

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HORTON

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

MARCH 15, 2006

There was a special Council Meeting held in the Municipal Council Chambers on Wednesday March 15, 2006. Present were Deputy Reeve Bob Hall and Councillors Dave Bennett, Don Eady and Bob Kingsbury. Reeve Johnston was away on vacation. Deputy Reeve Hall presided.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Reeve Hall called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There was no declaration of pecuniary interest.

3. REPLACE HEAD OF COUNCIL IN ABSENCE OF REEVE & DEPUTY REEVE

The CAO/Clerk noted that Reeve Johnston is on vacation now and Deputy Reeve Hall will be leaving for a short vacation tomorrow, he asked who would be the acting Reeve in their absence?

Moved by Bob Kingsbury

Resolution No. 06-109

Seconded by Don Eady

That Councillor Dave Bennett be appointed as acting Head of Council while the Reeve and Deputy Reeve are away on vacation between March 16 and March 21, 2006.

Carried.

Councillor Bennett, as a member of the Joint Municipal Nutrient Management Committee, noted there is a meeting March 17, 2006 in Admaston and Reeve Johnston who is also appointed to that Committee, will be absent, he asked if another member of Council would be willing to attend? Councillor Kingsbury said he would attend with Councillor Bennett.

4. COUNCILLOR EADY'S REPORT ON HORTON PUBLIC SCHOOL PURCHASE

Councillor Eady said he had expressed an interest to in purchasing the property last year. The Municipal Clerk wrote to the School Board asking if the Township could purchase the property and the price. Arrangements were made with the School Board to view the school, he and Councillor Bennett attended.

Following this meeting he realized that there was an opportunity to relocate the Municipal Office in part of the school building, as it would greatly increase the municipal office space. He spoke with Reeve Johnston, who was initially interested, about this possibility, but later changed his support. He outlined several opportunities that may be available with Ontario Provincial Police and Ontario Hydro, who now hold several meetings each week at the Renfrew Inn. He has no confirmation that they would be interested at this time.

The property is large enough that we can add recreation to this Site if we wished. The outdoor rink is still there as well as a soccer field that the school put it. We would have to wait until the snow melted to see what condition the field is in. He stated that at the current Community Centre Site our space is limited. We purchased six acres, but we would only have room for one other major activity i.e. a soccer field or arena. We only have 120 feet on the left side of the property to develop. There is flat rock under the soil on this corner of the property.

Reeve Johnston suggested that he contact Gordie MacMillan of the Second Ice Pad group in Renfrew, who are looking for a location for an arena, so he invited them to tour the school facility on March 9, 2006 when Council and the office staff were present. In the meantime all Council received an e-mail from Deputy Reeve Hall who had learned of an opportunity for a private company that sets up and operates arenas. This company is putting one up in Beckwith Township and it is called Community and Rink Factory. The Company owns and manages the facility. Every time the ice is rented, \$9.00 per hour comes to the Township. He estimated that an arena in Horton could be used 30 weeks per year at \$60.00 per hour would bring \$16,200 in rink revenue to the Municipality.

Councillor Eady has received information from the School Board that the heating and hydro costs for the school year September 2004 to August 31, 2005 were \$16,209. He noted that there is a flat roof on the school which could be a concern. He knows of a price of \$5.00 per square foot to repair flat roofs. Money would have to be put into reserve from the rent income for future repairs to the roof.

The Ross-Mineview school is up for sale by the School Board, it contains 17,320 square feet listing for \$175,000. The school appraisal came in at about \$10 per square foot which would put the Horton School at \$95,000 listing price if it went on the market.

Ross Peever has provided a quote to him on what the school would be worth and he estimates \$140,000 to \$175,000 and the Municipal Office would be worth \$68,000. If the school sold for \$100,000 Horton's share of the commercial tax would be \$713 a year. The current municipal office contains about 1,000 square feet. An estimate from a contractor was that it would be \$120 - \$125 per square foot to add to this building. A 3,000 square foot new building, which would equal the size of the area available in a school would cost between \$200,000 to \$250,000. He estimated that it would need \$100,000 of upgrades to put the building into condition for the municipal office. We could recoup \$60,000 of that from the sale of the Municipal Office, leaving \$40,000 to be raised. He does not have any prices from contractors.

Councillor Eady suggested that this is a once in a life time opportunity and we should take the four weeks remaining before the April 15, 2006 deadline and use it to put a plan together. He is concerned that he has been on Council for five and a half years and has not seen any Council action for children - youth is our future.

Councillor Bennett said he did not have a problem with purchasing the school if we put a plan together, however he does not want to decentralize the office and recreational facilities. If there are other options that we can put together, to cover the cost of purchasing and developing, he would be supportive. He believes that we will have to spend money to purchase additional land at the present Community Centre site to do what we want to do there. He asked if Mr. Norman Eady would be willing to sell us more land? Is the Christian School interested in using part of the Horton Public School? The zoning is CF - this would have to be changed to general commercial if we were going to entertain commercial activity. He asked if the floor tiles in the school contained asbestos? Councillor Eady said he has checked into this - if they are they do not have to be removed, but they have to be well sealed.

Councillor Bennett estimated that if the Township put on an addition to this building it would have to contain 800 square feet. Construction costs would be \$78,000 which would include a Council Chamber, purchasing property, addition to the parking lot, and sewage pump for septic. Councillor Eady said other municipalities do not seem to have the same concern with centralization - departments are spread throughout the municipality. Maybe we should contact other municipalities to see if they have concerns.

Councillor Eady said he had spoken with Jim Ferguson, of our Emergency Measures Organization, who would support a central location. If we had a new office site more space would be available for staff, storage and there would always be enough space for the long term, 800 square feet added to this building would be a band aid solution. He added that he does not believe that we have three phase hydro at the current Community Centre Site. If we wanted to add an arena the school has it now.

Councillor Kingsbury said that before he came on Council he was not 100 per cent in favor of the new Community Centre location but as chair he has a different view. He sees the Community Centre as a point for drawing people. If you take some of the recreation to the school he feels this is like taking the shoes out from him before he starts the race, as we have just started to look at alternatives. He suggested expansion should be at the current site. He realizes that either way will cost money. The community is used to the central location for the office complex, he notes that Rod Eady, Public Works Superintendent, comes to the municipal office to photo copy etc and this would be difficult with an off-site location. He would support a business plan to use the building for something other than an office.

Deputy Reeve Hall said that he believes this is at least a one year project, there is no way we can make a decision by April 15, 2006. The volunteers on the Recreation Committee are just starting to look at other recreation requirements. We would need time to sign leases with potential tenants of the school.

Council debated the issue further - in the end Councillor Eady asked the Council members to join him in researching to see if there was any possibility of acquiring the Horton School and using it for the betterment of the Township. Councillor Kingsbury agreed to speak with Norman Eady to see what the additional land purchase opportunities would be. Councillor Bennett agreed to meet with Councillor Eady to work on costs of renovating the school for rental and to establish a rental rate.

Council agreed that this discussion would continue with Reeve Johnston present at the March 30, 2006 Finance Committee meeting.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

6. CONFIRMING RESOLUTION

Moved by Bob Kingsbury
Seconded by Dave Bennett

Resolution No. 06-110

That the Council pass this Confirming resolution to validate any action or directions given during the open portion of this Council Meeting which are minor in nature and which were not set out in By-law or resolution.

Carried.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Bob Kingsbury
Seconded by Don Eady

Resolution No. 06-111

That this Special Council Meeting be adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Deputy Reeve Hall

CAO/Clerk