



PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Proposed Municipal Boundary Adjustments

A Joint Public Meeting of Perth County Council, Perth South Township Council and Stratford City Council was called for Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., at the Rotary Complex, 353 McCarthy Road West, Stratford.

STRATFORD CITY COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Mathieson – Chair presiding, Councillors Beatty, Bunting, Burbach, Clifford, Gaffney, Henderson, Ritsma, Sebben and Vassilakos.

REGRETS: Council Ingram

PERTH COUNTY COUNCIL: Warden Jim Aitcheson, Councillors McDermid, Kellum, Herlick, Duncan, McKenzie, Kasenberg, Eidt and Wilhelm.

REGRETS: Councillor Ehgoetz

PERTH SOUTH COUNCIL: Mayor Wilhelm, Deputy Mayor Aitcheson, Councillors Corriveau, Martin, Zurbrigg, Orr and Jeffrey.

REGRETS: None noted from Perth South Council.

CITY OF STRATFORD STAFF PRESENT: Joan Thomson – Acting CAO, Tatiana Dafoe – Acting Clerk, Ed Dujlovic – Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, David St. Louis – Director of Community Services, Michael Humble – Director of Corporate Services, Kim McElroy – Director of Social Services, Jacqueline Mockler – Director of Human Resources, Paula Lombardi – City Solicitor, Joani Gerber – CEO investStratford, Jeff Leunissen – Manager of Development Services, Rachel Bossie – Planner, Jodi Akins – Council Clerk Secretary, Nancy Bridges – Recording Secretary, Lisa Francis – Customer Service Clerk.

TOWNSHIP OF PERTH SOUTH STAFF PRESENT: Rebecca Clothier – Administrator/Treasurer, Lizet Scott – Clerk, Martin Feeney - Chief building Official

PERTH COUNTY STAFF PRESENT: Lori Wolfe – Acting CAO/Clerk, Pauline Walkom – Administration Support Clerk

ALSO PRESENT: Members of the public.

Mayor Mathieson called the Public Meeting to order at 6:06 p.m., and stated the purpose of the meeting is to present the municipal boundary adjustment proposal and to give Councils of the County of Perth, Township of Perth South and City of Stratford and the public an opportunity to hear all interested persons with respect to the boundary adjustment proposal.

Members of Stratford City Council introduced themselves. Mayor Mathieson asked if there were any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature thereof under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

None declared by Stratford City Council members present.

Warden Aitcheson called the meeting to order for Perth County Council at 6:06 p.m., and asked if there were any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature thereof under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

None declared by Perth County Council members present.

Members of the Perth County Council introduced themselves. Warden Aitcheson introduced Perth County staff that were present.

Mayor Wilhelm called the meeting to order for Township of Perth South Council at 6:06 p.m., and asked if there were any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature thereof under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

None declared by Township of Perth South Council members present.

Members of the Township of Perth South Council introduced themselves. Mayor Wilhelm introduced Township staff that were present.

Mayor Mathieson explained the order of procedure for the public meeting. There were no questions from Council members or members of the public with regard to the order of procedure.

STAFF PRESENTATION: Joan Thomson, Acting Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Stratford, welcomed everyone present and thanked them for coming as it is important to hear comments on the proposal.

The Planning Justification Report was made public yesterday and she acknowledged it was not a lot of time to review it. A considerable amount of time has been put into the background research and studies.

InvestStratford has worked to identify available land with minimal impact on the City of Stratford, County of Perth and the Township of Perth South.

Members of the public were asked to leave their contact information on the sign-in sheets at the back of the room if they wished to be contacted further. Ms. Thomson acknowledged Warden Aitcheson, Mayor Wilhelm, Mayor Mathieson, Council members and staff present and the amount of work that has gone into this proposal.

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Thomson stated the Township, County and City are considering a proposal that would, if approved by all three Councils, adjust the City's boundaries to annex lands currently in Perth South. The Councils are seeking public input and comment about the boundary adjustment proposal being presented at the meeting.

Boundary Adjustments are permitted under sections 171 to 173 of the Municipal Act, 2001 and if approved, the proposal would allow an expansion to the existing industrial park in the south end of the City. This would create new industrial development opportunities in the City and facilitate spin off and supporting industries in the area. These new lands would be available to retain existing companies looking to expand and to attract new industries wanting to locate to the City. The City's supply of available industrial land, also referred to as employment lands, is low. Sales of available serviced land in the City picked up in recent years and the inventory has been depleted.

With respect to consultation, information was posted on the three municipal websites and on social media. Newspaper notices have been placed in area newspapers. Correspondence has been sent to property owners surrounding the proposed boundary adjustment lands and to First Nations. This Joint Public Meeting is being held to present the proposal and to hear from interested persons

If the boundary adjustment proposal is accepted by the three Councils, the proposal will then be sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for consideration. The approval of the Minister of MMAH is required.

Ms. Thomson referred to a map and described the boundaries of the two parcels of land in relation to major roads and highways adjacent to the south end of the City. Previously annexed lands that house the RBC data centre were highlighted on the slide. Parcel 1 comprises 18.83 hectares on Perth Road 113 (Embro Road) and Line 29 and Parcel 2 comprises 111.17 hectares along Line 29 and Highway 7. Parcel 1 is included in the proposal because part of this farm unit is currently half in the City and half in the Township. Annexing it at this time is a logical step and helps clean up the boundaries. The proposed boundary adjustment would add approximately 130 hectares adjacent to the Wright Business Park.

Two slides were shown showing the property descriptions of each parcel, noting that Parcel 1 is adjacent to an existing hydro corridor and Parcel 2 is adjacent to a major highway and railway corridor.

In a boundary adjustment proposal, the municipalities need to outline how they will address certain issues. They are based on similar terms in previous boundary adjustments involving the Township, the County and the City.

Except as noted in the boundary adjustment proposal, the assets, liability, rights and obligations of the Township become the City's responsibility as of the effective date set by the Minister of MMAH.

There are no other properties owned by the Township or the County in the proposed boundary adjustment area.

The properties included in this proposed boundary adjustment will be subject to City taxes as of the effective date. An agreement has been worked out to share in the growth in tax revenue as development occurs on those lands, similar to previous boundary adjustment agreements.

Owners of the lands subject to the proposed boundary adjustment will be required to connect to the City's water services when the lands are being developed. Any properties on existing septic systems can continue to use the septic systems for up to a maximum of 15 years. The exception is if those septic systems experience operational difficulties or there are significant upgrades to the property. If City sanitary sewers are available at that time, the properties will be required to connect to the City's services.

The provisions of by-laws of the County of Perth and Township of Perth South passed under the Drainage Act and Weed Control Acts continue to apply to the lands subject to the proposed boundary adjustment.

Should the boundary adjustment proposal be adopted, compensation to the Township from the City would be set out in an agreement between the Township and City. In that agreement, the Township and City will decide on an appropriate allocation of the municipal taxes to ensure no negative financial impacts associated with the boundary adjustment are experienced by the Township. The City will compensate the Township for at least the level of local taxes associated with the annexed lands prior to the boundary adjustment, in addition to a portion of any increases in local taxes due to future development.

Should the boundary adjustment proposal be supported, the Township, County and City will continue to share their portions of joint costs for Social Services, Emergency Medical Services, the Huron Perth Health Unit and Spruce Lodge on the basis of assessment and in accordance with the existing cost-sharing agreements in place.

Rebecca Clothier, Administrator/Treasurer of Perth South, stated that being a mainly rural area, Perth South Council and staff take the role of stewards of prime agricultural lands very seriously. When considering annexing lands to the City, they do so with full consideration of the importance of farmland, the intention of maintaining as much agricultural lands as possible, while at the same time keeping the Township viable.

Keeping the Township viable has become increasingly difficult in recent years. The biggest challenge is the reduction of funds from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund from the province. This grant funding, which supports all operations of the municipality, was reduced by \$2 million in 2012.

The Township is required to reduce expenditures by \$2 million each year, or alternatively, find replacement revenue. An increase in taxes as replacement revenue would be equal to adding \$1,252 to every household's tax bill. Alternatively, they would have to add an additional 1,428 homes to the Township. The latter is not possible as they lack the required water and wastewater services.

