

2014-2018

Council Achievements



Mayor Margaret Lupton

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Forbes

Ward 2 Councillor Marie Keasey

Ward 3 Councillor Marcus Ryan

Ward 4 Councillor Doug Matheson



OUR BRAND

- We take great pride in our exceptional rural lifestyle in Zorra Township, made possible by our highly engaged community and government.
- Zorra Township's location allows residents and businesses to enjoy a small village atmosphere with abundant green space, easy and fast access to big city amenities and large consumer markets.
- Zorra is highly progressive, environmentally conscious, economically strong and prosperous.
- Our highly productive rural land provides a solid foundation for successful and varied agriculture and food production in Zorra Township.

We strive to make Zorra better by doing our part. In Zorra, we take great pride in maintaining our exceptional rural lifestyle, made possible by our highly engaged community and government. Our location allows residents and businesses to enjoy a small village atmosphere with abundant green space, easy and fast access to big city amenities and large consumer markets. Zorra is progressive, environmentally conscious, economically strong and prosperous. Our highly productive rural land provides a solid foundation for successful and varied agriculture and food production. In Zorra Township, we care.



Message from Mayor Lupton and Council



As this term of Council draws to a close, it is time to reflect and recognize the achievements accomplished during the 2014 –

2018 term of Council. This has been a very rewarding term and with the genuine cooperation of all members of Council has allowed us to oversee many successful projects and undertakings.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the assistance of our dedicated and hard-working staff. The level of cooperation and the single-mindedness of goal achievement between Council and Township staff is one that we can all be proud of. Council would also like to recognize the invaluable contributions from all of our volunteers, Committee members and members of the public who have helped shape our community. Your participation in Township events, public meetings and open houses provides community input that we need to help guide Council in its decision-making process. We could not have accomplished as much as we did without your help.

Zorra remains one the best places to live and raise a family because our community works together to achieve our goals. From our community groups and businesses, to local schools, libraries, hockey arenas and community centres, Zorra residents are deeply committed to making our community a more livable place for everyone.

This was reflected in the adoption of our community based Strategic Plan in 2015. The values and goals of our community were captured in a document that set the focus on making a Zorra a more sustainable, liveable community. Along with being sustainable, the community needed to balance economic growth, fiscal responsibility and environmental awareness. Initiatives throughout the Plan also focused on cultivating partnerships, engaging the community, excelling in service delivery and incorporating green principles in decision-making. Engagement of our young people and seniors will continue to be a priority for the next term of Council. We need to focus on our future while remaining true to our past.

We are proud of our accomplishments and “*doing our part*” to help Zorra remain such a wonderful community.

On behalf of your 2014 – 2018 Zorra Township Council, we thank you.

Mayor Margaret Lupton

Ward 1 Councillor
Ron Forbes

Ward 2 Councillor
Marie Keasey

Ward 3 Councillor
Marcus Ryan

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2015-2018 Strategic Plan

Our Vision

"A vibrant, prosperous, engaged and environmentally conscious community that evokes pride in residents for its accomplishments and continuing resilience as it forges the future"

Our Mission

"The Zorra team of elected officials, staff and volunteers works together responsibly and transparently to realize and sustain the community's vision."

Our Values

Trust - The trust between community members is what makes Zorra an inclusive community. Community trust is built through sensible planning, reliable services and public engagement.

Respect - The residents of Zorra come from diverse backgrounds. It is through respect for the varied backgrounds and experiences that common ground can be achieved.

Innovation - Zorra must be a community which embraces change. It must remain open to all ideas to become a flexible, progressive municipality which can successfully anticipate and adapt to changing environments.

Accountability - Council and staff must be accountable to Zorra residents and be responsible for actions and inactions.

Teamwork - We will work cooperatively at all levels of the organization and community to accomplish the Township's objectives and to provide our residents with quality service.

Transparency - We will conduct all affairs for the Township openly and with complete transparency, except where prohibited by law.

Our Goals

We are a **vibrant community** that values our uniqueness, creativity and takes pride in calling Zorra home.

We are a **prosperous community** that provides opportunities to work and shop in our community and to grow in a sustainable manner.

We are an **engaged community** that values all members and actively encourages involvement, engagement, openness and transparency.

We are an **environmentally conscious community** that are good stewards of our natural environment and we protect our environment by valuing our natural assets and using our resources wisely.



New Council, New Visions

Shortly after the 2014 Election, Council and Staff were asked to prepare a list of ideas, goals, objectives, projects, buildings, etc. they would like to see accomplished over the term of this Council. The ideas and thoughts were wide-ranging and provided valuable input on the collective vision from Council and Staff on the future of the Township. Members of the public were also asked for input on what they would like to see accomplished over the term of Council.

In review of the goals and objectives, it became clear that Township Council was focused on long-term strategic planning. The discussion and debate that took place mimicked a typical strategic planning process without the formality or substantive public input. At that point, Council decided it was the appropriate time to consider enshrining a mission statement, vision and key principles and then refine specific goals to set the direction of the Township in its day to day operations. A set of specific strategic objectives were then developed which underwent public consultation to provide assistance to Council in defining a mission statement, vision and key principles.

What started out as a goal setting exercise morphed into a community based strategic plan that established a vision, mission, values and goals for the Township of Zorra.

The mission is for Zorra to be "A vibrant, prosperous, engaged and environmentally conscious community that evokes pride in residents for its accomplishments and continuing resilience as it forges the future".

For the remainder of this term, key initiatives and undertakings were tested against the Strategic Plan to ensure what was being

proposed met the spirit and intent of the Plan.

This also led to Council undertaking a branding exercise to build upon the excellent work that led the creation of the Strategic Plan. In 2017, Zorra Township Council decided that a branding exercise was necessary in Zorra. The goals were to establish Zorra Township as a desirable destination for possible residents and visitors and to strengthen and update visual identity.

As part of this exercise, the Township identified the following needs:

- New tag line (new positioning line)
- Communications standards guide
- Community entrance signs
- Promotional items

Working closely with Karen Sample and her team at 31st Line Strategic Communications, the new brand was created and was officially launched at the December 19, 2017 Council meeting, with several community and staff members present.

After a successful launch the brand has taken off with Council, staff and the public embracing our new brand. In 2018 the Township installed 14 new gateway signs to welcome visitors to Zorra.





Renewing our Infrastructure

A vital element of maintaining and enhancing the community we live in is to ensure that critical infrastructure is not only maintained, but also improved. Zorra Township's book of assets includes, roads, bridges, storm sewers, arenas, fire stations, community centres and other public facilities. The net book value of all these Township assets is approximately \$41.5 million dollars.

In order to wisely manage these assets, Council and staff prepared a financial strategy to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated on an annual basis for capital spending. This multi-year capital forecasting allows for strategic planning to wisely manage our infrastructure.

Thamesford Fire Station



The first meeting of the 2014 – 2018 term, saw a proposal to proceed with tendering of a new Thamesford Fire Station. Although, the background work had been carried out by the previous Council, it was the current Council that had the final decision to proceed with tendering of the project. After a careful and thorough review of the project, a contract was awarded on April 21, 2015 to Sierra Construction in the amount of \$1,984,291 and the total estimated project cost was \$2,119,535. The total project final cost was \$2,155,873 or 1.93% over estimate.

The new facility acts as the Township's emergency management operations centre

and while not considered LEED Certified, is extremely energy efficient. This building will serve the needs of the community for generations to come.

Embro Town Hall Lift

The Township, in partnership with Thistle Theatre made an application for funding under the Ontario 150 Grant Program to install a lift at Embro Town Hall and for improvements to washroom facilities. This project was spearheaded by Wendy Marshall and she worked closely with Director of Finance, Maureen Simmons and former Recreation and Facilities Manager, Doug Mills to see this project come to fruition.

The project received a \$160,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to help offset project costs of \$220,000.



