

December 14, 2021

As I write this on December 14th there are 4 active COVID-19 cases in Zorra, 106 in Oxford, and 229 in Southwestern Public Health as a whole. The Township of Zorra has adopted a policy requiring that all members of Council, staff, and Committees be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This policy is in place now, and all Zorra staff will be vaccinated by January.

On November 27 the Embro Zorra Agricultural Society put on an amazing parade. Perfect weather for it! Thanks so much Embro Zorra Agricultural Society and the entire Embro community who donated non-perishables for the Food Bank.

On November 29 there was an excellent turnout and even better discussion at the meeting of the TVDSB Rural Education Task Force. Unfortunately, neither of the Oxford Trustees attended to hear residents discuss the importance of our schools in our communities.

On December 8th Oxford County Council passed a resolution to finalize the 2022 budget. The inflation rate in Ontario was 4.9 per cent to October 2021. Right now, the proposed \$66.3 million tax levy is a 4.0% increase from 2021, so 0.8% less than inflation, and some of that will be offset by growth. This includes an additional \$1.5 million dollars to Human Services for housing. In Oxford County there are currently 2500 people on a waitlist for Affordable Housing. There will be a new Housing Strategy to identify gaps and necessary action to meet short and long term needs. This will result in an additional 66 affordable units in Oxford during 2022. We will also be lobbying the Provincial and Federal Governments for their share of housing funding as this is not just an Oxford problem. However, I know that several Councillors are bringing motions forward to the January meeting to try to change the budget, so I'm not yet able to accurately tell you the tax bill impact. Zorra budget will begin in January, and the Province sets the education rate. The Province has again delayed the MPAC property assessment. Once all that is done, then we will know the final impacts on your property tax bill.

Happy holidays!
Merry Christmas!
Happy solstice!
Happy Pongal!
Happy Kwanza!
All of those. And any I've missed!

It's the shortest darkest day of the year, and we don't all celebrate it the same way, just be grateful someone wished you well!

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