

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, Sept. 6.

- **Support for Farmers Due to Rainfall:** Council passed a motion in support of the Lanark Federation of Agriculture's (LFA) request to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the province to assess "disastrous" conditions resulting from record-setting rainfall this season, particularly in eastern Ontario, and to prepare to deliver emergency assistance to area farmers. The LFA noted the conditions resulted in delayed planting, poor emergence and delayed forage harvesting, and that existing risk mitigation programs "are not expected to adequately cover the expected losses." Farmers have indicated crop insurance may cover some costs, but not loss of income. Correspondence to the LFA stated many farmers are in disaster mode. For more information, contact Marie White, Tourism Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1530.
- **Support for VIA Plan:** Council passed a motion supporting VIA Rail's high-frequency train project. It calls upon the federal government to provide financial support, for the province to include the project in its list of priority infrastructure projects and for both governments to ensure the project is carried out in a way that enables users to have direct and fast access to railway stations and hubs in communities through eastern Ontario. VIA has submitted its proposal for the Windsor-Quebec corridor, which is the busiest in Canada. It includes the route from Toronto through Peterborough to Ottawa with a view to improving "the quality, frequency and reliability of passenger rail service" while "attracting more customers" and "stimulating economic growth." The motion notes the project allows for more options for connections with other transportation modes, such as light rail and airports, and it will require significant financial contributions from the federal government and private sector. It further states increased rail service will lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, which supports Canada's environmental objectives under the Paris Protocol. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.
- **Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest Designations Clarified:** Council has passed a by-law to adopt Official Plan Amendment No. 5 to its Lanark County Sustainable Communities Official Plan (SCOP) that redefines designations for Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). The amendment recognizes and clarifies the different categories of ANSIs within the county and makes technical corrections to ANSI policies and mapping. Local municipalities were consulted throughout the process for input, and revisions to the Official Plan Policy will enable them to protect ANSIs even where the county plan does not. Sixteen ANSIs were affected by the amendment, which defines different types (e.g. Life Science and Earth Science), their categorizations (e.g. provincially, regionally or locally significant) and whether they are deemed confirmed or candidate ANSIs, which establishes how lands will be protected through the SCOP and local official plans. Candidate ANSIs are removed from the SCOP, and development may be permitted in accordance with the policies of the underlying land-use designation or on adjacent lands if an environmental impact study shows there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or ecological functions. Local municipalities can designate candidate ANSIs in their official plans without an amendment to the SCOP. Brian Whitehead of Jp2g Consultants Inc. presented his technical report to the economic development committee in August outlining the changes. For more information, contact Julie Stewart, County Planner, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1520.
- **Commuter Cycling Program Agreement Authorized:** Council has passed a by-law authorizing the warden and CAO to enter into an agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation for

funding under the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program (OMCCP). Last month the county submitted a list of approved projects to the province and requested accelerated funding to complete them as soon as possible. As part of the agreement, the county commits to providing 20 per cent of the funding. Projects approved by the county for the program include adding a gravel and stone dust base to the Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail (OVRT) between Montague and Mississippi Mills, paving 17.3-km of shoulders on both sides of County Road 43 between Perth and Smiths Falls, and adding decking and railings to the former railway bridge in Pakenham on the OVRT. The OMCCP is a \$42.5 million investment by the province into commuter cycling infrastructure for 2017, with additional funds over three years, and is part of the Ontario Climate Change Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It aims to invest cap-and-trade proceeds into commuter cycling initiatives. The county projects will augment safe cycling routes for commuting to work. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, County CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

- **Council Approves Official Plan Amendment Regarding Parkland:** Council passed a motion approving Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan Amendment No. 19, which changes the land use on a portion of land known as Block 40 (Don Maynard Park) from “open space and parkland” to “residential.” This comes following a presentation by Mississippi Mills Planner Stephen Stirling, who explained the rationale behind the amendment, which was to address surplus parkland in the community. At the August economic development committee meeting, eight delegates made a presentation in support of retaining the land as a park. As well, the committee received a technical report from Brian Whitehead of Jp2g Consulting Inc., who reviewed the submission on behalf of the county, which has the authority under the Planning Act to approve local official plan amendments. Mr. Whitehead concluded the amendment is “consistent with provincial, county and municipal policy and regulations respecting land use planning.” At the council meeting, County Planner Julie Stewart reiterated this and explained the county’s role is to make sure the local municipality has complied with the submission process and stated Mississippi Mills has signed an affidavit indicating it has. Following this decision, those opposed to the official plan amendment may appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. For more information, contact Julie Stewart, County Planner, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1520.
- **Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, Sept. 20, 5 p.m.;** Economic Development, Sept. 20 (following County Council); Public Works, Sept. 20 (following Economic Development). **County Council, Wednesday, Oct. 11, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Oct. 11 (following County Council); Corporate Services, Oct. 11 (following Community Services). 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!