

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HORTON

PUBLIC MEETING

TO CONSIDER INCREASED BUILDING PERMIT FEES

AND

ADOPTION OF ANNUAL BUDGET

June 19, 2007

There was a Public Meeting held following the Tipping Fee Public Meeting on Tuesday June 19, 2007 in the Horton Community Centre. All members of Council were present.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Johnston called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m.

2. INCREASED BUILDING PERMIT PROPOSAL

The CAO/Clerk reported that in preparing the Building Department Budget there was evidence of a deficit in the Building Permit Fees. As Building Permit Fees have not been changed in Horton since 1990 he requested Council authorize a survey of neighbouring municipalities for comparison. Council authorized this. A handout tonight shows the current Horton rate with neighbouring municipalities and also the proposed rate the Council recommended after receiving this information.

Mayor Johnston added as the revenue did not cover the expenses, it resulted in all ratepayers covering some of the cost of the Department rather than builders and their building permit fees covering the cost.

The public discussed the current Township Lot Development Charge of \$1,000, and compared it to surrounding municipalities.

3. DRAFT MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Deputy Mayor Hall, Chair of Finance Committee presented the Draft 2007 Municipal Budget which included a Report to Council from Finance Committee, the Reserve Budget, the Capital Budget, a comparison of taxation required showing differences between 2006 and 2007 budgets and the budget by Department.

4. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Dave Brown questioned what the Tile Drain was under general government? This was explained to him.

Councillor Eady presented history on Reserve Funds, noting that we now have Reserves to cover capital equipment purchases, large trucks, $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck etc, and we are working towards increasing these funds.

Deputy Mayor Hall noted that a neighbouring municipality had a large tax increase this year because they did not have reserves, while in Horton we have tried to even the tax rate out each year to ensure that there are no spikes.

Dave Brown asked about the \$50,000 asphalt fund? Councillor Eady explained the Asphalt Reserve Fund was set up to ensure that there was some work towards hard surfacing every year, monies came from the Lot Development Charge Fund, reduced Reserve Account and the Public Works Budget.

Bob Barker questioned the Library Agreement which was to be increased each year. Mayor Johnston said that historically we have given the Renfrew Library the grant of \$5,000. They have asked for an additional \$5,000 this year, an additional \$10,000 in 2008 and an additional \$15,000 in 2009. However, we have only signed a contract for 2007 with a \$5,000 increase as Council Members agreed that we were not paying our share.

Bob Barker suggested we take this money and put it into computer access at the Community Centre instead of having people use the computers at the Renfrew Library.

Council discussed the statistics provided by the Library Board. Robert E. Johnston asked what is the process if he wants to borrow a book at the Library? The group discussed the useage of the Renfrew Library Service. Bob Barker said the extra \$5,000 would be better used to offset recreation user fee.

Deputy Mayor Hall invited everyone to call if they had a question after reviewing the Budget material.

5. COUNCIL MEMBERS COMMENTS

Councillor Bennett said that he believes there is a need for more funds to be put into infrastructure. It is better to raise \$20 this year than having to raise \$50 next year. At the very last minute \$32,000 was chopped from the Public Works Budget and it will cost more than \$50,000 next year to cover this, he estimates. He supports financing construction projects over time. Mayor Johnston said Council Members vote the way they feel, and he supports financing construction projects.

Deputy Mayor Hall said at the last Finance Committee Meeting \$32,000 was chopped from Public Works but at the meeting before Waste Management and Recreation had funds chopped. The Public Works Budget represents approximately 60% of the overall budget. Choices have to be made to cover the diverse needs of the ratepayers. There will never be enough money to cover costs of infrastructure.

Councillor Kingsbury said he called for a slowdown of increases in the Budget this year. He reviewed the increases and decreases by Department. He will not support this Budget as he was looking for a budget increase in the mid 3.5% range. He is concerned for the elderly ratepayer who has no pension increase to cover the increase in taxes. He suggested infrastructure projects could be spread out over several years to cover their costs.

Davud Brown said that he sees both sides of this issue but informed the Committee that last Fall that while driving on Humphries Road he was stuck in the middle of the road – that should not be.

Councillor Bennett said that the cost of construction is increasing far beyond the inflation rate, and we are trying to set a budget set on inflation rates. This year the Budget had sufficient funds to almost complete the Goshen Road construction and hard surface program, however with the cut the hard surface program had to be removed. He added that he does not know how we are going to fund infrastructure in the future. We need grants, we have tried and were unsuccessful and we have to examine financing costs.

Earl Newberry said a big problem with roads is that there is no bottom to carry the big truckloads and we need to set up vehicle weight limits like half loads. Councillor Kingsbury said that we discussed this at a Public Meeting on Lime Kiln Road and a trucker brought his lawyer and threatened to sue the Township if we did this, as we are interfering with their livelihood.

Councillor Eady says he needs to see an overall plan on why we need to borrow money to carry out infrastructure programs. He needs to know these facts and figures. If Public Works can prepare a case he can probably support it.

Being no further discussion or comments Mayor Johnston called for adjournment.

Moved by Bob Kingsbury, seconded by Bob Hall
That this meeting being adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Carried.

Public Meeting – Building Permit Fees & Budget
June 19, 2007