



The Municipal Corporation of the
Town of Fort Erie

Council-in-Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 11, 2021

Council Chambers via Video Teleconference

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Closure of Town Hall

All electronic meetings can be viewed at:

Town's Website:

<https://www.forterie.ca/pages/CouncilAgendasandMinutes>

Town's YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/townofforterie

or click on the YouTube icon on the home page of the Town's website (www.forterie.ca) or Cogeco TV

1. Call to Order

Mayor Redekop called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Redekop acknowledged the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the New Credit, and Anishinaabe people, many of whom continue to reside in this area.

2. Roll Call

Present (In Council Chambers): His Worship Mayor Redekop

Present (Via Zoom Teleconference): Councillors Butler, Dubanow, Lubberts*, McDermott, Noyes, and Zanko

(*Arrived at 6:01 p.m.)

Staff (Via Zoom Teleconference): A. Butler, A. Dilwaria, K. Dolch, J. Janzen, T. Kuchyt, E. Melanson, L. Richardson, C. Schofield, and K. Walsh

This meeting was held in compliance with the electronic participation provisions of Council Rules of Procedure By-law No. 36-2016, as amended.

3. Announcements/Addenda

There were two addenda:

- Addition of Delegation (d) under Planning and Development Services: Gregory Bender, Manager, Municipal Planner, WSP, Re: Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study (Report No. PDS-03-2021); and
- Deletion of Delegation (a) under Planning and Development Services: Claudio Brutto, President, Brutto Planning Consultant Ltd. Re: Urban Expansion - Southeast Quadrant Garrison Road and Rosehill Road (Area 2) (Report No. PDS-03-2021); and deletion of PowerPoint Presentation by Delegation (c) Stephen Fraser, Principal, Planner, A. J. Clarke and Associates Ltd. and Danny Gabriele, President, Marz Homes Re: Urban Expansion - 0-9785 Schooley Road - "Beachwalk II"- Marz Homes (Area 1) (Report No. PDS-03-2021).

Mayor Redekop made the following announcements:

- **T. Roy Adams Humanitarian of the Year Award Nominations**

Douglas Rapelje, a well-known individual in the Region, was the winner of the Award for 2020. Nominations for 2021 are now open. You can find forms and information on the Niagara Region's website, where you can also view T. Roy Adams and Douglas Rapelje's biographies. I would encourage those of you who know worthy recipients to consider making nominations.

- **COVID-19 Update**

The Mayors and Regional Chair have had several meetings this week with the President and CEO of Niagara Health, Dr. Hirji, and the Niagara Region. Public Health and Niagara Region Public Health are working together on a vaccination plan that will be made public on how they will be distributing vaccinations, such as who will be receiving the vaccination first. Public Health and Niagara Regional Public Health are also working on improving communication with the public, which has been an issue in the recent past. They are trying to get as much information out to the public regarding the vaccination plan and what is happening in our communities. The Niagara Region's COVID-19 web page does have statistics that change every day at 11:30, which breaks down the information by demographics and municipality. Fort Erie will be posting a weekly breakdown on the Town's website of

what has been happening in Fort Erie, specifically regarding COVID-19, so that the public will have better access to information. Regional municipalities have advised that we are available to assist in the roll-out of the vaccination plan. The Town of Fort Erie's CAO has been very active in this process and the other CAOs in the Region. Today, there were many new cases reported in the Niagara Region, 471, as there was a catch up in the backlog of testing. The additional cases were individuals who would have isolated from the time of their test to the time of their results so they would not have been spreading COVID-19 during that delay. The Premier is supposed to be making an announcement tomorrow on possible further restrictions. I would encourage everyone to be patient as there is a light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccination. A large portion of the population will not receive the immunization likely until the spring depending on how quickly Niagara can receive the vaccines. Be compassionate as we are all extremely stressed. Focus on how you can best protect those around you.

4. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

- (a) Mayor Redekop

Mayor Redekop declared pecuniary interests with respect to Delegations (b) Stephen Fraser and (c) Gregory Bender and (d) David Falletta, regarding Item 8.2 Report No. PDS-03-2021 Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study - Interim Report, and Item 8.2 Report No. PDS-03-2021, as he has two clients who own lands within parcels recommended to be included in the urban boundary, but do not represent either on this specific matter. He abstained from participating in the Delegation presentations, and he abstained from discussing and voting on PDS-03-2021.

5. Notice of Upcoming Public Meetings

- (a) 2021 Budget Meeting Schedule

Council-in-Budget Committee Meetings:

#3 - Wednesday, February 3, 2021 - Library, General Levy Operating Budget & Assessment Analysis;

#4 – Wednesday, February 10, 2021 – (If required).

All budget meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. Via Video Teleconference.

Budget By-laws:

Monday, January 18, 2021 – Water and Wastewater Budget and Rates By-law;

Monday, February 22, 2021 – General Levy Budget By-law and General Capital Budget By-law.

(b) Public Meeting

Re: Proposed Increase in Building Permit Fees - Monday, January 18, 2021 - 6:00 p.m. - Via Video Teleconference

6. Public Meetings

(a) Proposed Official Plan & Zoning By-law Amendment

Re: 80-84 and 94 Jarvis Street - Owner - Jagjit Sandhu - Agent - Jason Pizzicarola. The applicant is requesting to allow the construction of a 5 storey mixed-use building which will include 34 dwelling units and 198 square metres of retail space. The property is currently designated Commercial in the Official Plan, and zoned site-specific Central Business District Commercial (C2A-419) Zone and the applicant is requesting to rezone to a site-specific Central Business District Commercial (C2A) Zone to allow an increase in the maximum building height to 5 storeys and a reduction in the size of the residential open-air balcony.

Mayor Redekop announced that this portion of the meeting would be devoted to the holding of Public Meetings.

Mayor Redekop also provided information on electronic participation for members of the public who wished to provide input relative to the Application.

Mayor Redekop enquired whether the Clerk received any comments subsequent to the posting of the Reports, to be read into the Minutes. The Clerk advised that she did not.

Ms. Dilwaria, Senior Development Planner, delivered a PowerPoint Presentation which is available for viewing on the Town's website.

Ms. Dilwaria confirmed the statutory requirements for the Public Meeting were met, summarized the purpose of the Application, and public comments received.

Mayor Redekop requested that staff bring the Applicant or Agent in to participate in the meeting.

Jason Pizzicarola, Agent, was present to speak on behalf of the Application.

Mr. Pizzicarola advised that he believes this is an excellent project for the downtown core as it will bring more density. He added that the more residential density there is, the more successful the area's businesses will be, that developing a seniors housing project is ideal in the downtown core. There are already several amenities; a doctor's office, coffee shop, restaurants, a bookstore, and a park. Mr. Pizzicarola added that increasing the development from 3 stories to 5 stories achieves many requirements in the Zoning By-law; the building will be situated at the front of the lot, not to see the parking, meets parking requirements, and does not create shadows.

Mayor Redekop enquired whether there were any members of the public in the waiting room who wish to speak in favour of the Application.

(a) Vince Salvatore, 31 Jarvis Street

Mr. Salvatore advised that he is a member of the Bridgeburg Business Improvement Area, and he supports the development. Mr. Salvatore noted that the development would be a vital asset to the area, help bring in other businesses, and encourage future growth.

Mayor Redekop enquired if any members of the public wished to speak in opposition to the Application or ask questions.

No members of the public came forward.

Mayor Redekop declared the Public Meeting closed.

