

**Township of Woolwich
Special Council - Planning Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

7:00 PM

**Council Chambers – Hybrid with YouTube Livestream
24 Church Street West, Elmira**

Present from Council: Mayor Shantz (Chair)
Councillor Bryant
Councillor Cadeau
Councillor Schwindt
Councillor Grant*

Absent from Council: Councillor Burgess

Present from Staff: David Brenneman, Chief Administrative Officer
Jeff Smith, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
Richard Petherick, Director of Financial Services*
Deanne Friess, Director of Development Services
Jeremy Vink, Manager of Planning
John Scarfone, Planner
Alex Smyth, Deputy Clerk
Tanya Bettridge, Council and Committee Support Specialist
Meet Patel, IT Help Desk/Support Representative
Barry Gerth, Manager of IT Services

**indicates remote participation*

Land Acknowledgement

Mayor Shantz read a land acknowledgement.

Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

None.

Public Meeting

DS43-2023: Township Initiated Zoning By-law Review and Official Plan Amendment Locations

Mayor Shantz declared the public meeting to be open.

In a report for information, staff provided explanations and background information for the proposals for the Township-initiated Zoning By-law Review and two Township-initiated Official Plan Amendments.

Council discussed the reasons for limiting geothermal heating in source water protection areas, considering allowing bunkhouses where they may be needed on smaller properties for intensive farming operations (i.e., greenhouse operations) and the need to communicate with property owners any significant changes of land use designation as it related to the environmental features.

Council inquired about the zoning for environmental features; it was explained that the mapping helps to identify to a landowner that a property is subject to the regulations and these features are already identified and enforced by conservation authority or regional policies.

Registered Participant Richard Scheid clarified lands near his property would remain agricultural until a planning application comes forward. Mr. Scheid expressed his desire to protect agricultural lands from development and clarified the processes for development approvals and appeals.

Registered Participant Delmer B. Martin provided Council with a history about his property, concerns with development restrictions and work he has done to date. Mr. Martin expressed his desire to be able to build a house within the woodlot on his property. Council and staff confirmed the planning application process that would be required for Council consideration.

The Clerk noted there were no unregistered participants in the meeting.

There were no other members of the public present to speak to the application.

As there were no further speakers, Mayor Shantz declared the public meeting to be closed.

Presentations

Uses In Prime Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Enforcement

Manager of Planning Jeremy Vink provided a presentation which highlighted:

- Background/timeline of steps toward enforcement
- Provincial Policy Statements guidelines and examples
- Township and Regional Official Plans
- Zoning uses (agricultural and home business - tradesperson)
- Overview of the process/costs for various applications and occupancy certificates
- Taxes and MPAC assessment implications
- Options for Council to consider moving forward

Council discussed agriculture enforcement and planning application fees, the number of farm stands in Woolwich, and compliance timelines/deadlines, processes, and enforcement fees. Staff confirmed there have been a few properties where the enforcement fees apply, and Council expressed concern about penalizing property owners for things they may have not been previously aware of. Council acknowledged the importance of compliance and consistency and expressed concerns in charging small roadside stands a fee amount that could be more than the stand would earn. One Council member suggested that the Township pivot to a complaint and application-based approach program so that staff can focus on larger provincial planning issues.

Council received confirmation on the status and cost of the current contract with Stantec. Staff explained the flexible approach Woolwich has historically taken with property owners to ensure business continuity during the compliance process. Council and staff discussed the challenges with complaints-based enforcement and the previous Council's desire for a fair process. Council confirmed the timeline for Stantec to finish the notification letter process.

Motion by Councillor Bryant

Seconded by Councillor Grant

The Council of the Township of Woolwich, considering a presentation regarding Uses In Prime Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Enforcement, direct staff to:

1. continue to send out all enforcement letters to landowners to complete the notice process within the entire Township;
2. stop active enforcement for 12-18 months while continuing to allow voluntary compliance;
3. waive the added agricultural enforcement fee;
4. stop the enforcement process for roadside produce stands and update the Fees and Charges By-law accordingly;
5. report back to Council by the 2nd quarter 2024 with:
 - a. a summary of outstanding non-compliant properties; and
 - b. a review of the process for on-farm diversified uses with options for further streamlining; and
6. determine an appropriate funding source for the consultant contract from the 2023 budget.

...Carried

By-laws

Moved by Councillor Grant

Seconded by Councillor Cadeau

That the following by-law in the hands of the Clerk be read a first, second and third time and finally passed, that it be numbered as By-law number 70-2023, and that it be signed by the Mayor and Clerk and sealed with the corporate seal.

- A By-law to Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of the Council (November 7, 2023)

...Carried

Adjournment (9:23 pm)

Moved by Councillor Bryant

Seconded by Councillor Cadeau

That the meeting adjourns to meet again in regular session on Tuesday, November 21, 2023.

...Carried

Sandy Shantz, Mayor

Jeff Smith, Clerk