

COUNCIL NEWS

FROM THE APRIL 24TH, 2017 COUNCIL MEETING

MURS DESIGN-BUILD

As part of the Building a Vibrant Tomorrow vision, Council approved the proposal from Ball Construction Inc. to construct a Multi-Use Recreational Site (MURS). This exciting venture will include a library, an arena, a playground, multi-use rooms, a gymnasium, a splash pad, a skateboard park, an outdoor walking trail, an indoor walking track, a wellness centre, and site servicing for a future bandshell! For more information, please visit www.westlincoln.ca.

COUNCIL REQUESTS MINISTER OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH AN IMMEDIATE MORATORIUM ON THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS AND SCHOOL CLOSURES AND WILL BE SEEKING A JUDICIAL REVIEW

On April 24, 2017, Council adopted two motions as a result of the proposed closure of South Lincoln High School. The first motions requests that the Minister of Education establish an immediate moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process and the second states that Council will be filing an applications for a judicial review. Both motions are provided below:

MOTION # 1

WHEREAS the current Accommodation Review process is not reflective of the reality of rural school and community life;

AND WHEREAS rural schools are integral to the future of rural communities;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Ontario recognizes that it is critical that continued student achievement and well-being form part of the review process for school closures;

AND WHEREAS school closures impact single-school small rural communities in educational, social and economic aspects to a far greater degree than those who would be impacted in multi-school urban communities;

AND WHEREAS the Township of West Lincoln is a small rural community who is deeply concerned that the current process to consider rural school closures is not inclusive and the timelines do not provide for adequate community input;

AND WHEREAS the Township of West Lincoln and its schools should be considered to be part of a rural community;

AND WHEREAS the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) is not defined as a rural school board because of having larger urban communities within its jurisdiction (i.e. City of St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Port Colborne and Welland) and that the Province should have different guidelines with respect to the closure of schools in rural areas versus urban centres;

AND WHEREAS the length of time that rural student(s) could be on a bus to travel from their home to school and vice versa would, in a lot of cases be very lengthy and an unacceptable duration of time;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Ontario is not adhering to their own policies/guidelines with respect to developing complete communities (i.e. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Provincial Policy Statement and Places to Grow Act) and that all ministries, including the Ministry of Education, should follow the same Provincial policies/guidelines that municipalities are required to adhere to with respect to future intensification, development and growth;

AND WHEREAS prior to any scheduled or proposed closures of schools, the Province of Ontario needs to ensure that School Boards have thoroughly investigated and taken into account those municipalities that have received approvals for intensification/growth so that schools are not closed prematurely without having proper discussions with both Municipal and Regional Planning & Development staff as it relates to future growth projections;

AND WHEREAS the Township of West Lincoln supports the actions that have been taken by many municipalities within the Province of Ontario as well as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) through their correspondence to the Minister of Education dated January 5, 2017 and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) in their correspondence dated March 15, 2017 with respect to, but not limited to, school closures, Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline and the Accommodation Review Process;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Ontario should be concerned for the health of all our children, for the quality of education of all children in Ontario as well as the viability of our towns, villages and neighbourhoods which are negatively impacted by reducing access to schools within each community; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Municipality of the Township of West Lincoln hereby requests that the Minister of Education establish an immediate moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process in all school boards until such time as a review of the above mentioned impacts on small rural communities is studied, completed and the results and recommendations are implemented; and

THAT, the Minister of Education rewrite the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), in order to take into consideration community and economic value consideration of rural communities and provide for a more democratic process; and,

THAT, the Minister of Education place a retroactive moratorium on those school closures that are to occur during the current year and over the next couple of years until such time as the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline is rewritten and the recommendations applied to all current and proposed school closures; and,

THAT, this resolution be circulated to the Minister of Education, Premier Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Municipal Affairs, the District School Board of Niagara, the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), MPP Sam Oosterhoff (Niagara West-Glanbrook) and all municipalities in Ontario.

MOTION # 2

WHEREAS, on March 28, 2017, the District School Board of Niagara resolved to close South Lincoln High School, Grimsby Secondary School, and Beamsville District Secondary School;

AND WHEREAS, South Lincoln High School is scheduled to close on June 30, 2017 and Grimsby Secondary School and Beamsville Secondary School are slated to close at the end of the 2019-20 school year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minister of Education and the District School Board of Niagara be advised that the Township of West Lincoln will file an application for a judicial review with the Superior Court of Justice with respect to the District School Board of Niagara's decision to close South Lincoln High School; and,

THAT, this resolution be circulated for information to the Minister of Education, Premier Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Municipal Affairs, the District School Board of Niagara, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), MPP Sam Oosterhoff (Niagara West-Glanbrook) and all municipalities in Ontario.

WELLANDPORT LIBRARY - PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Our Wellandport Library and Hall renovation project is underway! Council and the West Lincoln Public Library Board authorized the West Lincoln Public Library CEO to hire Hank Huitema from Kalos Engineering Inc. to provide project management services for this project. Stay tuned for more updates as the project moves forward!

POULTRYFEST

Council officially declared the PoultryFest Festival as a "Community Festival" which will be held on Saturday, June 24, 2016 at the West Niagara Fairgrounds. Don't forget to attend this wonderful event which will include many festivities as well as their annual fireworks display.

COMMUNITY PARKING LOT

In January, 2017, Council authorized a long-term lease/licence agreement with the Smithville United Church on West Street (Regional Road 20) for the construction of a shared municipal parking lot. On April 24, 2017, Council approved the tender submission of Rankin Construction Inc. for the construction of this shared community parking lot. The project is part of the Building a Vibrant Tomorrow vision to provide improved parking to the downtown area, and to make the downtown core a walkable, friendly hub for the community. The project is scheduled to start during the week of May 8th and should be finished just in time for the Canada Day celebrations.

NEW SWIMMING POOL BY-LAW

Council approved a new Swimming Pool By-law to replace the existing by-law to reflect new types of swimming pools while also improving the enforcement measures available through the by-law for the protection and safety of the public. The new by-law will be effective as of May 1, 2017. In addition to requirements for fencing and enclosures, the new by-law captures a definition of seasonal pools, provisions for electrical and plumbing connections as well as drainage of water from swimming pools and lot grading of the property after the installation of a swimming pool.

REFRESHMENT CART LICENSE APPROVED FOR CURBSIDE FRIES

The refreshment cart license for Curbside Fries has been approved for one more year for the 2017 season.