

Mayor's Blog – October 21, 2020

There have been zero active COVID-19 cases in Zorra for months, but there are 9 active cases in Oxford at the time of writing. Remember that all the controls recommended are to REDUCE, not ELIMINATE transmission. Zorra Staff continue to consult regularly with Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) about how to safely operate and deliver services.

On October 2nd, a new restructured deal was finalized for the former Maple Leaf Foods Inc. site in Thamesford. It is the same land, and the same development, in the same way, but now in three stages, for more money. The first portion of land includes two existing industrial processing plants, and a 2-acre parcel of land along Middleton Street for \$2,000,000. As part of the agreement of purchase and sale, Kingwood has also agreed to purchase the remaining 112 acres over two phases with the second deal to close in mid-2021 and the third deal to close in mid-2022. The combined sale price is \$7,000,000. Kingwood is proposing to construct 178 single-detached dwellings, 203 townhome units, 75 bungalow condominium townhomes and 350 low rise apartment units. In addition, Kingwood is also proposing to construct 9,000 square metres of commercial space. The next step is for the new owner to make a formal planning application and then building permits and spring construction!

In the ongoing fight for a better say for our communities in the future our schools, at it's September 28th meeting the Thames Valley District School Board's (TVDSB) Rural Education Task Force (RETF) passed my Motion to recommend that the Board ask the Ministry of Education (MOE) to maintain and enhance the Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF), maintain the moratorium on school consolidations and closures for the schools that qualify for the RNEF (all Zorra schools), strengthen and promote local planning conversations among school boards, municipalities and other relevant local partners to ensure ongoing communication. And ask the MOE to develop policies for capacity planning and pupil accommodation reviews that formally recognize the importance and value to the community of rural and single school community schools. This was passed by the Board at its October 13th meeting.

Finally, but most importantly, for Local Government Week Zorra Council heard presentations from Zorra Highland Park Public School on inspirational sidewalk messages, a leash free dog park proposal, and a clothing donation rack proposal. Council was very impressed and asked staff to report back on the feasibility of all three!

Please be calm, be kind, be safe, and do your part.

As always, please feel free to contact me on any issue:

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