(b) Proposed Official Plan & Zoning By-law Amendment

Re: 0-6489 Nigh Road - Owner - Frank Kenneth DiCorso - Agent - Jason Pizzicarola. The amendments are requested to facilitate a future severance to create two new residential lots. The property is currently designated Rural, in part, and Environmental Protection, in part, in the Official Plan, and zoned Rural (RU) Zone, in part, Environmental Conservation (EC) Overlay Zone, in part, and Hazard (H) Zone, in part. The site-specific RU regulations are requested for a reduction in the

minimum lot frontage and minimum lot area requirements of the by-law. The applicant is not proposing any changes to the Environmental Conservation (EC) Overlay Zone and Hazard (H) Zone.

Ms. Dilwaria, Senior Development Planner, delivered a PowerPoint Presentation which is available for viewing on the Town's website.

Ms. Dilwaria confirmed the statutory requirements for the Public Meeting were met, summarized the purpose of the Application, and public comments received.

Mayor Redekop requested that staff bring the Applicant or Agent in to participate in the meeting.

Jason Pizzicarola, Agent, was present to speak on behalf of the Application.

Mr. Pizzicarola advised that the property owner wishes to build a house for himself, closest to the creek, and then sever two parcels. Mr. Pizzicarola stated that there was a lot of work required for this proposal, including environmental impact studies, archaeological studies, and civil engineering.

Mayor Redekop enquired whether there were any members of the public in the waiting room who wish to speak in favour of the Application.

No members of the public came forward.

Mayor Redekop enquired if any members of the public wished to speak in opposition to the Application.

No members of the public came forward.

Mayor Redekop declared the Public Meeting closed.

7. Consent Agenda Items

(a) None.

8. Planning and Development Services

Chaired by Councillor Dubanow.

8.1 Presentations and Delegations

- (a) Robert Long, Owner, 477 Ridge Road North

Re: Request to Remove Heritage Designation - 477 Ridge Road North (Report No. PDS-39-2020)

Mr. Long reiterated his previous comments at the November 16, 2020 Council Meeting.

Mr. Long provided a proposal to Council including the following:

- that the fines owed be forgiven; and
- that, with the financial relief of forgiven fines, the dwelling be restored with the assistance of an engineer that specializes in historical restoration; and
- that living quarters be permitted above the garage; and
- that an additional dwelling be allowed on the property for rental income.

- (b) Stephen Fraser, Principal Planner, A. J. Clarke and Associates Ltd. and Danny Gabriele, President, Marz Homes

Re: Urban Expansion - 0-9785 Schooley Road - "Beachwalk II"- Marz Homes (Area 1) (Report No. PDS-03-2021)

Mr. Fraser stated that he supports the recommendation in Report No. PDS-03-2021 Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study – Interim Report. He advised that his client's land interests are identified within the Ridgeway-Crystal Beach Area of the Report and are considered for residential use. Mr. Fraser added that the lands identified as Area 1 are approximately 11 hectares in size and are surrounded by existing residential uses to the east and the south. The lands have several access points including Michener Road, Schooley Road and Rebstock Road, 2 of which are within the urban boundary and contain municipal services to help service this particular property. Mr. Fraser added that they also support the recommendation that these lands are prioritized for consideration of the urban area expansion; this recommendation is supported by the civil

engineering memo and planning memo that A.J. Clarke and Associates Ltd provided the Town.

Mr. Gabriele stated that he is looking forward to developing the property and that they feel the development will tie in perfectly with the adjacent subdivision, Beachwalk, which they hope to bring to the community in April. Mr. Gabriele added that they plan to use the same design concepts already used elsewhere in Crystal Beach.

(c) Gregory Bender, Manager, Municipal Planner, WSP

Re: Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study (Report No. PDS-03-2021)

Mr. Bender delivered a PowerPoint Presentation which is available for viewing on the Town's website.

