
Road transfer plan marks a cooperative venture

Lanark County is working with Lanark Highlands Township and Omya (Canada) Inc. on a property transfer arrangement that would allow the company's operation to expand, thereby continuing its strong economic contribution in the county and local communities.

At a public works committee meeting Wednesday evening, councillors reviewed, in closed session, a proposed set of terms and conditions that could see a formal agreement for the transfer of ownership of County Road 9 (the Tatlock Road) from the county to Omya. This would enable the calcium carbonate processing company to expand its quarry operation at Tatlock. In exchange, Omya will construct a new and relocated County Road 9.

The terms were approved in principle at a special county council session Wednesday evening, and the detailed agreement is targeted to come back to the next public works meeting. "If it is supported it will be made public, then we would recommend it go forward to county council to continue to support the agreement," Warden Susan Freeman explained.

Council also accepted a resolution from Lanark Highlands in which the township agrees to transfer to the county a portion of the 6th Concession of Darling, from its intersection with the Tatlock Road and continuing 500 metres west. This transfer would maintain local travel on the new county road system. The township would retain mineral rights under the previous township road allowance, if applicable. At the county's request, Lanark Highlands also agrees to amend its official plan and zoning by-law if necessary to provide for the relocated County Road 9.

The report containing these motions received almost unanimous support. "The vote tells it all," said Aubrey Churchill, the county's public works committee chairperson. "I am very pleased county representatives are on deck."

County CAO Peter Wagland noted the county has always been interested in working with Omya to create a fair and equitable settlement regarding the Tatlock Road. "I am pleased to be able to partner with Lanark Highlands to make this happen."

Discussions concerning the transfer of Cty. Rd. 9 have been ongoing for more than three years. "At the beginning of this year, when Omya came to us with a request to restart negotiations, I made an agreement on behalf of county council to work quickly and in good faith," Ms. Freeman added. "As a result of transferring the road, Lanark County will get continued viability of an economic resource for the benefit of the citizens of Lanark County."

She noted Omya makes a significant economic contribution to the county not only through taxes, but also in direct payroll, trucking payroll, rail payroll and supplier purchases of \$227 million. Their total job impact, both direct and indirect, is 696 positions.

"Municipalities across North America work very hard to keep and attract businesses to their communities. It is Lanark County's responsibility, as a municipality, to look after the interests of the citizens of our County. In this case it means protecting jobs, protecting the economic spin-offs and protecting the tax base."

Mr. Churchill congratulated Lanark Highlands council for their support in the process. "They are a willing partner – it's a partnership all the way."

Agendas for the next public works meeting, in August, will be available on the county's new website at www.county.lanark.on.ca.

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