

August 20, 2023 Blog

I'm writing this while I'm at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference in London. I will be making delegations to various Provincial Ministers about: the importance of rural schools and Zorra's unique proposal for future co-builds with the TVDSB; the need for more Affordable Housing funding from the Province, Mental Health and Addiction; and Long-Term Care beds.

Oxford Council has passed a resolution stating we do not wish to be considered for the implementation of either "Strong Mayor" powers or any restructuring that is not requested by Oxford with its area municipal partners. I first spoke against this legislation the day it was announced. It is fundamentally undemocratic. Residents should get full value and representation from every member of council they elect: none more than others. A Head of Council should be "strong" because they understand their community, have good ideas, advocate, and execute, not because they have a veto or gifted supermajority. This proposal goes against the fundamental democratic principles of how councillors do their work and how councils function. In the long run, Heads of Council with gifted supermajorities or vetos, will discourage good people from running for council. This is the opposite of what is needed. Oxford residents should decide how they are governed, and Oxford Council has communicated that.

At the April 19 meeting Zorra Council decided to "provide notice of intent to declare a block of land from the Embro Zorra Community Centre property to be surplus to be made available for a potential mix of market rate and affordable housing (80% of market rate rent) partnership with Oxford County. On June 21 Council deferred the decision to September 6th to get a more detailed report comparing pros and cons, and financial considerations of three options: originally proposed rec centre property, current Embro Public Works property, and the possibility of a location closer to the centre of Embro.

All Zorra and Oxford Council meetings are open to the public, full agendas are published online, and you can watch Council meetings on Youtube: @zorratownship3193

Zorra is always striving to do our part and serve residents better. If you have a concern about a park, facility, road, or staff member, please use our website form to report it. <https://forms.zorra.ca/Report-a-Concern>

Zorra and Oxford are conducting a budget survey to hear from you about how you'd like us to prioritize services in the budget(s). Search "Speak Up Oxford" to complete the survey.

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