
2018 Warden's Forum
Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 4:05 p.m.
Falls Inn, Walter's Falls

Present: Warden Stewart Halliday; County Councillors Paul McQueen, Kevin Eccles, John Bell, Sue Paterson, Selwyn Hicks, Alan Barfoot, Dwight Burley, Bob Pringle, Barb Clumpus, Harley Greenfield, Anna Marie Fosbrooke, John Woodbury, Gail Ardiel, John McKean, Arlene Wright, Ian Body; Municipal Councillors Marion Keopke, Brian O'Leary, Michael Martin, Bob Gamble, Jim Frew, Barbara Dobreen, Shirley Keaveney, Steve Bartley, Shawn Greig, Brian Gamble, Sue Carleton, Carol Barfoot, Hazel Pratt-Paige, Peter Hambly, Rebecca Hergert, Dough Hutchinson, Lynn Silverton, Cathy Little, Peggy Harris, Terry Mokriy; Staff members Karen Mills, Rob Adams, Raylene Martell, Bill Klingenberg, Shawn Moyer, Wilda Allen, Marty Wellwood, Kevin Wepler, Kim Wingrove, Rob Hatten, Heather Morrison, Barb Fedy, Pat Hoy, Lynne Johnson, Kevin McNab, Randy Scherzer, Brian Tocheri, Rob Armstrong, Dave Milliner, Joanne Hyde, Liam Gott, Glenn Walker, Jim Ellis, Shawn Everitt, Wayne Ritchie, Philly Markowitz and Penny Colton – Recording Secretary

Others: Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Keith Currie, Pat Jilesen and Joanne Hughes

Opening Remarks

Warden Halliday welcomed everyone to the 2018 Warden's Forum and requested a moment of silence for the lives lost at the recent incident in Toronto.

Economic Development is the first pillar of Grey County's Strategic Plan; therefore we will be discussing a facet of economic development this evening. Agriculture and food production is an important part of Grey County industry.

The Warden introduced Ontario Federation of Agriculture's President Keith Currie and Zone 2 Director Pat Jilesen.

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Keith Currie presented the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's (OFA) Producing Prosperity in Ontario presentation. Keith first provided an overview of the organization

and their current issues including; economics of farming, environment and sustainability, labour, food safety and health, and public perception.

Current challenges for farming and rural business include; lack of infrastructure, services and labour, rising property taxes, closing of local schools. Urban Ontario is also facing growth challenges including; rising poverty, gridlock, affordable housing, and infrastructure that cannot keep pace with growth.

The OFA's plan is to rebalance the growth in Ontario through distributing investments in infrastructure; investment in infrastructure pays dividends and will help reshape our growth and economy in a manageable way. Roads and bridges make the economy efficient and competitive, access to broadband makes rural Ontario an attractive place to work, live and invest. The OFA is proposing to create opportunities to live and work in affordable communities across Ontario. Farm businesses depend on the support of communities; strong communities ensure access to safe local food produced in an environmentally sustainable way.

The OFA's support for economic development across rural Ontario does not come without concerns and conditions. Industrial and residential growth must respect strict land-use rules so we do not devour our agricultural land. There is a need to balance the interest but all development must first work to protect our land base.

The OFA continues to partner with organizations such as municipalities, Western Ontario Warden's Caucus, Agri-Food associations and commodities, economic development officers, academia and others to help grow farming business while growing all of Ontario.

Questions:

Steve Bartley – Meaford – Requested confirmation that agriculture business is 10% of Ontario and 25% of Canada. Mr Currie confirmed the numbers according to the Gross Domestic Product.

Kevin Eccles – West Grey – requested the OFA's view on the recent meeting with David Crombie regarding review of regulations of the Conservation Authority Act , Niagara Escarpment Commission, Greenbelt and Growth Plan. Mr. Currie advised that the intent is to provide harmonization to the language of the various plans to make it easier to administer – especially permits. Work has been done on density targets to provide better responsible growth within hamlets and towns. The Conservation Authority Act is still a review in process.

Paul McQueen– Grey Highlands – Inquired about the predation control changes implemented in 2017 by the Province; is the OFA trying to push back? Mr. Currie

indicated that the committee recommending the changes had OFA representation. This issue appears to be in the interpretation of the rules. Mr. Currie advised it is important to be a good manager of your operation, look at what you can do to offset the loss due to predation. He suggested that constituents make their issues know by way of the following website wildlifedamage@OFA.ca , or contact their local OFA office.

Kim Wingrove – Grey County – What is the OFA looking for in regards to improvements in transportation infrastructure?

Mr. Currie advised it would be beneficial for the municipalities to be able to use provincial funding in the most effective manner for their municipality, with a strategic approach on how to invest. The Province is very prescriptive in what is eligible for funding. The economic return on investment in infrastructure is valuable for the Province.

Hazel Pratt-Paige – Hanover – Does the OFA partner and work with other groups ie. Christian Farmers?

Keith Currie - Everyone gets invited to the table for discussion; but the OFA is the largest and they generally get called first, and then the OFA advises other groups. The OFA is in constant communications with others and is happy to work with any group.

Warden thanked the members from the OFA for their presentation.

