

Response to the Community Meeting Thursday January 14, 2016

First, may I say how pleased Council and I were with the large turnout of concerned residents. Your concerns and feedback is appreciated by Council.

I will attempt to answer some of the questions posed in as straight forward manner that I can, but as one can appreciate, some of these questions will be answered as we proceed with the Environmental Assessment in a Municipal Class "C" process. There is no doubt with an aging population and no affordable housing for seniors or our youth, future growth in our Schools could be in jeopardy. Our Commercial sections of both urban communities are also struggling. The intent of the meeting was to get input on where the community wants the serviced growth to be situated. In particular, since we can only service approximately 25 hectares, should that serviced growth be in Hillsburgh or Erin?

Transition Erin has a growth/development checklist and yes, that will be considered by Council and given to all developers for their comment. I don't believe any Council member wishes to see growth like we have watched south of Erin. It is Council's intent to revive the Environmental Committee, and we will be advertising for members from the general public to sit on this Committee.

We have approximately 210 hectares of Future Development land presently designated in our Official Plan. We are not likely to see any change in that allotment as we are up against the Greenbelt and other constraints. Council will have to decide in the near future who receives serviced growth. Industrial, Commercial, and current infill lots within the urban boundary will require a portion of that servicing. The cost of hooking up to another Wastewater system like Georgetown is prohibitive even if they were interested.

In February we will be selecting the Engineering Firm that will continue the EA process. Step 3 of that process will consider all alternatives regarding treatment technologies. Performance based systems versus traditional methods of constructing and managing a Wastewater system will be examined and decided on. It is this Council's opinion that all options are open, but total cost is not definitive at this time. As much as it would be ideal to identify the cost now, it

cannot be done without the process. The SSMP (Servicing and Settlement Master Plan) direct cost could be in the order of \$650,000. We could stop the process now, not spending any more money, but that would be like starting a journey and only going part way. The SSMP was a requirement to approve our Official Plan over 10 years ago. Although there appears to be no immediate threat to the river or our water at this time, newer and more stringent standards for design and installation of septic systems will be coming. In all likelihood another assimilation study will be completed on the west branch of the Credit River as a part of the next steps in the EA process. Whatever the cost of hooking up to a wastewater system, it must be weighed against the cost of installing a new private septic system on a small lot. At this time no Developer is paying for the cost of the EA.

We are not excluding the Public/Private combinations of financing a system at this time. Council will consider all financing solutions moving forward. Infrastructure Ontario and Canada Infrastructure are both avenues of financing. Please be assured that this Council will not proceed if it is financially not viable to do so for the Municipality or our residents. During the EA process there will be an opportunity for public comment and input. Financing can also be a part of negotiations with the Development community.

There is no doubt that a wastewater plant will entice more industry to our community. Industry pays over double the residential tax rate. As long as the industry we attract is relatively a clean industry, then they should be welcomed. In the last year alone we have lost 3 industries that required some treatment of their wastewater and therefore did not continue looking at Erin.

The question was asked as to why we were proceeding now and the answer is quite simple. We need growth and we cannot have approval for growth within the urban boundary without the completed full Environmental Assessment stating where the serviced growth will be. Once that is determined, there is a possibility that we can obtain growth on partial systems in the other areas of identified development land. Partial systems mean communal water supply but private septic systems, or possibly communal septic systems.

We were asked as to why we were considering a walkway along the river behind the commercial district and possibly linking up with the Elora Cataract Trail. This idea came from the Economic Development Committee to help generate tourism in the Town of Erin. This is an untapped valuable resource for the Town. At this time, all that has been proposed is the completion of a feasibility study. This will require more work to be done and consultations with affected owners to take place.

There was a question on why don't we double our Development Fees or even match Halton Hills? We have just completed a Development Charge Review as mandated under Provincial Regulation. We cannot just arbitrarily change our Development Charges but they are to be reviewed with the level of service and infrastructure we provide. When someone new comes to our Community to build and develop, we charge our Development Charges to their project with the idea that they are paying to catch up with what we, the residents, have already paid for in our taxes. Obviously if we have a substantial development take place, we will review our DC's again and will certainly in another 5 years' time.

It is understandable that "change does make for unease" but Erin has stood still for far too long. We are starting to see the effects of inaction.

There will be more opportunity for comment from all residents as the process unfolds.

Mayor Allan Ails

Councillor John Brennan

Councillor Rob Smith

Councillor Matt Sammut

Councillor Jeff Duncan