Mr. Bender provided the following comments during the presentation:

Purpose of the Study

- Confirm the need for additional employment lands within the Town and assess candidate lands to be considered for future employment and residential uses
- Prioritize candidate lands for the Town's consideration
 - Identify lands to be considered as part of Region's MCR
 - Identify lands to be considered outside of MCR process
 - Identify additional work required to bring the lands into the urban area boundary

Background Information

- Shortage of lands available to accommodate employment growth
- Limited suitable locations for new employment development
- The Region is currently undertaking Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)

Background Studies

- Niagara Region MCR; identified Fort Erie needs 135 hectares of employment lands to accommodate growth between 2016 and 2041 – the Region is currently updating this work
- Fort Erie Industrial Land Development Strategy (2017); identified it needs between 138 and 186 net hectares of additional employment lands to accommodate growth between 2011 and 2041
- Growth Plan (2020 Consolidated) will impact the number of employment lands needed

Employment Land Needs

- Evaluated employment land supply against projected demand (2011 – 2041)
- Based on existing Town of Fort Erie studies (e.g., 2017 Industrial Land Development Study) and Provincial Growth Plan and updated Land Needs Methodology, it is confirmed that between 138 to 186 net hectares of additional lands are required for the Town to accommodate future growth
- This range is being used for discussion purposes but needs to be identified by the Region through its MCR

Residential Land Needs

- Based on pre-consultation with Town staff and the Region, residential lands are also being evaluated to accommodate the long-term needs of the Town and as input to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process

G. Bender summarized the candidate lands in several locations throughout the Town.

Finalize Report

- Following input from Council, Town staff, and the public, a final UAB Expansion Study – MCR Recommendations Report will be prepared

Phase 2 of Study

- Identify potential opportunities for land swaps and/or boundary expansions to be considered outside of the Region's MCR

Recommendation No. 1
Moved by: Councillor Noyes

That: Mr. David Falletta, Bousfields Inc. be permitted to make a presentation to Council. **(Carried)**

(d) David Falletta, Planner, RPP, Bousfields Inc.

Re: Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study (Report No. PDS-03-2021)

Mr. Falletta shared a map and advised that International Country Club Golf Course has retained Bousfields Inc. to review the feasibility of including their lands as candidate lands within the urban area expansion considerations. Mr. Falletta advised that the lands fall between the Stevensville and Douglastown urban areas and are logical additions for an urban boundary expansion and connection of those two areas; developing these lands would allow for efficient use of existing infrastructure and services.

8.2 Reports

PDS-39-2020 Intent to Amend Schedule "A" of By-law No. 135-99 - Being a By-law to Designate Lands at 477 Ridge Road North (Birthplace of Dr. Edmund J. Zavitz) as being of Architectural and Historical Value or Interest Property
(Postponed from September 14, 2020 Council-in-Committee Meeting and the October 5, 2020 Council-in-Committee Meeting and further proposed from the November 16, 2020 Regular Council Meeting - Previously Moved by Councillor McDermott as Recommendation No. 3)

That: Council approves the amendment to Schedule "A" of By-law No. 135-99, to remove the heritage designation on the dwelling at 477 Ridge Road North, under Section 30.1 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and further

That: Council directs staff to provide Notice of Intention to Amend a Designating By-law in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Recommendation No. 2
Moved by: Mayor Redekop

That: The Report be amended by adding the following additional recommendations:

That: Council directs staff to discuss with Mr. Long his proposal with respect to the property and report back to Council as soon as practical, and further

That: Council directs that the monthly fines be suspended until staff reports back to Council.”

Councillor Noyes moved a friendly amendment to the first added recommendation by adding: “and report back to Council within 2 months”, which was accepted by the Mover, Mayor Redekop.

The amendments, as amended, were voted on as follows:

That: Council directs staff to discuss with Mr. Long his proposal with respect to the property and report back to Council within 2 months, and further

That: Council directs that the monthly fines be suspended until staff reports back to Council.” **(Carried)**

Mayor Redekop requested that the recommendations, as amended, be dealt with and voted on separately.

