



**MEETING DATE:** April 16, 2013  
**LOCATION:** Town Office – EPW Meeting Room  
**PREPARED BY:** Adam McMullin, Engineering and Public Works

## A. Call to Order

Chair James McKinlay called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

**Present:** James McKinlay, Lynn Vail, Jacquie Hendry, Alfred (Jim) Farmilo, John Ardiel, Rod Knott, Sid Dykstra, Grant McMurchy, Ron Marshall, Al Lockhart

**Guest:** Ritchie Baird (Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association)

**Regrets:** None.

### A.1 Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes of February 20, 2013 meeting were reviewed. Adam said that the minutes were included in the April 15<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Adam referenced the two motions in the minutes.

James reiterated that the minutes are circulated and approved using electronic mail.

## B. New and Unfinished Business

### B.1 Deputation – Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association (BMRA)

James introduced Ritchie Baird from the BMRA noting that Rod, Grant and he met with Ritchie and John Leckie from the BMRA. James said that the BMRA asked to speak to the Committee.

Ritchie said that he has lived in The Blue Mountains for four years and has been a member of the BMRA for two years. Ritchie said that the BMRA has 210 members and has set out a goal to recruit 1,000 members before the next election. Ritchie said that the mandate of the BMRA is protection of the environment and to promote sustainable taxation. Ritchie said that the BMRA would like to see councillors that limit tax increase moving forward as there has been year over year tax increases of 5 – 8% which is unsustainable. Ritchie added that tax increases are not aligned with inflation which can be tough on fixed income residents. Ritchie said that John and he carefully look through the budget and that The Blue Mountains is well operated, but conservatively run. Ritchie said that in comparison to similar Counties and Municipalities, the Town is highly taxed. Ritchie said that the Town's net tangible assets are high and the debt is low. Ritchie added that a significant portion of the Town's tax dollars 42% goes to Grey County accounting for 26% of their budget in 2013 and that the Town does not get the equivalent value of services. Ritchie said that the Town has experience a population decrease, 5.5% from 2006 – 2011. Rod said that the full-time permanent population may have decreased but that the transient population has exploded.

Ritchie said that tax increases are being used to fund mega-projects that have not started. Ritchie asked that with the population decreasing, does the Town need a new landfill site and that the Town should re-evaluate the project. Ritchie added that the Town could extend the anticipated life of the landfill and change the amortization period to reduce the pressure on taxation to fund the project.

Ritchie said that the BMRA can have an impact. Ritchie said that the BMRA recommended that the Town consider other policing contract options, which has happened and this is an example of the influence of the BMRA. Ritchie said that the BMRA would like to grow and have representation from all members of the community. Ritchie added that the BMRA would like to have a representative from the Agricultural Advisory Committee on the board.

Jim asked Ritchie if he has a clear understanding of the Town budgeting process and how the financing works. Ritchie said he and other members of the BMRA understand Municipal finances, and that for example, that the Town may be double taxing individuals that construct houses and then have to pay to connect to the system. Rod said that these charges fund reserves to replace infrastructure in the future. Lynn added that the transient nature of the population can be stressful on the Town infrastructure such as the sewer system and it needs to be adequately funded. James asked about the BMRA annual general meeting and what the guest speaker Lance Thurston, Grey County CAO will be talking about. Ritchie said that the BMRA is going ask Lance what the Town receives for their tax dollars. James asked how often the BMRA board meets. Ritchie said approximately 6 times per year. James thanked Ritchie for speaking to the Committee.

## **B.2 Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority - Strategic Plan Discussion**

James asked Jacquie to provide an overview of the workshop that she attended and asked her what she hoped to achieve. Jacquie said that she attended a workshop hosted by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) that was focused on soliciting feedback from stakeholders and partners on the strategic plan they are developing. Jacquie said that the workshop had many developers, tourism and environmental stakeholders. Jacquie said that there was limited representation from the farming community and that agricultural community needs to have a voice in the plan development. Jacquie said that there were many items discussed and the NVCA does not seem to understand the regulations and efforts that farmers currently undertake regarding environmental stewardship. Jacquie added that it is good that the NVCA are requesting input on the plan.

James asked the Committee how it should proceed. Jacquie said that the Committee could outline what farmers are currently doing to inform the NVCA. James asked if OMAFRA has a position or feedback that the Committee could potentially support. Jacquie said there were some issues of concern from an agricultural perspective such as charging for water use. Sid noted that the MOE governs the water taking permits and that the NVCA should be aware of that.

Rod asked when the comments had to be submitted. Jacquie said that the NVCA wishes to have a completed plan by September, but the comments for this draft are due April 17. Lynn asked which Councillor sits on the NVCA board. Jacquie said that Gail Ardiel is the representative. Jim referred to the OFA guiding principles and thought that it could be used as a basis for comment to the NVCA. John said that Brian Gilroy would be a good source of information and could provide some feedback.

Grant said that there are so many things that farmers do and it does not seem reflected in the draft strategy.

James said that the Committee could utilize the OFA guiding principles and other resources to develop feedback. James asked Jacquie if she would like to draft a letter. Jacquie agreed and asked that the Committee provide some feedback on the different goals outlined in the draft strategy. The Committee discussed some of the goals. John noted that there is much duplication with this strategy and the other agencies. Sid suggested that the NVCA should research and study what is already been done and that it seems like they do not have a good understanding. James said that a letter of support could outline what actions farmers already take in the watershed, including the environmental farm plan, nutrient management, water-taking permits and so on. John suggested that the letter commend the NVCA on their efforts but that they need to investigate the actions already being taken. Jim offered to assist Jacquie to draft the letter and will circulate to the Committee for review and comment.

### **B.3 Farm Tour**

Adam said that he would like to establish a date for the farm tour and discuss which farms should be included. The Committee agreed on June 5. The Committee felt that there should be a cross section of farms on the tour. The Committee suggested some potential stops. Adam said that he would work with James to finalize the plans.

### **B.4 Official Plan (OP) Review**

Adam said that once the OP draft has been released he will schedule a meeting with the Committee. Adam added that a sub-group comprised of James, Rod and Grant will review the speciality agriculture sections of the OP. John asked if he could be involved in the sub-group which was approved by the Committee. James asked when the OP will be released, Adam said the exact date is not known, but in the near future.

### **C.1 Correspondence - Day of the Honey Bee**

Al said that the Ontario Bee Keeping Association supports this notion. Al said that he likes the idea but does not necessarily want to burden the Town with anything associated with the proclamation. James said that Council could support the proclamation only.

#### **Al moved a motion:**

**“THAT Council proclaim May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013 as the fourth annual “Day of the Honey Bee,” and that this proclamation be issued in perpetuity” John seconded the motion and it was carried by the Committee.**

## **C. Next Meeting Date**

- Tuesday June 18, 2013. 7:00 – 9:00 (Tentative)

## **D. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm