

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	July 25, 2019
Subject / Report No:	County Official Plan Amendment 42-10-480-OPA-147 / Report PDR-CW-33-19
Title:	Georgian Heights School-Church Official Plan Amendment Merit Report
Prepared by:	Scott Taylor
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	Municipality of Meaford
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee of the Whole as presented as per Resolution <i>CW162-19</i> ; Endorsed by County Council on August 8, 2019 as per Resolution <i>CC63-19</i> .

Recommendation

1. That Report PDR-CW-33-19 regarding a proposed County Official Plan Amendment be received; and
2. That the proposal proceeds to a public meeting to consider an amendment to the County of Grey Official Plan on lands designated 'Agricultural' and 'Hazard Lands', to permit a school and church in a shared facility for the lands described as Part Lot 14, Parts 1, 4 & 5, 16R-11185, Concession 8, geographic Township of St. Vincent, in the Municipality of Meaford, provided the Municipality is prepared to hold a joint public meeting in consideration of the necessary local amendment requirements.

Executive Summary

A proposed County Official Plan Amendment application (42-10-480-OPA-147) has been submitted to amend the Agricultural policies, to permit a private school and church in a shared building. County Agricultural policies permit some institutional uses, but do not currently permit this use on the subject lands. County Official Plan policies permit this type of institutional use where the users' primary mode of transportation is horse drawn vehicles, but that is not the case for this school-church proposal. This amendment also requires an official plan amendment and zoning amendment from the Municipality of Meaford.

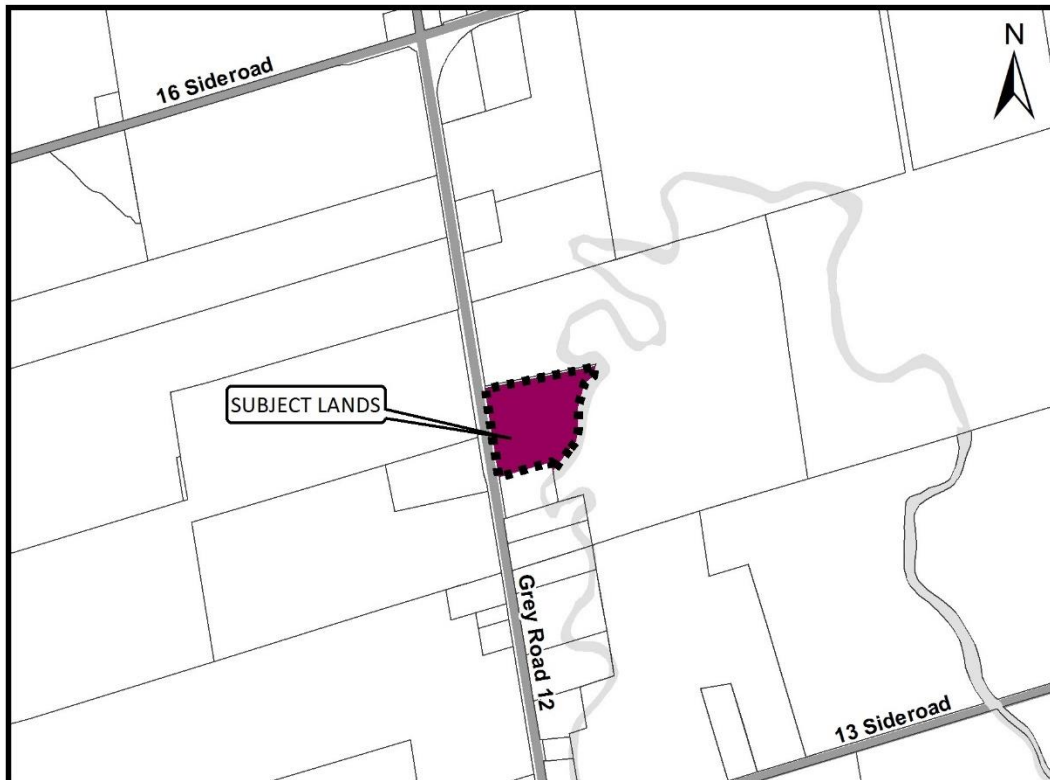
Background and Discussion

The County has received an application to amend the County's Official Plan to permit a private school/church in a one-storey building on-site. The amendment would allow exemption to the 'Agricultural' policies to consider an institutional use, whose users do not primarily rely on horse drawn vehicles.