That: Council approves the amendment to Schedule “A” of By-law No. 135-99, to remove the heritage designation on the dwelling at 477 Ridge Road North, under Section 30.1 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. **(Lost)**

That: Council directs staff to provide Notice of Intention to Amend a Designating By-law in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*. **(Lost)**

That: Council directs staff to discuss with Mr. Long his proposal with respect to the property and report back to Council within 2 months, **(Carried)**

That: Council directs that the monthly fines be suspended until staff reports back to Council. **(Carried)**

PDS-01-2021 Proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments - Jagjit Sandhu (Owner) - Jason Pizzicarola (Agent) - 80-84 and 94 Jarvis Street

Recommendation No. 3
Moved by: Councillor McDermott

That: Council receives for information purposes Report No. PDS-01- 2021 regarding amendments to the Town's Official Plan and Zoning By-law for 80-84 and 94 Jarvis Street.

(Carried)

Council recessed for 5 minutes at 8:47 p.m.

PDS-02-2021 Proposed Combined Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments - Frank Kenneth DiCorso (Owners) - Jason Pizzicarola (Agent) - 0-6489 Nigh Road

Recommendation No. 4
Moved by: Mayor Redekop

That: Council approves the amendments to the Town's Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw No. 129-90 as detailed in Appendix "3" and Appendix "4" of Report No. PDS-02-2021 for the lands known as 0-6489 Nigh Road, and further

That: Council authorizes staff to prepare the necessary by-laws.

(Carried)

PDS-03-2021 Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study - Interim Report

Recommendation No. 5
Moved by: Councillor Zanko

That: Council endorses the Urban Boundary Expansion Study – Interim Report, for the purpose of the Region of Niagara's Municipal Comprehensive Review process, attached as Appendix "1" to Report No. PDS-03-2021, and further

That: Council directs staff to forward a copy of the Study to the Region of Niagara to further inform the Region of Niagara's Municipal Comprehensive Review and Official Plan Update.

(Carried)

PDS-04-2021 Extension of Draft Plan Approval - Royal Ridge Phase 1 Subdivision - West Side of Ridge Road North, South of Nigh Road - Royal Oak Property

Developments Ltd. (Brent King) - Owner - KLM
Planning Partners Inc. (Mark Yarranton) - Agent

Recommendation No. 6
Moved by: Councillor McDermott

That: Council extends draft plan approval for the Royal Ridge Phase 1 draft plan of a subdivision located on the west side of Ridge Road North, south of Nigh Road until December 19, 2022, and the Owner and Regional Municipality of Niagara Planning and Development Services Department be so advised.

Recommendation No. 7
Moved by: Mayor Redekop

That: Report No. PDS-04-2021 be postponed for one month to give staff an opportunity to have further discussions about realigning the access-egress point further south. **(Lost)**

Following Recommendation No. 7 to postpone Report No. PDS-04-2021 being lost, Recommendation No. 6 was voted on:

That: Council extends draft plan approval for the Royal Ridge Phase 1 draft plan of a subdivision located on the west side of Ridge Road North, south of Nigh Road until December 19, 2022, and the Owner and Regional Municipality of Niagara Planning and Development Services Department be so advised. **(Carried)**

PDS-05-2021 Town of Fort Erie Park Naming Policy

Recommendation No. 8
Moved by: Councillor Butler

That: Council approves the Town of Fort Erie Park Naming Policy attached as Appendix "1" to Report No. PDS-05-2021, and further

That: Council directs staff to circulate the Policy to pending applicants, and undertake the park naming process for new Town Parks as identified in this Report.
(Carried)

8.3 New Business/Enquiries

(a) Councillor Zanko

Councillor Zanko enquired with respect to the name of Ferndale Park, which is now signed as “Bertie Centennial Park.” She had spoken to Ms. Hansen about where the name came from because many of her residents had never heard of that name and have been living here for a very long time, referring to the park as “Ferndale Park”. She asked if it was possible to add “Ferndale Park” on the sign as “also known as”.

Mr. Walsh responded that there are a number of parks in Town that also have AKAs. “United Empire Loyalist Park” is also known as “Ott Road Park”. He asked if Council wishes to have an “AKA” on every site, as he thinks it’s bad protocol.