Other challenges include farm consolidations which eroded both the tax base and population, little to no growth in any sector due to development challenges, and most recently, their largest employer and tax payer, Maple Leaf Foods, closing and moving its operations to London.

The proposed municipal boundary adjustment to annex land from Perth South to Stratford is a partnership between the two municipalities to develop serviced industrial lands for future development. The partnership will be beneficial for both municipalities as Stratford requires additional land for industrial development and Perth South requires additional revenue. In addition, the spin off and supporting industries will benefit all municipalities in Perth County.

Perth South has previously partnered with Stratford in a similar partnership for land development with a land annexation and tax revenue sharing agreement. This partnership has been a significant factor in offsetting OMPF losses and they feel that this proposed partnership discussed tonight will have the same impact.

Joani Gerber, CEO of investStratford provided background information on the structure of investStratford and the make-up of their Board of Directors. It was incorporated in 2014 as an arms-length not-for-profit to represent the economic development interests of the City of Stratford.

InvestStratford, along with their Board of Directors and City of Stratford Development Service staff, began looking at the industrial land inventory in early 2017. At that time it was determined that ongoing enquiries and interested companies were quickly exceeding the City Owned Inventory. Various properties were researched and explored. As a group, they assessed servicing complexities, ownership of land and the subsequent sale price of shovel-ready land. The proposed boundary adjustment will add much-needed inventory to the City's industrial land supply. In order to have a 20 year supply, and to accommodate the current leads and ongoing demand for smaller 1-3 acre parcels, this proposed boundary adjustment is required.

Ms. Thomson, referring to the PowerPoint presentation, stated that feedback on the proposal was received by all three municipalities.

Additional traffic has been raised as an issue. The proposed boundary adjustment lands are located on a provincial highway (Highway 7 / Perth Road 119) or have ready access to this highway, which will facilitate truck movement generated by future industrial development to and from the City.

Installation of traffic lights are being discussed with the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) who is the governing authority over provincial highways. Improvements to Highway 7 will be undertaken as part of any development process and subject to MTO design requirements and approvals.

Ms. Thomson asked the Administrator/Treasurer for Perth South to speak to concerns about woodlots and minimum distance separations.

Ms. Clothier stated that there are woodlots on the subject lands and a report would be required for any proposed development. They will need to be assessed and if impacted, replaced by provincial requirements.

With regard to Minimum Separation Distances (MDS), there are minimum distances required by OMAFRA from barns, housing and livestock. These distances are subject to OMAFRA's MDS formula. The MDS formula is a land use planning tool that determines the appropriate setback distances between livestock barns, manure storages or digesters and surrounding land use. The objective of the MDS is to minimize land use conflicts and nuisance complaints related to odour.

The MDS is based on the type and number of livestock, percentage increase in the size of the operation, type of manure system and storage, type of encroaching land use and therefore the setback distances vary according to the five factors and the formula is available on their website.

Ms. Thomson requested the Director of Infrastructure and Development Services speak to concerns related to municipal drains. Ed Dujlovic, Director of Infrastructure and Development Services for the City of Stratford, advised there are no changes to municipal drains and how they operate. Any new development would have to undertake storm water management. Any modifications of the drains, if required, would be at the cost to a developer. Property owners upstream would not be required to contribute.

With regard to feedback about long term strengths, the CEO of investStratford stated the proposal will be of benefit to all three municipalities. For Stratford, it promotes economic development and is a logical expansion of industrial park lands. It will spark other development in the area, including spin-off and long term opportunities for all three municipalities. It is a suitable location, with access to a highway and railway corridor.

Lori Wolfe, Interim Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Perth, stated that they promote economic development and support the long term viability and orderly growth of the municipality.

Ms. Clothier stated that they know this proposal is of concern and their Council does not take the decision lightly. However, 93% of the Township of Perth South is agricultural lands and any development that takes place will be on agricultural lands. They feel these lands are a responsible choice as they are adjacent to an urban centre.

Ms. Gerber stated this proposal is in response to a need for additional industrial lands. It has been identified that existing municipal services can be extended. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to hear comments from the public and comments can also be provided in writing.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS: City of Stratford Councillor Cody Sebben stated that 130 hectares seems more significant than past annexations and requested an explanation for why a smaller piece of land if not being pursued.