The subject lands are approximately 4 hectares in size and are located on Grey Road 12, south of Highway 26. The Bighead River forms the rear property boundary of the subject lands. This development is proposed to be serviced via private well and septic system.

The proposed development also requires an amendment to Municipality of Meaford Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

The subject lands are located at Part Lot 14, Parts 1, 4 & 5, 16R-11185, Concession 8, geographic Township of St. Vincent, Municipality of Meaford. Map 1 shows the subject lands and surrounding area, while Figure 1 shows a rendering of the proposed building.



Map 1: Location of the Subject Lands



Figure 1: Drawing of the Proposed Development

The subject property is designated 'Agricultural' and 'Hazard Lands' in the County Official Plan. An amendment is being requested because the proposed church and school site would be central to many of its users, many of whom would walk or ride their bike to school, should the development be approved. The County Plan would permit a church/school on-site if the users primarily relied on horse-drawn vehicles as their primary mode of transportation. In this case, the attendees of the school and church use a mixture of private automobile and active transportation.

Until recently the subject property was part of a larger farm parcel, but this 4 hectare lot was created via the natural severance process based on the river and a strip of County owned land accessing the river.

The surrounding lands are a mix of agricultural operations, with some non-farm residential lots.

Kristine Loft, of Loft Planning Inc. has submitted a Planning Justification Report in support of the proposal. The applicant did engage the Municipality and the County in pre-submission consultation for this proposal. A copy of the Report and background materials can be found at the below link:

[Link to Background Materials](#)

A joint public meeting has been scheduled with the Municipality of Meaford for September 9, 2019, to gather input on these applications.

Analysis of Planning Issues

In rendering decisions, planning authorities must have regard to matters of Provincial interest under the *Planning Act* and be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). Decisions within the County must also conform to the County of Grey Official Plan, and in this case the Municipality of Meaford's local official plan, and any Provincial plans in force and effect. The subject lands are outside of the Niagara Escarpment Plan area.

A detailed planning analysis has not been undertaken at this stage. Following the public process, and agency comments, a thorough analysis and staff recommendation will be provided. Key Provincial and County policies have been flagged below for consideration.

Provincial Legislation – The Planning Act

Most notable to this proposed official plan amendment are the following matters of provincial interest from the *Planning Act*, which will need to be considered.

- (a) the protection of agricultural resources of the Province,
- (f) the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage, and water services and waste management systems,
- (h) the orderly development of safe and healthy communities,
- (i) the adequate provision and distribution of educations, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities, and
- (p) the appropriate location of growth and development.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

Section 1 of the PPS generally directs new growth and development to settlement areas, where full municipal services are provided. Section 1.6.6 of the PPS provides a servicing hierarchy, which includes private well and septic systems. New development is permitted in rural areas, where it can be supported by rural service levels, and where it will not hinder farming or resource use.

Section 2.3.3.1 of the PPS states in prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities are: agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. Proposed agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. Section 2.3.6 of the PPS provides criteria for non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas.

County of Grey Official Plan

This application was initially submitted prior to the passing of the County's new Official Plan, Recolour Grey, however it was not deemed complete until after Recolour Grey was approved. To 'cover off' both old and new official plan policies, the proponent's planner has reviewed the former County Official Plan and the current Recolour Grey.

County Official Plan policies generally mimic the PPS, and the matters of Provincial interest under the *Planning Act*.

As noted above, the County's Agricultural policies do give some consideration to institutional uses across the countryside. The policies provide for an 'exception' to consider those populations who do not use automobiles, to facilitate such institutional uses in closer proximity to where they live, because their primary mode of transportation is via horse-drawn vehicle. The proponent has provided their rationale, along with a planning opinion on why such their own school/church use should be granted further exception. From a land use planning perspective, the impact of a school/church is very similar, regardless of the method of transportation used by its members.

Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae is also required by the PPS and County/Municipal Official Plans.

Municipality of Meaford Official Plan

The Municipality's Official Plan is very similar to the County Plan and designates the subject lands as 'Agricultural' and 'Environmental Protection'.

As noted above, following the public and agency processes, a thorough planning analysis and staff recommendation will be provided.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The application will be processed in accordance with the Planning Act.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no anticipated financial, staffing or legal considerations associated with the proposed official plan amendment, beyond those normally encountered in processing an amendment. The County has collected the requisite application fee and peer review deposit for this application.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Planning Staff
- External: The Public, Municipality of Meaford, required agencies under the *Planning Act*.

Appendices and Attachments

None