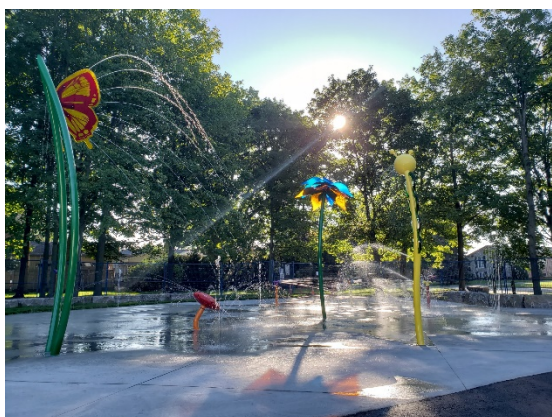


Renewing our Infrastructure

Thamesford Spray Pad and Skateboard Park

What started out as a vision for a few Thamesford and area residents three years ago, turned into reality a few short weeks ago with the opening of Thamesford Spray Pad and Skate Board Park. Committee Chair, Don Weir and members, Wendi Jackson, Bronwen Metcalf, Amanda Breen-Cowan, Andrew McClure, Councillor Marie Keasey and staff resource, Stephanie Starchuck worked tirelessly to see this project come to fruition. Matthew Paul, By-law Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector, was the project manager and helped this project meet deadlines and budget. With the support of Council in the form of a \$150,000 contribution to the project, the Committee worked diligently to secure a \$150,000 Ontario Trillium Grant and \$50,000 donations from the Thamesford Lions Club, Vito Frijia of Southside Construction and Bill Loyens/Vito Frijia of Toil Development Inc. In addition, the Thamesford and area community contributed almost \$110,000 in corporate and private donations.

Hogg Construction of Thamesford recently completed construction of this \$525,000 project.



Council Chamber Renewal

In order to improve accessibility for members of the public attending Council meetings, a new layout with enhanced audio visual capabilities was completed in 2018. Council agendas and supporting documents are readily accessible from all areas of the Council Chamber.



Embro Soccer Pitch

The Township was approached by representatives from various soccer associations in Embro with a proposal to construct a full-sized dedicated soccer pitch on the grounds of Embro Zorra Community Centre.

In coordination with Zorra's Recreation and Facilities Department a two-year project saw a fully irrigated regulation sized soccer pitch created at the south-east corner of the grounds. The addition of this pitch will allow for greater flexibility in the use of grounds for Embro Fair, Weinerfest and possibly Embro Highland Games. Wayne and Carol Fraser donated material for this project from a residential subdivision in Embro.

Developing Responsibly

Rooftop Solar Projects

The Township was approached by EARTH Corporation to determine if the Township was interested in partnering for the installation of rooftop solar panels at Thamesford District Recreation Centre and Embro Zorra Community Centre. EARTH applied for these projects under the Feed In Tariff 4 program under the Green Energy Act. EARTH was awarded the contracts and presented a proposal to Council to rent space from the municipality for a period of 20 years in return for annual rent payments of \$17,000.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The Workplace Electric Vehicle Charging Incentive Program (WEVCIP) was announced in early 2018 to support employers that wish to provide Level 2 electric vehicle chargers for their employees or workplace tenants by providing 80 per cent of the initial cost, up to \$7,500 per charging space. The Township submitted an application for two charging units at the Municipal Office as this facility was the only one that met the criteria of having 10 employees at a work site location. The Township was advised the application was approved for the installation of two charging stations at the Municipal Office. Installation took place early in 2018 and both stations



have seen considerable use since they were installed.

Smart Growth

How Zorra grows and develops as a community is as important as what is built. Council and staff carefully consider development options and engage with residents and businesses to ensure Zorra continues to be a place where everyone has an opportunity to thrive.

Sustainable and smart growth are vitally important to the overall health and well being of our community and it is imperative that it be well planned. Thamesford and Embro are both designated as growth communities due to being serviced by municipal water and municipal sanitary sewage. Millions of dollars has been invested by the County of Oxford and the Township of Zorra on these municipal services and in order to minimize the amount of productive farmland lost for development purposes, compact and dense growth is desired. Council and County planning staff carefully considered subdivision applications in Embro and Thamesford and worked with the respective developers to densify growth to maximize land use. Over this term of Council there has been a total of 127 new houses constructed Township wide with the majority being built in Thamesford and Embro.

