



Proposed Township of Norwich and City of Woodstock Boundary Adjustment

Public Information and Consultation Meeting Notes

Thursday June 29, 2017
Oxford Centre Hall
6:00 p.m.

1. **Opening Remarks – Mayor Birtch and Mayor Martin**
Both Mayors welcomed those in attendance and introduced the staff present.
2. **Needs Assessment – Len Magyar, Development Commissioner, City of Woodstock**
Mr. Magyar provided an overview of the reasons for boundary adjustment discussions and proposed location.
3. **Taxes – Patrice Hilderley, Director of Administrative Services, City of Woodstock, Mike Legge, Director of Finance/Treasurer, Township of Norwich**
Mr. Legge advised that if approved, land owners would pay their taxes to the City of Woodstock, arrears would be transferred over and current Preauthorized Payments plans would cease.
Ms. Hilderley provided an overview of the proposed tax phase-in and how it would be calculated.
- Community Planning – Gord Hough, Director of Planning, County of Oxford**
Mr. Hough provided an overview of the required Secondary Planning and Servicing Study and outlined various considerations.
4. **Municipal Services/Bylaws - David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Woodstock**
Mr. Creery provided information with respect to: sewer and water services, municipal services, Municipal By-laws (continuation of Norwich Zoning By-law), addressing, street name changes, speed limits and municipal drains.
5. **Compensation - Kyle Kruger, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk, Township of Norwich**
Mr. Kruger explained that the goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability for the Township. He provided an overview of the ongoing base compensation and new property tax sharing for the commercial tax class and industrial tax class.

6. Next Steps – Mayor Birtch and Mayor Martin

Mayor Birtch advised that there will be a written comment period. If the proposal is approved by both Council's it will then go to Oxford County Council after which it will be sent to the Province for final approval.

7. Questions and Comments

Mr. Colin Gibson, 685896 Highway 2, quoted a recent interview Mayor Birtch conducted with CTV news regarding the need to act fast on the boundary adjustment because of interest expressed by a significant employer that could employ up to 1000 people. Mr. Gibson asked where this factory will be located. Mayor Birtch advised that there has been a lot of speculation but currently no deals are in place. He further advised that there is still extensive studies and servicing to be completed.

Mr. Joe Beauvais, 685745 Highway 2, advised that he bought his place to retire there. He did not purchase in Woodstock because he does not want to live there. He inquired if there were steps the public could take to stop this proposal. Mayor Birtch advised that this is an open public process so that everyone can have their say. He further commented that nothing would change with your property and stop you from enjoying your retirement. The choice is yours if you wish to stay in your house.

A concerned Eastwood resident commented that this adjustment benefits Woodstock and Norwich but asked how it benefits those affected. He commented that the taxes would go up but would they get sidewalks or streetlights? He advised that if they are paying the same taxes as current Woodstock residents, they should receive the same benefits. Mayor Birtch advised that employment lands benefit everyone who works in Woodstock.

Mr. Al Buckrell, 345705 Quaker Street, Norwich, asked what this boundary adjustment will do for him. He commented that they keep hearing what Woodstock wants, but we are rural Ontario, this will not benefit Norwich and will lead to increased property taxes. Mayor Martin advised that Norwich Township taxes would not be increasing and that Blandford Blenheim has the lowest property taxes in Oxford County due to the Toyota Agreement.

A concerned Eastwood resident advised that the proposed boundary adjustment would affect their enjoyment and use of their property. She displayed concerns that people may decide to sell for industrial use and they will have factories across the road from their home. Mayor advised that secondary planning around Highway 2 would probably be commercial instead of industrial. Gord Hough, Director, Oxford County Community Planning, stated that the proposal would go through a very rigorous review process concerning a new municipal boundary. Over time they would be moving non-agricultural uses across the landscape while respecting the existing uses.

A concerned Eastwood resident questioned how many people from our area are working at Toyota, also expressing concern that farm jobs are being taken away to give jobs to others. He inquired why the lands taken from Blandford-Blenheim have not been serviced yet. Mayor Birtch advised that there are services in some areas and plans for servicing in other areas.

In response to questions regarding what additional services would be received for the increased taxes, Ms. Hilderley, Treasurer, City of Woodstock, advised that the additional services would include: fire protection from a full-time force, recreational facilities, library and additional value to property value.

Kristy and Justin Sauve of 685794 Highway 2, advised that they are young and moved to Eastwood for a certain way of life and this will take that away from them. Mr. Sauve advised that they were not interested in what Woodstock wants and that no-one in Eastwood want this change.

An Eastwood resident spoke to the increased traffic, dust, noise and pollution caused from Toyota especially during the shift changes. She advised that they had moved out of Woodstock because they didn't want this environment and now it's being brought right back.

Greg Richardson of 17 Burgess Street, Burgessville advised that he owns land on Patullo Ave. He commented that his land is farmland and that it employs people in Norwich Township and Oxford County. He commented that he employs local people while factories create employment for people overseas and in the United States. He questioned the ability for Woodstock to fight fires in Eastwood without the required tanker trucks and no fire hydrants in place. Mr. Creery advised that they would seek a mutual aid agreement for tanker service with the Township of Norwich.

Mike Copper of 714573 Middletown Line, advised that he is a City of Woodstock employee and a member of the Oxford Centre Fire Department. Mr. Copper expressed concerns with fire protection.

A Princeton resident owning property within the affected area questioned the increase to his taxes and why there was no phase-in for commercial taxes. Ms. Hilderley advised that she would require specific information about his property but that on average taxes are about 50% higher in Woodstock.

In response to questions regarding stopping the process, Mr. Creery advised that comments are being requested and will be received until July 21st. Following that the proposal will come before both Council's during August for approval, then Oxford County and finally sent to the Province for approval. Mr. Creery further advised that the first level of appeal would be to the local Council. In order to take effect, the process must be completed by January 1, 2018.

Mr. John Thompson, 545228 Pattullo Ave, expressed concern regarding abandoning municipal drains and possible property damage. Mr. Creery advised drain abandonment would be done in such a way that it doesn't cause damage to anyone's property.

Mayor Martin requested that residents take the supplied comment sheets and submit them for consideration. He thanked all in attendance for coming and commented on the difficult decision.