The Warden asked Grey Highlands CAO Rob Adams to introduce staff from his home municipality of Grey Highlands.

Dinner Break

Grey County Agriculture Highlights

Warden Halliday introduced Philly Markowitz, Economic Development Officer – Grey County

Philly thanked and recognized the Falls Inn as being a great champion of local food since its opening.

Philly provided an overview of the history of local food in Grey County including the following projects; Local Food Project (Foodlink Grey Bruce) – started by the late Freeman Boyd, Grey Bruce Ag and Culinary Assoc., Local Food Week outreach, and support to the Grey County Chef's Forum Food Hub.

There were partnerships with the University of Waterloo for an On Farm Business Study (planning) and Farm Lot Size Study (planning); Chef and Restaurant Mentorship ,

Saints and Sinners Agri-Culinary Trail and Transition Smart Delivery to name a few. In 2016 Grey County held the award winning Ag 4.0 Summit to bring agriculture and technology together.

Actions that have been generated include targeted support to strengthen Grey County's agricultural sector, coordination of services to ensure gaps are addressed, support innovation, promotion of local products, building partnerships and facilitating links between producers and consumers.

Recent project focus includes the agri-food asset map which provides a comprehensive map of assets across the agri-food value chain that facilitates data collection and analysis. The data that will be available from the map includes taxonomy, an asset map database and unique farm listing features.

Currently staff are working on a tri-county initiative with Simcoe County, Georgian College and other community partners on agri-food business retention and expansion. It is anticipated that the first set of analysis and results will be available in September and an action plan by December 2018. Other items of note include the Agri-food newsletter, farmers market networking event, local food event planning, the Made in Grey profiles and Local Food Week campaign.

Future projects will include brand development; and potential Skills, Trades, Training, Innovation Centre opportunities and Ag. 4.0.2.

Q & A

Hazel Pratt-Paige – Hanover - community partnerships, does the County have a connection with Mennonite communities?

Philly - Yes some connections with Mennonites. Philly works mainly with the operator of Misty Meadows and Southgate staff has a good relationship with their local Mennonites.

Barbara Dobreen – Southgate – Grey County has diversified processing and farming, what are the current employment opportunities?

Philly – Economic Development staff collect information from businesses by use of the various surveys; Ag survey, local food survey, tourism survey and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs. This gathers information on employment and labour needs – everyone is having the same issues.

Keith Currie – Complimented Philly on her presentation and work to date. He indicated he is very impressed with the accomplishments. He recommended contacting the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration of Ontario regarding geographic distribution of

new immigrants. Philly indicated that Grey County has recently provided a New to Grey opportunity to identify immigrants who are able to provide skills and have an interest in relocating to Grey County for the agricultural industry.

Kevin Eccles – West Grey- concerns regarding immigration. Years ago West Grey Premium Beef was growing with the assistance of immigrants, but regulations became so restrictive the immigrants could no longer work and have now left. How do we bring them back to rural Ontario once small shops and process operations have closed?

Keith Currie referred back to his presentation of Producing Prosperity in Ontario.

Al Barfoot – Georgian Bluffs – There have been huge investments for Grey County and congratulated Philly on the work to date.

Warden Halliday – Kim Wingrove has also been instrumental behind the scenes in Economic Development.

Roundtable

Georgian Bluffs – thanked the Warden for hosting this event. Waste – we only have two facilities in Grey that can separate source organics. We need to work on moving these facilities forward by providing more source organics; support from Grey County is required.

Owen Sound – supportive of County managed waste.

Southgate – requesting improved communication channels from the County to the municipalities. The Warden indicated that the local Treasurers, CAO's, and Transportation staff meet regularly and also all agendas with supported documentation can be found on the County website.

Meaford – The Forum provides a great opportunity to get together and introduced members from Meaford. Meaford is experiencing rapid growth and is looking to share resources with neighbouring municipalities and the County for various functions ie. planning, building officials, engineering etc. The Warden advised that Dufferin County does offer services to its local municipalities and asked Kim Wingrove to follow up. The Warden also reminded councillors of the Collaborative Decision Making Process to bring items forward for review by Council.

West Grey – Where in the process is the County with its Transportation Master Plan? The Warden indicated staff continue to work through the plan and Pat Hoy advised he intends to provide an update to council within the next six months.

Meaford – Is there an interest to work together and share services ie engineering where bridges are concerned? The Warden reminded of the process to bring items forward to council.

Grey Highlands – Requested an update on the Recolour Grey Official Plan updates. Randy Scherzer provided a summary of work to date and advised the revised plan will be provided to council in July for adoption. Communications will be provided shortly to municipalities and also another opportunity for comment.

Chatsworth – Welcome to Chatsworth Township and thanked the Warden for the 2018 Forum.

The Warden advised attendees that an open house is anticipated for early June of the addition and renovation of the Administration Building. Also the 2018 Warden's Banquet will be held in Feversham at the Osprey Hall October 19, 2018.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 7:40 p.m.

[Agri-Food Asset Map](#)

[OFA Producing Prosperity in Ontario presentation](#)

[Agri-Food Presentation](#)

[Grey County Collaborative Decision Making Guide](#)