

Mono Council answers residents' concerns, discuss culvert repairs, moratorium on aggregate

By Peter Richardson

Mono's Council meeting last Tuesday was off to a rocky start, with disrupted internet service forcing Mayor John Creelman to attend the virtual meeting from Town Hall instead of his home.

Deputy Mayor Fred Nix presided over the opening of the meeting, through to Question Period, when Mayor Creelman rejoined the proceedings.

Deputy Mayor Nix made three proclamations on behalf of Council, proclaiming June 21 as National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 27 as Multicultural Day and June 19 as Longest Day of Smiles in the Town of Mono.

Question Period

Public Questions followed, with Janice Jiang asking if the town had any programs to offset the high cost of propane in the town, claiming her winter heating bill alone was some \$10,000 which she felt was far too high.

Deputy Mayor Nix suggested the installation of a heat pump could reduce her costs by one third, while Director of Public Works reminded Council that the Town has no input or control over the cost of utilities in Mono and even the Town's costs have risen sharply, post pandemic.

Next, Cossette Pathak asked why the Mono Cliffs Park staff were advised to send visitors seeking cell service to go south on third line rather than north as she has had people knocking on her door at 7:30 p.m. asking where to park. Again, Mike Dunsmore answered saying they advise people be sent north to the town dump entrance where there is room to park and cell reception.

Anthony Hosein, who frequently participates in Question Period, queried for updates on the Neighbourhood Watch Program, wishing to know how the program is run.

He also wanted to know why the Town did not have better social media engagement, like other communities notifying people of turtle crossings, speed enforcements etc.

He also asked what was happening with the current Fireworks bylaw and asking for updates on fiber internet installations in Mono. Specifically, if any new bids had been awarded saying there was no word on further updates from local service providers.

CAO Mark Early stated that the Neighbourhood Watch Program was before the Police Services Boards and discussions are underway with the OPP, who are in favour of its resumption. He also refused to comment on the social media issue saying he felt staff was doing an excellent job already. Fiber contracts are a federal issuance and the Town hears about it when the contracts are issued.

Public meetings

Council then went into two different Public Meetings, to discuss NEC Development Permit Applications in the Town. The first was for the renovation and rebuilding of a reflective and meditative retreat on 4th Line.

Director of planning, Dave Trotman said the retreat had previously been operational since the 70's and that the NEC permits had expired and needs to be renewed. He said considerable time and money had already been expended and everything currently met with all town requirements, if the property was not controlled by the NEC.

Existing neighbours said there were no issues with them as they never knew it was there previously. Council approved the motion and moved on to the second NEC Permit Application.

Next up during the Public Meeting was a property on 6th Line, that's looking at large horse stable construction totalling some 39,000 square feet.

The facility will include an indoor arena, new stable and barns, a sand ring, and upgrades to the existing buildings and structures. It will be built by Dutch Masters Design and Construction Services and known as Hawkhaven Stables, Formerly the Property was owned and operated by Park Stud and was a thoroughbred breeding facility.

Again, Mr. Trotman said he had no concerns to bring forth and Council approved the motion.

Culvert repairs

Meanwhile, director of public works, Mike Dunmore reported that preparations for repair/replacement of two culverts that had recently collapsed, was well underway and RFP's should go out within the week.

He shared with Council that projected cost are 40 to 50 per cent higher the expected due to material shortages and hoped that actual quotations would be closer to what was expected.

Currently, the culverts alone were coming in at \$250,000 without the required land rehabilitation.

Deputy Mayor Nix asked where the money would come from and was told that once final costs were determined, the Treasurer would be consulted to try and find sources for the costs. There were various options, including reserves, other budgeted project, deferrals and reallocation of their funds and borrowing.

Moratorium on aggregate

The next agenda item was a motion by Mayor Creelman requesting the provincial government put a temporary moratorium on new Aggregate production in Ontario, as current demand was being met with the existing 5000 pits and quarries in the province and several things needed to be addressed before more were allowed.

The lengthy motion covered such topics as pit rehabilitation, municipality compensation through taxing these as large industrial/commercial undertakings, First Nations Treaty rights and other matters of concern.

Though a well thought out presentation, it isn't likely to have any affect upon the current majority provincial government's appetite for more highways and urban construction.

Staff reports

During reports from staff, Kim Heaton noted that due to Hydro One delays caused by the recent storms in the province, the Island Lake Family Park will not open July 1, but Rather sometime this fall.

Opening without power was considered, but due to labour laws and other ongoing construction, this was not feasible, or prudent.

On a good news front, Mono's soccer will start on schedule, with 180 children taking part.