Councillor Noyes advised she agrees with Councillor Zanko and the Town can call a park anything it wants. 95% of the Town is still going to refer to it as “Ferndale Park”. She advised that as part of this Report, there should have been public consultation, and she doesn't think there was. She wouldn't put an “AKA” on it, and would just call it “Ferndale Park”.

Mayor Redekop advised there was a discussion about this at Planning and Development Services, and Ms. Hansen mentioned Bertie Centennial, that it clicked in, that it was Bertie Township in 1967. And that's what the Centennial is all about, so that undoubtedly is the correct proper name. But if we're talking about wayfinding, and this was raised during the meeting, why would we be misdirecting people or directing them to some place that they don't know? He thought Planning staff was, to there being, in those occasions where a park has an official name but is known by something else, a reference to both names.

Mayor Redekop advised the thinks we should make sure that when we're trying to direct people to places, we can direct them properly and he hopes Council doesn't need a formal motion where Council directs staff to use some additional wording on the odd sign that we have in Town. The whole purpose of Wayfinding is to make sure people can find their way, so he's supportive of where it's

necessary putting on 2 names. If staff feels that Council should bring a formal motion, then he would second Councillor Zanko's motion.

Councillor Lubberts advised that the naming or renaming can be done by a Councillor. Chair Dubanow advised that Council had moved on from the Report.

Mayor Redekop stated he wanted to make sure Council comes to a conclusion on this and he doesn't know how staff want to proceed. He asked if this is something we can leave with staff and they can let us know whether we need to bring a formal motion or not with respect to parks that have aliases?

Ms. Dolch advised that if Council passes the Park Naming Policy, Council has the ability to change the name of the park "Bertie Centennial". As staff, they could discuss it further and report back to Council.

Mayor Redekop advised he is not suggesting to change the historic names that have been given to these parks which are no longer used colloquially, but that for better signage, use the original name, but just make sure that people who refer to it as something else know that's where it is.

(b) Mayor Redekop

Mayor Redekop enquired whether Council was waiting for something from staff relative to a Tree By-law review. This comes out of complaints received from people where there seems to be a lot of trees being cut down, some of which are necessary, some of which seem to be unnecessary. The Emerald Ashwood Borer has caused a lot of devastation in the Town. He questioned why even though we're going to be hopefully embarking upon a good tree planting program, why cut down good trees?

Mayor Redekop advised he would leave that with Ms. Dolch to let him know if there is anything to be worked on by staff, or not.

8.4 Business Status Report

No changes.

9. Infrastructure Services

Chaired by Councillor Lubberts.

9.1 Presentations and Delegations

None.

9.2 Reports

IS-01-2021 Notification of Intent to Update the Public Transit System in Fort Erie to an On-Demand Model

Recommendation No. 8
Moved by: Mayor Redekop

That: Council approves the use of an On-Demand Model for Public Transportation in Fort Erie and to replace the current Fixed Route Model, and further

That: Council directs staff to issue an RFP to find a provider capable of On-Demand Public Transportation commencing in October 2021. **(Carried)**

IS-02-2021 Summary of Community Feedback on the Design of a New Boardwalk at Bernard Beach

Recommendation No. 9
Moved by: Councillor Butler

That: Council directs staff to proceed with the construction of the boardwalk at Bernard Beach as designed. **(Carried)**

Recommendation No. 10
Moved by: Mayor Redekop

That: The hour of adjournment be extended to 10:30 p.m. **(Carried)**

IS-03-2021 Single Source Purchase of 2020 Sanitary Sewer Closed Circuit Television Inspection & Assessment - Contract No. ISE-19P-SANCTV

Recommendation No. 11
Moved by: Councillor McDermott

That: Council approves the single source purchase of the 2020 Sanitary Sewer Closed Circuit Television Inspection &

Assessment from 284612 Ontario Limited (o/a Bob Robinson & Son Construction), as a Scope Extension to CONTRACT ISE-19P-SANCTV, at an upset limit of \$158,635.62 (including 13% HST), and further

