

**TOWN OF STRATFORD
PUBLIC MEETING MINTUES
OFFICIAL PLAN
APPROVED**

DATE: September 17, 2014
PLACE: Stratford Town Hall, 234 Shakespeare Drive
TIME: 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

COUNCIL: Councillor Emile Gallant, Councillor Diane Griffin

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS: Norman Lalonde, Rob DeBlois, Sharon Cameron

STAFF: Vahid Ghomoshchi, Director of Planning, Kevin Reynolds, Development Officer
Adele Gillis, Recording Clerk.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 18

Call to Order:

Deputy Mayor Clow called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed all those in attendance.

Deputy Mayor Clow then explained that the Town of Stratford is currently at the final step of reviewing its Official Plan. Pursuant to Section 11 of the Provincial Planning Act we held an Open House on Tuesday, September 9th and today we are holding an official public meeting to obtain comments, concerns, and feedback from Stratford residents and stakeholders, regarding the draft of the revised Official Plan.

A hard copy of the Official Plan can be obtained from the Stratford Planning Department. Also, a digital copy of the Official Plan is available on our website.

Vahid Ghomashi, Director of Planning Department, will present an overview of the process and components of the Revised Official Plan to you.

After Vahid's presentation, we will be happy to hear your comments and concerns, if any.

Since we record all your comments and suggestions, please take the microphone, introduce yourself and make your comments.

Deputy Mayor Clow then turned the meeting over to Vahid to make his presentation on the review of the Official Plan.

A copy of each chapter of the Official Plan was displayed in large format on the wall for residents to review.

Vahid then explained the definition of the Official Plan and the components of the OP. It was noted that the official plan is the most important legal document for any municipality and all municipalities are required to have an Official Plan according to the government Municipality Bylaw and Planning Act. The Official Plan strategy is high level and mostly based on the policy features for long term strategy. The OP Plan is comprehensive and integrated and looks at all areas of development in the Community.

The official plan is very comprehensive and most important it is the guideline for land use. The Provincial Planning Act asks that Municipalities review, in a timely manner, and update their official plan every five year. It was noted that the Town started the review in May 7, 2013 and launched the Official Plan. This has taken a long time as we used a collaboration process which has taken a long time because of the new engagement strategy of the Town.

Vahid then reviewed and noted the key highlights of each chapter in the Official Plan with the residents in attendance.

Key features in the revised Official Plan.

- 1st Vision. .
- 2nd Process
- 3rd Structure and Components

The Town of Stratford in the past seven years developed a new vision and we needed to include this vision in the Official Plan.

The Process has completely changed in this Official Plan compared to the previous Plan. Normally a private consultant is asked to develop and review the Official Plan and the revised plan is presented for public consultation. This Official Plan is being reviewed with residents not for residents. This is a completely different approach. The results of this vision, approach and process we have a new structure and components for the Official Plan.

The Town has discussed Sustainability for approximately seven years. First, the Town approved sustainability principles in 2006 Plan and later developed the Sustainability Plan and now after many years Sustainability is like an umbrella, which covers everything in the Town of Stratford.

The Town has also reviewed and adopted a Performance Management Policy and based on the Performance Management Policy we need to implement and measure our achievements to reach all sustainability goals and objectives.

The third part of the Town of Stratford Vision is Community Engagement. We have looked at Community Engagement a new way, which is called Collaborative. This approach will be used when developing future visions or when a decision has a major impact on resources and/or residents and stakeholders.

Based on the Vision we have a Community Engagement Strategy. In this Community Engagement Strategy you see we have three steps – Communicate, Consult and Collaborate.

Communicate – This approach will be used when no decision is required and it is for information only, or when the decision has a minor impact on resources and/or on residents and stakeholders, This application will be used for studies/policies, minor purchases, events/programs and operational reports and data. Examples of tools that will be used are media releases, newsletters, website posting, school notices, sign board postings, email distribution and Council meetings.

Consult - This approach will be used when a decision has an impact on resources and/or residents and stakeholders or where a decision must be made but alternatives are available. This application will be used for studies and plans major purchases, bylaw amendments, and policies. The tools that will be used are public meetings, open houses, surveys and focus groups.

