

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – NOTES – PUBLIC MEETING – JANUARY 8, 2024

Notes of the Public meeting held on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 6 p.m. in the O'Connor Community Centre.

Present: Mayor Vezina  
Councillors: Crane, Sobolta  
Clerk-Treasurer Buob

Visitors: Stefan Huzan, Northern Planning representing the applicant  
Sharon Corrigan, Paul Corrigan, Tammy Cook, Brendan Rea, Sarah Henny, Matt Henny, Cameron Noy, Doug Morris, Diana Bockus, Larry Bockus, Andy Buob, Kelly Johnson, Joel Johnson, Linda Racicot, Mike Zettek, Lorna Krieg, Leslie Scheuerman.

Absent: Councillor Torkkeli

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

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

Mayor Vezina welcomed everyone present at the meeting and introductions of Council, Clerk-Treasurer Buob and Mr. Huzan were made.

Mayor Vezina then turned the meeting over to the Clerk-Treasurer to explain the process for making an amendment to the Township of O'Connor's Official Plan.

Clerk-Treasurer Buob explained the process of submitting an application for an amendment to the Township of O'Connor's Official Plan. Application #2023-01 from Tim and Jennifer Silvaggio for the property known as Concession 3, N ½ Lot 7, 51 Connolly Road was received requesting that the Township allow the property owner an additional lot severance on this property. It was confirmed that Notice of Application #2023-01 and Notice of the Public Meeting were sent out to all required agencies, and residents within 120 metres of the subject land. The Notices were also included on the Township's website, bulletin boards, and the Notice of the Public Meeting was included in the January issue of the Township of O'Connor's monthly newsletter, which was delivered on December 28, 2023, to all residents of the Township.

Clerk-Treasurer Buob read aloud the Notice of Public Meeting, which outlined the purpose of the meeting, the proposal, the purpose and effect of the proposal, how to participate and the right to appeal. The Report to Council dated January 8, 2024, which included Administration's recommendation to Council, the purpose of the proposed amendment, and Sections 1.1, 1.2, 9.3 and 9.3.2. of the Township of O'Connor's Official Plan. The Report summary included the process as described above and informed those present that no decision will be made at the Public Meeting.

Written comments received were read aloud by Clerk-Treasurer Buob. Correspondence was received from the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) – dated December 5, 2023, and Tbaytel – dated December 11, 2023. An email was received December 1, 2023, from Enbridge Gas stating that they would not submit comment if the property is not in proximity to an Enbridge transmission pipeline, which it is not.

The meeting was then turned back to Mayor Vezina. Mayor Vezina then asked for speakers in support of the proposed amendment application and invited Mr. Huzan to speak to the application.

Mr. Huzan appeared and spoke about the application and commented on the Clerk-Treasurer's Report. He thanked Clerk-Treasurer Buob for setting up the meeting and explaining the process. He then stated that he was disappointed that he was not told that a recommendation would be made at this meeting and would have liked to have seen the report to Council prior to the meeting. He noted that the proposed amendment does not meet the requirements of the Official Plan, therefore the reason for the application. He noted that any property owner can apply for an amendment to the Official Plan. He has a bone of contention that Administration would recommend not to agree, as that is the purpose of the application. The Official Plan must be reviewed

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every ten years to ensure that it is up to date. He stated that the province is currently pushing for more housing faster and encouraging additional housing. The Official Plan does stay steady, and applications are submitted to allow more people the opportunity. Mr. Huzan explained what a settlement area is and noted that the Township of O'Connor does not have settlement areas. He disagreed that this application would create one. He noted that the application fits within the rules of the Township's current consent and is logical infill, the lot size is consistent with the surrounding properties and no agencies had any concern with the application. He stated that it simply is not appropriate to freeze the Township by not allowing additional applications.

Mayor Vezina thanked Mr. Huzan for his comments and asked if there were any questions from those present for Mr. Huzan.

