

December 15, 2022

Both Zorra and Oxford have begun their budget processes intending to complete them in January. Please watch for updates on the processes as the budgets set municipal service levels and property taxes for the next year. All the budget documents considered by Councils are available on the respective websites.

Bills 23 & 39 continue to be the largest issue in municipal government in Ontario. Bill 23 the “Mores Homes Built Faster” and Bill 39 the “Better Municipal Government Act” have both now been passed.

A report from Oxford County staff (in partnership with area municipalities such as Zorra) conservatively estimates the cost to Oxford residents at \$10.5M over 10 years in direct costs, and an ongoing \$288,500 per year starting in 2024 for additional staff to do the ongoing work required by Bill 23. These changes that were not asked for, we were not consulted on, and will not result in more homes faster, will translate into either increased property taxes or cuts to services.

Bill 39 gives the Province the authority to appoint mayors and give those mayors the power to pass some bylaws with only one third of council support. This is not democratic. In many cases the changes being made are to address issues in the greater Toronto area and are either irrelevant or counterproductive in Oxford.

As Oxford County Warden and Zorra Township Mayor, I met with Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman to express our very strong opposition to both bills.

I have written a public letter, co-signed by all Oxford Mayors, to Premier Ford outlining our opposition and concerns and asking that the Province pay the bill for the cost of their legislation, and exclude Oxford from the appointment of mayors and the ability to pass bylaws with one third of Council support.

Your local government democracy and accountability are threatened. Please contact your MPP:

erniehardemanmpp.com

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

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