The CEO of investStratford responded that one reason is a contiguous area/land size for provincial allowable industrial lands for 20 years and the second reason is to meet the requirements of the provincial Job Site Challenge. She believes the area will align with the program and provide the City with the opportunity for growth.

City of Stratford Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach asked if there was a woodlot to be assessed and removed, whether it would be replaced within City limits. The Administrator/Treasurer of Perth South stated that if the lands were annexed, the City and Township could partner as they have lands available for planting.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Ken Wood expressed concern with the amount of agricultural lands being annexed and noted that he feels farmland is very important as Southwestern Ontario is importing more food than exporting.

He also asked for clarification if the annexation was to satisfy an arrangement with the glass plant that had already been rejected by the City of Guelph. Mayor Mathieson noted the company in question is indeed a possible developer, however many other companies have expressed interest in the lands as well.

Mr. Wood expressed concerns with taking taxpayer dollars from the City of Stratford to compensate another municipality and thinks that citizens need to know about the financials. Ms. Clothier responded the Township will share in any increased taxation of the lands in question but will receive a smaller share. Mayor Mathieson provided an example of the tax arrangement for the lands occupied by the RBC building.

Robert Wilhelm, Mayor of Perth South, stated that progress is needed. The City of Stratford does not have land and Perth South needs funds. He noted that developing a partnership with the City of Stratford and Perth South will be beneficial to all parties.

Stuart Arkett stated the only justification given for annexing Parcel 1 is that it evens up the boundary but he does not believe it does. He wondered how annexing Parcel 2 fits into the City's 20 year plan.

Mayor Mathieson advised that including both parcels makes sense to improve the economy of scale and spread out the costs associated with servicing the lands.

Joani Gerber, CEO of investStratford, also touched on the economies of scale and sharing the costs across more area. The large area allows for flexibility on lot size and site design. This annexation is part of a 20 year plan, however if a large company purchases a significant area of land, additional lands may need to be annexed within those 20 years.

Mr. Arkett stated that he hopes the parties involved will put some thought into offsetting the paving of farmland.

Robert McTavish noted the protection of agricultural lands is very important in Southwestern Ontario and he is against taking away these lands. He encouraged the Councils to consider how paving over farmland is forever and that if this trend continues we will be required to import more food from places like the United States. He expressed concerns with the increased growth of Toronto towards Perth County and the pressure to expand.

Bob Verdun requested an estimate of the property taxes that will be going to the Township.

Mayor Mathieson noted that providing exact numbers is difficult when there is no actual building on the land yet.

Ms. Clothier stated the Township receives approximately \$500,000 in taxes for the RBC property but any new development would depend on the actual property and assessment by MPAC. She noted the 2020 revenue from RBC will offset 25% of the OMPF losses the Township will experience.

Mr. Verdun proposed that new development should build upwards to reduce loss of agricultural lands. He would like to see greenhouses on top of industrial buildings so that we are intensifying the use of industrial lands and minimizing future losses of farmland.

Julie Danen stated the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's position on annexation is that there should be no more development of farmlands in Ontario and that there should be firm urban boundaries. She inquired whether the City has looked at any other options to develop greenfield and brownfield lands.

Mayor Mathieson stated the City has completed a Brownfield Community Improvement Plan and Crane Avenue was the last brownfield site completed.

Jim Aitcheson, Warden of Perth County, noted the bigger concern is with the intensification of residential lands. Mayor Mathieson provided examples of intensification occurring in the City, including reduced frontage requirements.

Ken Wood questioned why all of a sudden the City is running out of industrial land. He noted there are lots of green empty spaces in the City that are sitting idle and many are privately owned. He would like the City to look at the lands they have before annexing more lands.

Jamie Gibb expressed concern with the lack of time to review the Planning Justification Report as it was only made available to the public one day ago. He asked staff for information on the other options that were reviewed for obtaining additional lands.

