



Council News & Notes

From Tuesday, May 7, 2024

Upcoming Meetings

Council Meeting
May 29 2024

6:00 PM

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Mayors' Message

I would like to begin by reminding everyone that on May 25 the Alzheimer Society Prince Edward Hastings will be hosting their IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's. The walk will begin at 9:30 AM at our fairgrounds.

Rachelle Hardesty has asked that I let everyone know about a "Participation" event happening in June. It will be a great opportunity to raise some big coin. We could be looking at a \$100K but we are going to need all residents to participate. Rachelle & Cindy are gearing up for a big announcement so stay tuned.

Council and the residents of the Municipality of Tweed extend a huge congratulations to Pat Thomas, also known as Comrade Thomas. She recently received one of the Canadian Legions most prestigious awards – The Palm Leaf Award. Council was honoured to write a letter of support acknowledging the major contribution this amazing woman has undertaken in service to her community and the Legion. As we noted in our letter: "Comrade Thomas is one of those people that everyone knows because she has touched so many lives in beautiful, wonderful and caring ways. She is a great humanitarian and puts service to community and to the Legion above self. She exemplifies all that we should strive to be." Congratulations Pat!

On April 25th I attended Hastings County Council. I invited Dan Taekema from CBC to that meeting so that local Mayors could share their mounting concerns/issues facing their municipalities. Dan then came to Tweed where Ryan Reid took him on a tour showcasing some of our most troubled bridges. I then had an interview with Dan. CBC was here for 5 hours that day. An article from that interview was posted on April 30th and can be found in today's Council information package. The video also aired on CBC News that same day. I want to thank Ryan for doing such an amazing job highlighting how critical it is that we receive financial supports from both the federal and provincial governments and if such supports are not forthcoming then we will be forced to close those bridges. That being said, this Council remains relentless in our pursuit of getting you your share of that fiscal pie. Both governments need to recognize that there is absolutely no way that we can deal with the critical infrastructure repairs coming at us fast and furious. Later that afternoon I attended a Belleville General Hospital Foundation Board meeting.

On April 26th we attended the annual Harvest Hastings Dinner which was incredibly delicious. On the 27th I made my way to Bancroft for the Tweed & Company Theatre Bancroft Playhouse Gala. On the 29th we all attended a Special Council meeting.

I was away from May 1-3 attending the Ontario Small Urban Conference (OSUM) in Orillia courtesy of Hastings County. More on that towards the end of my comments. On May 4th I was joined by Councillors Flieler and Valiquette and a host of volunteers for our Community Trees event. Thank you Rachelle Hardesty, Cindy Chow, Kate Lessard, Jim Pedersen, Jim Keniston, Al McNeil and Janice and Peter McConnell for all your help that morning. That afternoon I meet with MPP Ted Hsu to discuss the many challenges facing small rural Ontario. On the 5th we made our way to Queensborough for their annual pancake breakfast.

On May 6th I attended the Emergency Preparedness Open House followed by a Hamlet meeting that evening. The guest speaker at the Hamlet meeting was Leanne Latter from Hastings County who shared insights on how to prepare before a disaster strikes. A very enlightening presentation. The County is updating their emergency preparedness booklet. We will ensure that copies are made available throughout the municipality. Also, we are grateful for all that our Hamlet volunteers do to keep their respective communities beautiful and centres of action throughout the summer.

I noted earlier that I attended the OSUM conference in Orillia. It was a wonderful opportunity to follow-up with the different political parties. The first on my hit list was Marit Stiles the Leader of the Opposition and NDP Leader. I sent her a message on the back of my business card noting how disappointed I was that I hadn't heard from her following our ROMA delegation. She sent a note back saying that she did raise our concerns. After I read it I looked back at her and just shook my head. On her way out she whispered in my ear that she would give me a call.

Next on my hit list was Bonnie Crombie, Leader of the Liberal Party. I did the same thing and caught her on her way out. We had a great chat and she noted she would be in touch.

I then went after ROMA President Robin Jones. I have been trying to meet with her since AMO in 2023. At OSUM we did connect and had a great discussion on the challenges facing small rural Ontario and how the federal and provincial governments continue to ignore municipalities like ours. I remarked that I thought ROMA lost its focus when you consider that Premier Ford addressed ROMA attendees by noting all the wonderful investments they have made in rural Ontario. He then starts ticking off investments in Windsor, Chatham, Kingston, Kitchener Waterloo, etc. I noted that those large urban centres have nothing in common with small rural Ontario – communities of 10,000 or less. I commented that we face similar problems as large urban centers but do not have the resources, neither staff nor financial, to deal with the looming issues beating at our back door. ROMA needs to reach out and support small rural Ontario. I really appreciated her thought provoking questions on what I said. I have offered my services to ROMA to shed light on what I refer to as the "demise of small rural Ontario".

I then met with MPP Mike Schreiner Leader of the Green Party. He is so attentive to our needs and I am grateful for all that he did to secure some Tornado funding from the province. I am hoping that he will also lobby for a provincial dialogue with small rural Ontario.

I also had an opportunity to talk briefly with Minister Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I was impressed with his speech and upon his departure handed him my card noting I had grave concerns with how the provincial government has neglected small rural Ontario. He stopped, read my note and we talked about my comment. He noted that the government is working on a program designed to deal specifically with the issues facing small rural communities. Later MPP Bresee texted that Minister Calandra contacted him re our

meeting. I remain hopeful that our concerns have not fallen on deaf ears. Thank you Minister Calandra.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the meetings with Karen Fischer, Economic & Business Advisor, and Carolyn Puterbough, Agriculture & Rural Economic Development Advisor, both from OMAFRA (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs). We talked about the June 5th Teeny Tiny Summit taking place in the Municipality of Tweed's pavilion. Karen has done so much for our municipality. We benefited from an array of programs including: Strategic Planning, Economic Development Courses, First Impressions, Community improvement Plan, Business Retention & Expansion, Downtown Improvement & Revitalization programs, and RED Funding. Karen is that gift that keeps on giving and rumour has it that she will be retiring this year. It is tough to lose a champion. She will be greatly missed.

In closing, I remind everyone that continuous negativity drives people away. Remember, although we have areas of concern there is much to celebrate. You either want your community to thrive or you want it to die...the choice is yours. I thank Council, staff, volunteers, businesses and residents for all that they do to make our small municipality a destination of choice by many.