That: Council accepts \$102,500 in operating funding from the 2020 Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Program grant(s) from the Niagara Region, and further

That: Council amends the 2020 Operating Budget to substitute \$102,500 of Sewer Rate Stabilization Reserve funding with the CSO Control Cost Sharing Program grant funds to OJ-41075-SANCTV in the amount of \$102,500. **(Carried)**

9.3 New Business/Enquiries

(a) Councillor Butler

Councillor Butler advised she has received a number of emails and phone calls with respect to the conservation area that's directly behind Sunrise Court and abuts Thunder Bay Road, and some clear cutting that was taking place and basically destroyed or disseminated the conservation area that was part of the subdivision plan for that area of Ridgeway-by-the-Lake. She questioned if the Town is going to replant trees to make it recoverable?

Mr. Walsh advised that there has been a lot of discussion on this issue and he had a conversation with the Mayor this afternoon as well. Council will recall that the Town is cutting down trees for final phases of the annual programme. There were a number of trees in this strip along Thunder Bay Road, between the road and the houses on Sunrise Court. Going back a bit in history, when they were cutting down trees on the woodlands behind Canada Drive, and because it was an unattended road allowance, they were just laying the trees down.

Mr. Walsh advised that, based on previous direction from Council regarding tree cutting and clearing behind Canada Drive, the Operations Department removed the dead ash trees along Thunder Bay Road after being cut down. He added that this was done as a result of resident complaints about the unsightliness of dead wood debris. The heavier machinery required to complete this work also damages the underbrush. Mr. Walsh advised that further cutting and removal is still required pending direction from Council this evening.

Councillor Butler stated that, based on the photos shared by constituents, the removal of all the trees was a lot. She enquired what the plan is moving forward and how the situation will be corrected.

Mr. Walsh advised that this particular section of Thunder Bay is slated for redevelopment and revegetation.

Councillor Butler enquired about the conservation status of this area. Mr. Walsh advised that he cannot confirm the status and referred the question to Ms. Dolch.

Ms. Dolch advised that there are some conservation lands in the Ridgeway-by-the-Lake area; however, the lands adjacent to Thunder Bay Road are owned by the Town and are designated an Open Space Zone. Ash trees were removed from this area as they are a hazard.

Mayor Redekop stated that the removal of trees along Thunder Bay Road came as a surprise and is discouraging for those in the area. He added that the clearcutting and removal of trees is not a one-size fits all answer; that, although that was directed in one area, this vegetated area was deliberately maintained to act as a buffer between the homes on Thunder Bay Road and the Marz Homes development. Mayor Redekop further added that the vegetation and wildlife are attractive elements of an area, Fort Erie has heritage, and we have to be vigilant in protecting it.

Mayor Redekop stated that this most recent occurrence of tree cutting and clearing is an example of staff trying to determine what Council wants without a clear policy to refer to; he does not criticize staff of this effort. Council has advised that tree cutting crews be more careful in the future to preserve trees in good health and believes that the dead trees could have been pulled out without completely denuding the landscape.

Mayor Redekop stated that Council needs to be clear on what it is they want staff to do and need to make a decision on this. Mayor Redekop added that it is unfortunate what happened along Thunder Bay Road and that moving forward, each area should be handled differently, depending on the unique circumstances. Mayor Redekop further added that staff should respond to resident enquiries and they should possibly be given an opportunity to object or have input into an area projected to be cut.

Mayor Redekop stated that Council should consider what to advise staff moving forward and that he is more supportive of maintaining natural habitat. He questioned what the best way of directing staff is on this moving forward.

Mr. Walsh advised that staff are in favour of cutting down dead ash trees and not removing them as a more ecologically sound practice. He added that dead ash trees are a hazard and need to be cut, and tend to decay fairly quickly, approximately 3-4 years. In discussion with Mr. Hutton, leaving a large amount of dead cut trees creates habitat for undesirable rodents and wildlife such as skunks and racoons; however this is not the case in this area. Mr. Walsh advised that if they let the trees fall, there may be some underbrush that gets crushed, but it will grow back up the next spring.

