

## Mayor's Blog – May 21, 2020

As I write this there have been zero active COVID19 cases in Zorra for more than a week, and things are beginning to open up slowly. The province has amended emergency orders to allow some recreation amenities to re-open. Now, and as this continues, Zorra Staff will consult with Southwestern Public Health and make informed judgements about how to safely re-open, please follow Township social media, website, and signs.

Zorra's Senior Management Team, the Mayors and CAOs of all Oxford municipalities, and Southwestern Public Health continue to meet regularly to review the latest COVID19 information.

There are several steps that have been taken by all levels of government to attempt to help with financial pressures. Zorra has implemented property tax deferral, Oxford water/wastewater bill deferral, Community Futures micro loan program, ROEDC business grants, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. Links to these programs can be found on the Zorra homepage: [www.zorra.ca](http://www.zorra.ca)

The change in waste collection contractor did not go as smoothly as any of us would have liked. I have made this clear to Oxford County Staff who are also frustrated: it has not been an acceptable level of service so far. That being said, significant steps are being taken to improve the service. So, while I encourage you to be patient, please do not hesitate to point out areas for improvement. The change was not a choice initiated by the County, and certainly not what I wanted. Unfortunately, the contract with the previous waste collector was "terminated by mutual agreement". Therefore, the County had to put the contract out to tender, and because the global recycling market has changed none of the contractors who quoted would accept certain items (plastic films and food styrofoam), although others were added (black plastic materials i.e. food packaging).

Oxford County is still committed to extending the life of our landfill site, and to our goal of zero waste. This includes the future possibilities of a higher recycling rate (Oxford is already amongst the highest in the province), converting waste to energy in a way that also reduces overall greenhouse gas emissions, and lobbying the province for full producer responsibility of waste. The new recycling processing contractor was selected based partly on their demonstrated ability to divert more waste. With respect to plastic film and styrofoam that are no longer acceptable, they can easily contaminate other recyclables leading to additional recyclable material rejection (resulting in added waste to landfill). So, while less may go in your blue box, more may actually be recycled. This page has all the official, most accurate, and up to date info: [www.wasteline.ca](http://www.wasteline.ca)

Construction season is beginning and there will be several projects being done in the Township by both Zorra and Oxford County Public Works.

Annual gravel application and dust suppressant/calcium application began under the new plan to improve the quality of the gravel roads.

At last month's Council meeting we reviewed the contracts to begin work on Road 80 from the bridge to the end of the existing asphalt, Lakeside paved roads, and 31st line from Road 78 to Road 88. All the contracts awarded were under budget.

Both the new gravel road plan and the paving are a result of your Council having heard from residents that roads need to be improved. Council worked with Staff to find the best plan to not only improve the roads, but have a financially sustainable plan to maintain them in that improved state.

I released a "backgrounder" on Walker Environmental Group's proposed southwest landfill in Zorra. Please take the time to read it as it answers many questions I have had from residents. It is too long to reproduce here, but it is a complicated issue that has been going on for years and it is not to be taken lightly.

Your Zorra Council takes its job of decision making seriously.

In order to make decisions that are in the best interests of the municipality, and give every person a fair opportunity to make representation, and have those decisions defensible against appeal, we will be consulting with our experts on the science and legal aspects of this issue.

We will be doing what is in the best interests of the residents of the Township of Zorra.

We will be doing our part.

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

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