Provincial Funding.

The Toronto deal is \$8.8 billion over three years for 3 million people, that's \$1000 per person per year from the Province.

If Oxford got that deal it would be \$42 million dollars per year. That's 12% of the total annual budget.

If Zorra got half that deal, spread over six years instead of three, it would still be more than 6% of our total annual budget.

Do you think Oxford and Zorra deserve a similar deal? I do.

Lastly, thanks to Deputy Mayor Katie Grigg for building a team for 'Coldest Night of the Year'!!! We are looking for 3-5 community members to join our team and walk with us to help create awareness and raise funds in support of local charities serving people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness.

WHEN: Saturday, February 24, 2024 – 4:00 p.m. registration, walk starts at 5:00 p.m.

WHERE: Ingersoll, Ontario

DISTANCE: 2km route (5km route available)

DETAILS: <https://cnoy.org/location/ingersoll>

How YOU can SUPPORT: Join our team! Come walk with us! Shoot me a message and I'll send you registration details.

Or donate to any team of your choice.

Or form a team with your friends, family, or business!

All can be done by visiting the website listed above.

Many residents have reached out to us with concern about folks living rough in Zorra & Oxford. This is something we had not experienced in the past but sadly is becoming more common. Most recently a woman spent several weeks in Thamesford before moving on...to where? We don't know. While many residents offered some food or resources to these folks, I think we were all hoping to support in a better and more sustainable and impactful way.

This is a better way.

This is a piece of the puzzle, and one we can contribute to.

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

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