

May 25, 2022

It's May 25 and we just experienced the first Calithumpian weekend in three years and it was great! Yard sales, firefighter car wash, Lion's trout brunch, concert, parade, etc. Thanks so much to the Calithumpian Committee! It was great to have this back after two years. To anyone in Zorra who loves this weekend, please consider joining the Cali committee and doing your part to make it happen!

We also had quite a storm blow through and leave almost the whole Township without power and more than a dozen roads closed. Thanks to all of you for looking out for each other and especially Public Works for working hard on their long weekend.

The Provincial election is on June 2nd and there's still time to ask candidates two questions that are important to our communities. I will be following up with the new government (regardless of which party that is) on schools and aggregate taxation.

My delegation to the TVDSB on April 26th was frustrating in the moment, but honestly, I think they made my point about bad governance better than I could. This board spends \$1B a year on our children and LITERALLY won't accept criticism. We need better Trustees. We need better education governance. During the provincial election we asked candidates "Will you support pilot projects of alternate decision-making models that put local decision making back into our communities?" And I'll be following up.

Did you know that Zorra is the sixth largest producer of aggregate (gravel, sand, and stone) in ALL OF ONTARIO? For more info visit TAPMO at: <https://www.tapmo.ca/> and on Facebook at Top Aggregate Producing Municipalities of Ontario.

Unfair Aggregate taxation costs Zorra taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars a year by residents subsidizing a provincial property tax discount for pits and quarries. Every dollar they don't pay is a dollar someone else has to. The current provincial assessment methodology used to evaluate sand & gravel pits artificially classifies these aggregate sites as among the lowest forms of farmland, ignoring the revenue generated by these properties. In many cases, that means these industrial sites are actually paying LESS property tax per acre than a single-family home, a local small business, or even a similarly sized industrial property in the same area. You are paying their taxes and that's not right. We asked candidates "Will they fix this flawed system and champion fair taxes for aggregate operations?" Again, I'll be following up.

Zorra Township and Oxford County have to stop sprawl. Increased density in serviced villages helps address quantity, variety & attainability of housing, better use of infrastructure, & preservation of prime agricultural land & natural spaces. Complete communities build up. We need more variety and affordability of housing AND we need to protect farmland and natural spaces. Saving farmland and natural space IS part of the housing solution. More variety and attainable housing IS a way to reduce sprawl. At the May 11 Oxford County Council meeting my motion was passed to get a report on how to better accommodate projected residential growth through increased density within fully serviced settlement areas and minimize the need for settlement area boundary expansions.

There are now several Ukrainian families being hosted by Zorra families. To the families hosting: wow, thanks for really doing your part!

Українським родинам, які вперше в Zorra: Ласкаво просимо! Бажаємо, щоб ви потрапили в кращі обставини, але якщо наша спільнота може чимось допомогти, будь ласка, повідомте нам про це. Вас щиро ласкаво просять тут, і сім'ї та інші, хто вам допомагає, показують вам своїми діями, наскільки вас раді.

(To the Ukrainian families new to Zorra: Welcome! We wish you came under better circumstances, but if our community can help in any way, please let us know. You are truly welcome here, and the families and others helping you are showing you with their actions just how welcome you are.).

Both the refugees and hosts will need help, so they have started a Facebook page to follow along and see if it's for you: "Oxford County Helps Ukraine". #slavaukraini #doingtheirpart

The splash pad in Thamesford is on, the splash pad in Embro is getting started, and there's a new crosswalk in Embro!

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

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