

Mayor's Blog – October 20, 2019

Zorra Council has begun developing the 2020 budget based on the Strategic Plan and a new road needs study. Council is trying to complete the budget process sooner in order to get tenders out for capital projects and equipment sooner, in order to get more competitive bids and better prices. There will be a Public Meeting at the end of the process, but ALL Council meetings are open to the public, so please follow along and participate in YOUR budget.

The Township is still working on plans for the former Maple Leaf property in Thamesford, and things are proceeding according to plan. If things continue that way, we could be making an announcement by the end of the month.

Zorra hosted its annual Volunteer and Senior appreciation breakfast on September 27th and once again it was very well attended. It was a fantastic morning thanking people for #doingtheirpart to make Zorra vibrant!

Council has had our annual meetings in both Zorra Highland Park and Thamesford P.S. with A.J. Baker yet to come on November 6th at 9:00 a.m. One of the best things we do as Council is engage with and inspire our community's kids. These are our future volunteers, our future Committee members, our future Councillors, and our future Mayors.

I was invited to represent Zorra, with Oxford County Warden Larry Martin, at the 108th National Day of the Republic of China (Taiwan) on October 4th. My remarks on your behalf:

First, I would like to thank Director General Catherine Hsu and the entire Taiwanese community for including tiny little Zorra Township and inviting us here tonight. The Director General made it clear the values that Taiwanese and Canadians share, and I like to think that a Zorra Township resident played a significant role in the cultural exchange that began those common values when the Reverend George Leslie MacKay travelled there 140 years ago. It's an honour to be here tonight to represent Zorra Township, the Reverend MacKay's home, and we wish the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the entire Taiwanese community a happy birthday! Enjoy!

On October 8th I had a very productive meeting with Zorra, Oxford, and Middlesex developing a pilot community transit plan for the area. There's a lot more work to be done, and it may not come to anything, but we are exploring possibilities and are hoping to have a transit connection to Dorchester, London, Ingersoll, Woodstock, and Tillsonburg.

On October 17th the Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation hosted a free networking event in conjunction with the Oxford County Library in the Embro Library. A great group of entrepreneurs showed up to mingle, chat and network with other rural based entrepreneurs. Since the event was so successful keep an eye out for more events.

You may remember that in early 2017 the Thames Valley District School Board voted to close Springfield and New Sarum P.S. in Elgin County. I had been trying to help them as part of the larger fight to help rural schools, and suggested to the Trustees that they delay their decision as some action from the Minister of Education was coming. About a month later the Minister announced a province wide moratorium on school closures, new rules to consider school closures, and new funding for rural schools... but it was too late as

the Trustees had voted to close them. Well now a new Trustee is trying to have that decision overturned, and I was asked to speak again in favour of keeping them open, but my delegation request, along with everyone else's, was denied. I am shocked that the Board would not, as a matter of course, want to be accessible and open to hearing from residents in the TVDSB family. As a Head of Council myself I cannot imagine denying a delegation request unless someone was proposing something truly unacceptable. This issue will be reconsidered at the October 22nd Board meeting, I will update you next month (or follow me on social media).

Did you know that Zorra Township offers a spring tree planting program where you can request a free 6-8' Sugar Maple tree that will be delivered to your home in the spring? It is your responsibility to request locates and determine the best spot for the tree on your private property. You can do this by emailing your address and phone number to kmartin@zorra.ca

We continue to strive to make Zorra better by doing our part. Zorra is progressive, environmentally conscious, economically strong, and prosperous.

Check in on the website, follow the Township on Facebook or Twitter, 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 you can contact me on any issues at:

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