

February 20, 2023

Zorra is revising its Strategic Plan! The Strategic Plan sets broad priorities for Council and Staff based on the communities' needs and wants. Please check the website and talk to your Councillor about the goals you have for your community and all of Zorra. We've achieved big things, and this is how it's done: by identifying those things (no matter how big or difficult) and developing a strategy to get them done.

What do you love about your Zorra Township?

What are the things you like to tell people about Zorra?

What are the places and moments that you'll remember?

What can we do as a community to make Zorra even better?"

To make Zorra even better, you suggest we _____.

Look here for more info and to give feedback:

<https://www.zorra.ca/en/our-township/strategic-plan.aspx>

We need to hear from you!

In the recent election I said there were "some challenges and opportunities we need to advocate and lobby the Ontario government to address", so at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference in January I made delegations to do just that. Housing and homelessness cannot be addressed by Oxford alone. Even if we "fix" our problems we will then only (understandably) attract people from other communities looking to solve theirs. The Provincial and Federal governments need to help fix this larger problem. So I made a delegation to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing on Oxford's excellent Master Housing Strategy, how Oxford is funding it to get results, and asking the province to do its part in funding affordable housing with us.

Our schools are integral parts of our small rural communities. The Province needs to recognize this in changed funding formulas and policies. I made a delegation to the Ministry of Education about rural schools and the need to give a voice to municipalities in how they serve our communities.

During the election I also said we need to "Develop a plan to secure the future contribution of our schools to our communities". They are vital to our future. Therefore I have

submitted the following Motion for consideration of Zorra Council at the March 1st meeting:

That Zorra Township Council direct staff to collaborate with the Thames Valley District School Board, Oxford County Library, and Oxford County to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate exploration of multi-service co-builds for:

- **a new joint Thamesford District Recreation Complex including a junior kindergarten to grade 8 school and a public Library in Thamesford; and,**
- **a new joint community space and/or public library and classroom addition to the AJ Baker Public School;**
- **commits to exploration of a possible multi-service co-build before any closure, expansion, or consolidation of Zorra Highland Park P.S. is considered;**
- **and that all multi-service co-builds permit public access to all community spaces in the school buildings, and school access to all municipal facilities and community spaces;**
- **And further, that this resolution be circulated to Oxford County Library Board, Oxford County Council, the Thames Valley District School Board, Oxford MPP, and the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Education.**

This will require Oxford County Library Board, Oxford County, and the Thames Valley District School Board to pass similar resolutions.

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

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