Protecting Farmland

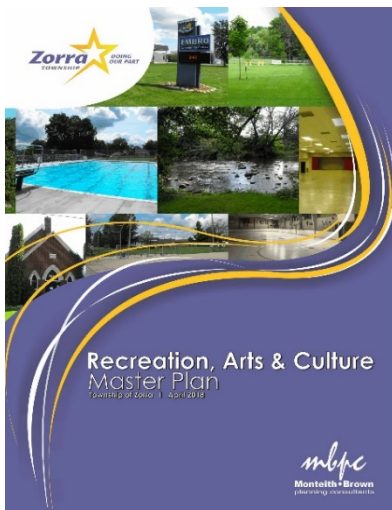
This Council took a firm approach to a boundary adjustment with the Town of Ingersoll. The proposal was rejected by Council until such time as the needs can be justified and sustainable development practices are implemented. Council also strongly opposed the province's proposal for a high-speed rail corridor in Zorra Township.

Dynamic, Thriving and Strong

During this term of Council, there were many other initiatives and projects that took place to make Zorra a more dynamic, vital and thriving community. Many were minor in nature, but when grouped together all helped make Zorra a stronger community.

Recreation, Arts & Culture Master Plan

In 2017, Council authorized the preparation of a Recreation, Arts & Culture Master Plan.



The Master Plan process was all encompassing and many user groups and residents were able to participate during its preparation and the consultation

phase. The result of this, is a document that sets the following strategic directions:

Focus on Healthy Communities

Encourage active lifestyles, public engagement, and strong communities.

Work Together

Build capacity through continuous staff development, supporting volunteers, and seeking community partners in the delivery of parks, recreation, arts, and culture services.

Promote Awareness of Opportunities

Promote the coordinated communication of parks, recreation, arts, and culture opportunities and facilitate the sharing of information among community partners.

Keep Facilities Relevant

Commit to a high standard of facility maintenance and management, and update and renew aging facilities, as necessary, in coordination with facility users.

Enhance Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails

Be stewards of parks, open spaces, and trails to ensure that current and future generations are able to experience Zorra's natural environment.

Along with these strategic directions the report also contained 54 specific recommendations that will require significant resources over the next 10 years.

Recreation Enhancements

The Recreation and Facilities Department underwent significant changes during this past term. It was identified by Council that a more active role in program development was required in order to provide recreation activities outside of organized sports. Stephanie Starchuck was hired as the Recreation and Facilities Program Coordinator to help implement a programming component. New programs include, a summer day camp and PD day camps, as well as partnering with schools and other agencies to provide programming.

More recently, Council authorized implementation of new software to make renting our halls, arenas and sports fields easier and readily accessible for all residents.

Dynamic, Thriving and Strong

Youth Engagement

Local Government Week was developed to celebrate the key role that Ontario local governments play in helping to define the character, priorities, amenities and physical make-up of communities. Council took the initiative to hold regular Council meetings at our local schools to help celebrate Local Government Week. This allowed classes to not only attend a Council meeting but to present projects they feel would help benefit our residents. Several of these requests have been acted upon and has helped in letting students know that their voices matter. Council has also invited classes to attend meetings at the Municipal Office when school visits were not possible. School buses were provided by the Township for this as well as to plant wildflowers at the Municipal Office.



Historical Signs

In order to preserve our past, Council undertook a project to sign many of our historic villages and hamlets. As you drive the Township you will see many of these blue and yellow signs that pay homage to our past.

Our collection of history books from East Nissouri, North Oxford and Embro and West Zorra tell the tale of these historic places.

Senior and Volunteer Recognition

With busy lives, it can be hard to find time to volunteer. However, the benefits of volunteering are enormous to you, your family, and your community. We rely heavily on volunteers in all aspects of the municipality and our many groups and organizations that help bind us as one. To recognize the importance of our volunteers and also to acknowledge the vital role seniors play, and have played in developing our community, Council now hosts an annual volunteer breakfast. This annual event has grown year over year and is one small way that we can say thanks to our many volunteers and to our wonderful seniors.

