

Mayor's Opening Remarks

January 26, 2015

1. On Wednesday, January 15 and Thursday, January 16, Council began its review of Augusta Township's 2015 Budget. On the first day, January 15, Council had its first look at the Budget that had been prepared by CAO Mercier and Treasurer Ray Morrison with input from department heads. Treasurer Ray Morrison provided a budget summary of revenues and expenses by type. He also identified and discussed budgetary items that pose a significant incremental impact on the Budget. On the second day, Treasurer Morrison presented Council with a summary that captured the previous day's discussions and proposals and followed up with a line by line review of revenues and proposed expenses by department. The next Budget meeting is set for Thursday, January 29 at 2:00 pm and it is anticipated that Council will review the Fire Department Budget and the Asset Management Plan if time permits.
2. On Saturday, January 17, I travelled to Toronto to attend the 10th Annual Chinese Business Excellence Awards and New Year. The event, which was attended by numerous Ontario mayors including Mayor Henderson of Brockville, Mayor Roger Hayley of Front of Young, Mayor Sayeau of Edwardsburgh Cardinal and myself, was an opportunity to network with business leaders and investors. Expenses for attending the event were paid wholly by me as the event did not involve a specific investment offer or inquiry for the Township.
3. A special meeting of the Agriculture and Planning Committee was held on, Monday, January 19 to deal with three items which included a review by CAO Pierre Mercier of the Counties' draft Operation Plan. Mr. Mercier plans to make his presentation to Council at a future Council meeting and make recommendations. I raise this to advise residents to look for the date and time for this meeting, and because I am currently in discussion with Mayor Sayeau of Edwardsburgh Cardinal regarding the possibility of holding a special joint public meeting of Councils on this matter. Mr. Mercier is a Registered Planner and it is thought that both Councils and the public would benefit from hearing CAO Mercier's review of the Counties' Operational Plan, including issues that he might have with the OP. There would then be a question and answer session.
4. I was appointed by Counties Council earlier this month to sit on the Board of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and attended the inaugural meeting of the new Board held on Thursday, January 22, 2015. Two issues discussed of interest for Augusta Township included changes to the "Healthy Smiles Ontario II Program" and "Changes to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act that came into force on January 1st, 2015.

I learned that the revised Smoke-Free Ontario Act requires municipalities to:

- Put up or post signage provided to identify the 20 metre to children's playground and sports fields including spectator areas as smoke-free;
- Meet with Health Unit Staff including Tobacco enforcement Officers to jointly ensure appropriate signage and compliance with the new regulations;
- Amend any current municipal smoke-free bylaws, if any, to eliminate areas that are now in conflict with the provincial regulations;
- Ensure people who are found within the smoke-free areas are asked to leave or extinguish the cigarette and do not continue to smoke in a prohibited area. This may mean including information in use or rental agreements with groups or users; and
- Remove any ashtrays within the prohibited area and move them to areas outside of the 20 metres radius.

5. I learned from the meeting that Health Unit Staff have already been in contact with Municipalities for a list of parks and play grounds and will be meeting in the future to ensure the placement of signage provided is appropriate and clearly visible to the Public. I further understand that enforcement of the regulations will be complaint driven.
6. The second item of interest to Augusta residents dealt with changes that the Province of Ontario has proposed to its "Healthy Smiles Ontario II Program." Health Unit officials expressed concern that about 270 children in the community will be without support for urgent dental care if the new dental program does not include an urgent care component.
7. On Saturday, January 24, 2015, our Deputy Mayor hosted a birthday party that was well attended by residents. It was a great time and I would just like to say, happy birthday George.
8. Just a reminder to residents that I am available at the Township office every Friday from 2:00 to 4:00 pm for residents to drop in and talk. I can also meet any week-day or evening by appointment.

Doug Malanka
Mayor, Augusta Township