A question from Mr. Noy was asked in regard to the retained piece of the property. He would like to know if the owner would consider selling some of this property for farming. Mr. Huzan is unaware, and it was suggested that if Mr. Noy wished to pursue this question that it be discussed following the meeting.

Mr. Corrigan asked what other side ideas Mr. Silvaggio is thinking about if this application is approved. He has in the past mentioned other housing concepts. It was noted that this application is only for a severance and if any other concepts are being entertained, they would have to be addressed at that time.

Mr. Henny asked the question as to why the applicant did not make comment in regard to additional severances when the Official Plan was recently reviewed. Mr. Huzan stated that he couldn't answer that as he wasn't involved at that time.

Concerns were expressed that if this application is approved it would be setting a precedent for others to do the same and expect the additional approval. Mr. Huzan stated that the approval of this application would not set a precedent. Each application should be considered on their own individual merit.

Mrs. Bockus disagreed with that statement and feels that it would set a precedent.

Other speakers in favour of the application were called for. No one came forward. Mr. Huzan was thanked for answering the additional questions.

Speakers in opposition to the proposed amendment were called upon. The Clerk-Treasurer read an email dated January 8, 2024, in opposition to the amendment from Matt and Sarah Henny. They feel that this amendment directly contradicts the primary objective of the Official Plan which states: "To maintain, where possible and appropriate, the rural and natural character of the Township which provides serenity, privacy and spaciousness". The creation of yet another new lot from this quarter section will have an adverse effect on neighbours with increased noise and traffic and decrease overall quality of life. It could also have a detrimental effect on the groundwater tables. Additionally, if approved, it will create a dangerous precedent which would allow further infilling of the rural area and undermine the overall purpose of the Official Plan. In their opinion, the Official Plan, as it stands, has found a good balance between preservation of the rural area and development.

Mayor Vezina then asked if anyone from the floor wished to speak in opposition.

Mr. Zettek advised that he was in opposition as he feels that it would set a precedent in the future for landowners to make similar applications, which would bring in extra work for Council and Staff.

Mr. Bockus advised that he was in opposition, noting that the Township has an Official Plan for a reason. He could understand if this property had a unique situation, for example with a river bisecting the property and there was no connection to the main piece of property, but not just to retain an additional severance. The province is currently proposing more houses, however, he feels that municipal planning has to take precedent. This would void our own Official Plan without an extraordinary reason.

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Mr. Morris advised that he had nothing against the landowners. While there is no legal baseline for precedence, this application would change the baseline of the Official Plan by which the Township follows, possibly leading to strip development and potentially modifying future planning.

Mr. Corrigan advised that he does not understand why he is looking at another consent application from the same individual. He feels there is something else planned following this application.

Mr. Henny advised that he would like to add to his written comments submitted. He quoted the Provincial Policy Statement, Part III – Geographic Scale of Policies, which recognizes the diversity of Ontario, and that local context is important. Policies are outcome-oriented, and some policies provide flexibility in their implementation provided that provincial interests are upheld. While the Provincial Policy Statement is to be read as a whole, not all policies will be applicable to every site, feature or area. Mr. Henny advised that in the Planning Rational included in the application, item (12), the suggested wording for the site-specific amendment would be inequitable to the other properties in the Township. Breaking the Official Plan because it doesn't work for this particular resident is not right.

Mrs. Cook, resident, advised that she did not support the application as the Township of O'Connor's Official Plan was just approved in 2019 and the consents were left at two severances for a reason. If the applicant wanted Council to consider more consents, it could have been proposed at that time. The Township's Official Plan is there to protect rural and natural character of the Township and she feels if Council allows this application, additional applications will come.

No other comments were made.

Mayor Vezina reminded everyone that no decision will be made in regard to the application this evening and thanked everyone for their comments. Mr. Huzan was invited to request a deputation at the Council meeting in which the application will be further discussed if he so wishes.

1. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE.**

**TIME BEING: 6:52 P.M.**

Carried

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Mayor

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Clerk-Treasurer