Mayor Redekop stated that if the tree doesn't really need to come down because it's not dangerous, then it can also provide habitat for birds, woodpeckers, bats, etc. He suggested that the Town's Arborist be consulted to provide advice, and enquired whether the small strip remaining on Thunder Bay Road will be denuded like the strip that has been.

Mr. Walsh advised that ash trees become very brittle and dangerous within a year or two of being infected, and as such, the most efficient approach is to cut down any ash tree that is dead on the first visit.

Mayor Redekop enquired whether an arborist was consulted on the tree removal along Thunder Bay Road. Mr. Walsh confirmed that an arborist was consulted and all the trees in that area were ash trees.

Mayor Redekop stated that there should be a policy on tree removal and that public consultation be included in the process. He thanked Mr. Walsh for his comments.

Councillor Zanko stated she agrees that residents should be consulted when the removal or non-removal of trees is considered, especially for the remaining portion along Thunder Bay Road.

Mr. Walsh advised that, based on his conversations with the Mayor and residents' emails, he believes that the preference would be to leave the trees to rot where they lie.

Councillor Lubberts stated that he agrees with Mayor Redekop that staff need to know what Council wishes. He also recalled the incidents which Mayor Redekop referred to regarding tree cutting and removal on Canada Drive, Pleasant Avenue and Thunder Bay Road. Councillor Lubberts added that the advice to staff has not been consistent.

Councillor Lubberts further added that the argument for leaving the trees, when they were felled, is in our Official Plan as good forestry practices, and that trees should be left when they fall to continue their cycle in the ecosystem.

9.4 Business Status Report

No changes.

10. Corporate and Community Services

Chaired by Councillor McDermott.

10.1 Presentations and Delegations

None.

10.2 Reports

CAO-01-2021 Waiving of 2021 Town of Fort Erie Business Licensing Fees

Recommendation No. 12
Moved by: Councillor Dubanow

That: Council directs staff to submit a by-law to Council to temporarily waive all business licence fees, save and except short-term rentals, for 2021 to assist businesses during COVID-19. **(Carried)**

10.3 New Business/Enquiries

(a) Councillor Dubanow

Councillor Dubanow referred to when businesses were shutdown previously, the Town waived property tax interest, water bill interest and other things. He enquired of Mr. Janzen whether this is something the municipality is monitoring right now.

Mr. Janzen advised that it is something staff are monitoring. The 2021 levy budget is being prepared right now. From some of the

preliminary analysis we did from the end of year, when we're looking at year over year arrears and collection issues, there are very minor changes, year over year. This speaks to tax payments being in a good position, and shows that people are mitigating issues. The Federal and Provincial government are putting a lot of effort towards helping, not only with subsidies, but also with loans when there's cash flow issues. Mr. Janzen advised that staff's main focus is doing everything they can to keep the 2021 tax increase low. The issue of waiving or postponing due dates pushes the issue down the road, so staff would like to address it more directly with the 2021 levy itself. He continued that a couple of municipalities regionally have implemented programs. Typically, they're application-based, so it's a bit more administratively heavy to get them going, and the impacts have been low.

Mr. Janzen advised he thinks the business licensing waiver is a great alternative and example of something we can do that has direct impact. He will include comments in the reports on other things that are being done provincially and regionally to assist businesses and residents alike.

Mayor Redekop asked if when Council does their operating levy discussion next month, whether they can get background on Mr. Janzen thinks the costs were to the Town for the tax and water payment penalty deferrals were, so that Council can look at that as well.

10.4 Business Status Report

No changes.

11. Scheduling of Meetings

None.

12. Adjournment

Recommendation No. 13

Moved by: Councillor Dubanow

That: Council-in-Committee hereby adjourns at 10:30 p.m. **(Carried)**

Mayor

Clerk