Ms. Gerber stated the review of existing boundaries began in 2017 and included a review of Park Street and the business park at the East end of the City. The review often found that available lands were difficult to service logistically and financially. These issues made the cost to the end user unreasonable and could potentially hinder the sale of available lands.

Mr. Gibb expressed concern with the lack of time for the public to provide comments and to review the documents provided.

Mayor Mathieson noted that information relating to the 2017 review could be made available to the public and that comments could be submitted after January 20th provided they are received prior to this matter being considered by the three Councils.

Mr. Gibb requested additional information regarding how the City determines where lands will be annexed and what other options were examined. He requested this information be made available to the public. He asked where the vacant lands exist within the City at this time.

In response to questions from Mr. Gibb, Ms. Gerber noted that an absorption rate calculation is used to determine a municipality's 20 year needs. She noted 242 acres are zoned industrial; however some of these lands are the Packham sports fields, stormwater management ponds or are privately owned. They looked at lands that were

“shovel-ready” for development and a map could be provided outlining these lands that were reviewed.

Mr. Gibb suggested that some of these lands will be expensive to develop and questioned whether it was in the Township’s mandate to provide the City with less expensive lands. Mayor Wilhelm stated that it is the City’s responsibility to justify the need and they will discuss the justification report at an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Gibb noted the annexation involves the potential loss of a woodlot area and this area should be saved. He does not believe that replacement woodlots are equivalent to old growth woodlot and suggested that development occur around the woodlot.

He inquired how much land has been annexed from the Township to the surrounding municipalities in the last 20-25 years. Mayor Wilhelm noted that St. Marys has received no land from Perth South in the last 50 years and he would attempt to provide additional information at a later date.

Mr. Gibb stated he would provide the remainder of his comments in writing but he does not support the current proposal.

Sharon Weitzel expressed concerns with the increase in traffic on Line 29 and advised the Township of Perth East is already struggling to control the speed of the current traffic. She questioned the lack of assistance from surrounding municipalities in dealing with the traffic issues.

Mayor Mathieson noted the City of Stratford does contribute to the County for road infrastructure. Mayor Wilhelm clarified that when funds are received at the County for road maintenance, it then reduces the costs to the townships.

Ms. Weitzel stated that as a member of the Perth County Federation of Agriculture, she does not support the annexation.

Sara Wood stated that per Provincial regulations, municipalities are required to complete their Natural Heritage Plans. She is unhappy that the City will be permitted to build near the woodlot when the property owners in the area are not permitted.

Mayor Wilhelm noted the Natural Heritage Plan is currently in draft form. Ms. Clothier noted once the lands are annexed they will fall under the Official Plan of the City. Mayor Mathieson advised staff have reviewed the costs of servicing, traffic, etc., and are unable to finalize the report until the lands are annexed due to the costs associated.

Dorothy Van Esbroeck stated she feels the annexation aligns with some of the strategic priorities of the City. She would like the questionable areas of the annexation proposal reviewed, as it does not follow all of the City’s strategic priorities. She expressed

concerns with the short comment period and noted feedback received on the strategic priorities.

Mr. McTavish reiterated the need to save farmland and questioned the plan for the lands at Mornington Street and Vivian Line.

Mayor Mathieson noted the lands at Quinlan Road and Mornington Street are zoned residential and a draft plan of subdivision is in process.

Mayor Mathieson advised that written comments will be accepted by all three municipalities until Monday, January 20, 2020 at noon and a Q & A will be posted to the City's website on January 21, 2020.

Mayor Mathieson stated the Councils of the County of Perth, Township of Perth South and City of Stratford intend to consider this proposal at their respective Council meetings scheduled for January 23, January 28, and January 27 where members of Council will have an opportunity for full discussion of the proposal after reviewing comments received from the public at this time.

Motion by Councillor Wilhelm and Councillor Eidt to adjourn the public meeting by Perth County Council. Carried

Motion by Councillor Orr and Councillor Zurbrigg to adjourn the public meeting by Perth South Township Council. Carried

Motion by Councillor Gaffney and Councillor Burbach to adjourn the public meeting by Stratford City Council. Carried

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Requests to receive further information, as indicated on the form at the public meeting on January 16, 2020, were received from the following:

Ken Wood Stuart Arkett
