
Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, June 23.

- **Council Approves Development Charges** – Following a public process and debate, council has approved the collection of development charges as of Jan. 1. Development charges are a tool provided to municipalities by the province to help recover a portion of costs associated with capital infrastructure needed to service new development. The county will collect \$2 million over 10 years that would otherwise have to be raised through taxes. A background study determined what charges the county can recover under the provincial Development Charges Act and determined projects related to long-term care, ambulance, studies and roads qualify. Luke McLenaghan of the Lanark-Leeds Home Builders' Association made a presentation to council outlining the reasons for the group's opposition to the charges, which include concerns over an economic slowdown, the introduction of the HST and rising insurance costs for homebuilders. He suggested the charges could result in reduced growth and asked council to consider limiting future increases if the bylaw passed. Council defeated an amendment to place a cap on development charges until 2014 as this would limit the ability to add new eligible projects. Director of Finance/Treasurer Kurt Greaves noted there is a mandatory review of the study every five years. Several councillors spoke in favour of the charges as a way to prevent property tax increases while having new development pay for new infrastructure. Councillors noted some of the development that is taking place and indicated the price of an average new home in Lanark County is \$316,237, which would increase to \$316,800 with development charges. In a recorded vote, council endorsed the background study, the proposed expansion of services and rates for various properties. Industrial, non-residential farm buildings, places of worship, cemeteries and hospitals are exempt. Council also passed the related bylaw. Warden John Fenik thanked the home builders for their participation in the process and their thoughtful comments. A copy of the development charges background study can be found on the county website at www.county.lanark.on.ca. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, Director of Finance/Treasurer, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1301.
- **Auditor Praises County in Report** – County auditor Howard Allan of Allan Chartered Accountant Professional Corporation presented the financial statements for 2009 and indicated the county's records are in good shape. He said 2009 was an interesting year for municipalities with the new requirement for accounting for capital assets. He also commented on the reduction in unconditional grants from federal and provincial governments along with the expectation for municipalities to show long-term sustainability plans. "Senior levels of government change policies frequently, so we need to encourage our counterparts to make longer-term commitments to us." He said he is impressed with the county's planning, noting the municipality has grown tremendously, moving from budgets of \$5 million to \$75 million with less reliance on unconditional grants. "The tax rate has dropped and we compare favourably to other counties," he said, adding longer-term financial plans are working to ensure sustainability. He praised the county's finance team for their work. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, Director of Finance/Treasurer, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1301.
- **County to Proceed with Official Plan** – The county has completed a request for proposals process to see the development of a county official plan that includes integrated community sustainability components. This is required in order for the county to continue to be eligible for the Federal Gas Tax Funding program which, to date, has provided \$6 million for improvements to 110 kilometres of county roads since 2005. Stantec Consulting was awarded the contract to complete the plan, scoring the highest points in the evaluation process and coming within the 2010/11 approved budget. For more information, contact Mary Kirkham, Planning Approvals Administrator, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1520.
- **Warden to Present Gift in Scotland** – Warden John Fenik (Perth Mayor) displayed a beautiful stone bowl carved from Perthite that will be presented to the Provost of Scotland when a delegation from Perth visits to participate in celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the founding of its twin city next week. The bowl was created by artisan John Schweighardt of Living Stones Sculptures in Lanark Highlands and will be presented on behalf of county council. For more information, contact Peter Wagland, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101. **(Photo available upon request.)**
- **Upcoming Meetings – No regular meetings scheduled in July.** County Council, Wednesday, Aug. 25, 7 p.m. Community Development, Aug. 4, 5 p.m.; Public Works, Aug. 4 (following Community Development). Community Services, Aug. 11, 5 p.m.; Corporate Services, Aug. 11 (following Community Services). For more information, call 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1501.