

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, Feb. 22.

- **Support for Crowdfunding Bill:** Council passed a motion in support of Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox & Addington MPP Randy Hillier's Bill 77 called "Kickstarting Public Participating Act." If enacted, the bill will lead to the establishment of a province-wide online crowd-sourcing platform for municipalities and community organizations to use to raise funds for community improvement projects. In correspondence to the county, Mr. Hillier explained crowdfunding "allows groups and individuals to solicit donations and investment for projects online by setting donation tiers, goals and, in some cases, rewards." He noted it has been used for infrastructure projects. "I believe that a crowdfunding platform accessible to all municipalities in the province will enable local governments to secure finances and gauge interest in public projects, while simultaneously empowering citizens to be more involved in community affairs and development." The letter is being sent to Premier Kathleen Wynne and circulated to all municipalities in the riding. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.

- **County Consents to Sale of Housing Property:** Council passed a motion granting consent for the sale of the Five Arches Non-Profit Housing property in Pakenham (Mississippi Mills) to Mills Community Support Corporation. In a report to the community services committee earlier this month, Social Housing Manager Sandy Grey said the Five Arches Non-Profit Housing Corporation owns the 40-unit apartment building and receives subsidy from Lanark County for 30 rent-geared-to-income units and 10 market units. The corporation's board began exploring its options in 2015 when faced with difficulty recruiting board members. In July 2016, it signed a property management/operation services agreement with the Mills Community Support Corporation. When that agreement expires at the end of March, the Mills will take over the building and has indicated it is willing to purchase the assets and undertake obligations of Five Arches. The Mills has drafted an agreement to purchase the business and continue operating the units as social housing. Ms. Grey indicated the transfer is expected to be seamless for residents. The motion indicates consent is conditional on the purchaser agreeing to assume the current mortgage of the business, and the Ministry of Housing will be asked to facilitate an exemption from Land Transfer Tax for the purchase. As well, funding previously provided to Five Arches will be transferred to the Mills and a new service provider agreement will be executed with the county from the date of sale to Feb. 28, 2019. The Mills will be required to confirm they will comply with the terms of the Social Housing Improvement Program, and capital reserves for the building are to be kept separate from reserves for other projects operated by the Mills, with ongoing appropriate contributions made. For more information, contact Sandy Grey, Social Housing Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401, or Nancy Green, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101.

- **Moving Forward with Truth and Reconciliation Actions:** A report by CAO Kurt Greaves presented to the corporate services committee earlier this month provided an outline of next steps and ideas on how to proceed with truth and reconciliation actions. This follows a resolution passed by council in December that formally recognized the work of the federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the importance of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Mr. Greaves highlighted two of the 94 calls to action from the commission's report that are specific to municipal government. One urges all levels of government to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. The second relates to education for public servants that includes skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution,

human rights and racism. “There are likely going to be many options available to municipalities for Truth and Reconciliation training,” Mr. Greaves said. “As these become available, it is important that we are ready and willing to participate when appropriate, in order to enable Canadian society to move forward collectively.... As we move forward, it is incumbent that we reach out to our Indigenous community and embrace training opportunities to improve our knowledge and understanding of First Nation’s issues.” Based on the report, Council passed a motion encouraging local Indigenous leaders and community members to participate in municipal government by attending meetings, requesting delegations, applying for board positions and running for council. It also directs county staff to explore all Indigenous cultural training and education opportunities for staff provided by the provincial and federal governments, and notes council continues to support the Algonquin Land Claim process through participation in the Municipal Advisory Committee. A progress report is to be prepared by staff on an annual basis for review by council. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

- **Support for Natural Gas Expansion:** Council passed a resolution to send a letter to the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (EOWC) endorsing its position paper on “Expansion of Natural Gas to Rural Areas.” It further authorizes Warden Bill Dobson (Montague Reeve) to send a letter to the provincial energy minister, Glenn Thibeault, asking the province to make the expansion of natural gas to rural areas a priority backed up with a minimum \$100 million annual allocation for 20 years. This comes following a report by CAO Kurt Greaves at the corporate services committee meeting earlier this month. He said the position paper outlines the need for access to natural gas to grow the economy of eastern Ontario by helping rural residents, businesses and farms to save money. The paper notes the 2015 Ontario budget committed \$200 million in loans and \$30 million in grants to natural gas expansion, with no criteria for the funds developed and nothing has been distributed yet. Further, the province has allocated \$100 million to be spent from 2017 to 2020 on renewable natural gas as part of the Climate Change Action Plan. As well, the Ontario Energy Board recently ruled existing customers cannot be charged to cross-subsidize the expansion of the natural gas distribution network in Ontario. The EOWC has partnered with the Western Wardens’ Caucus and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture to ask the province to develop a fair and equitable system for natural gas expansion, particularly considering revenues from the sale of Hydro One (50 per cent of Hydro One assets paid for by rural customers) and implementation of carbon pricing (minimum \$60 million annually from EOWC residents). Mr. Greaves said an annual allocation by the province to expedite the expansion of natural gas would see a reduction to heating costs for rural residents and businesses. “These savings would go back into Ontario’s economy and give a significant return on investment for the province.” He added it is needed to help residents and businesses deal with high energy costs while being a huge benefit to facilitate future development and business growth. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.
- **Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, March 8, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, March 8 (following County Council); Corporate Services, March 8 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, March 22, 5 p.m.;** Economic Development, March 22 (following County Council); Public Works, March 22 (following Economic Development). All meetings are in Council Chambers unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!