Collaborate – This approach will be used when developing future visions or when a decision has a major impact on resources and/or residents and stakeholders. This application will be used for Strategic planning, official plan, studies and plans, annual budgets, major purchases and bylaws. The tools that we will use are citizen panels, discussion forums and decision making systems.

The Main Objectives was to build a friendly relationship, sharing knowledge and experience, increasing trust, building capacity, making consensus, creating shared vision and developing objectives and policies.

The Official Plan Framework for the revised Official Plan will include four main sections - vision, objectives, policies and actions.

The new structure for the Official Plan will be as follows:

- Chapter 1 introduction
- Chapter 2 Stratford in Context
- Chapter 3 Governance
- Chapter 4 Housing
- Chapter 5 Transportation
- Chapter 6 Infrastructure
- Chapter 7 Recreation
- Chapter 8 Natural Environment
- Chapter 9 Economic Development
- Chapter 10 Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Chapter 11 Land Use Planning
- Chapter 12 Implementation – Actions.

Vahid then gave a brief summary of the key issues in each chapter of the revised Official Plan document.

Deputy Mayor Clow then asked the residents in attendance if they had any comments or questions on the Official Plan.

*David Harris
Reeves Estate*

The biggest concern is the safety on the Trans Canada Highway, mainly the speed coming into Stratford before Reeves Estate and around Balderston's Fruit stand. If we don't do something soon we will have a major accident. I tried to express my feeling with the RCMP and he believes that we need more enforcement. This is one my biggest concerns, we don't want to see a tractor trailer plow into a bunch of cars outside of Balderston's and if we don't do something soon it's going to happen.

Deputy Mayor Clow

This has been an ongoing issue and we are dealing with the Province and the RCMP on a regular basis. We have met several times and are in the process of doing some traffic calming in that area. We will be erecting no parking signs in front of Balderstons and have the RCMP enforce that. I live below you in Clearview and have the same concerns.

*Alan Sinclair
Trout Point Lane,*

I am a full time resident of Stratford. I retired to Stratford two years ago. While I have no town planning experience, I have had involvement in Business planning for employers over the years and fundamental involvement for over 10 years in strategic planning for a 12,000 member national not-for-profit association as a member of the Board and Executive, including Chairman of the Association.

I realize a lot of very hard work has gone in to this project, but you have asked for feedback on this document, so here it is.

What concerns me is that, notwithstanding the process that was followed to develop the plan, this Official Plan looks like a very large wish list developed with little or no critical review or rigor. I understand you established a group of 20-30 volunteer citizens, then you gave them the past Official Plan, various town planning documents, as well as the results of the Official Plan Review online survey, (which only had 152 respondents and the results of which were noted as not being statistically valid). Then it looks like they were asked to come up with a list of whatever would be nice to have.

What I see as a result of this, in Chapter 12, is a very diverse list of 176 action items to implement, which will now be used as a direction and justification for implementing policies for the next 5 years. This could be good, but...

What I don't see is evaluation and prioritization of alternatives to ensure efficient and cost effective ways to realize these community goals, nor do I see an evaluation of positive and negative impacts on our citizens and the community, related to implementation of these many action items.

For example:

- I see an item to establish information kiosks throughout the community, yet you have a website easily available to most people and a mass email list to send information to those who wish it. What is the cost vs. benefit of this potentially expensive initiative?*
- Other communications initiatives include expanding the Town's mass e-mail list and ensure the website and other forms of communication are available to newcomers. Both great ideas, but it takes resources and careful co-ordination to manage timely internet-based (and possibly multilingual) communication. For example, notification of this important meeting was not in the Sept 12 Stratford newsletter and Council Minutes after February were not posted for months until around the end of July.*
- One initiative is to "require new developments maintain view corridors from public roads" yet two initiatives are "install vertical windmills to aerate the sewage lagoon" and "reinstall windmills at the waste water facility" which are beside a major public road and view corridor for entering and leaving Stratford.*
- Lastly, there are numerous references to increasing the number of trails and beach access points. Great ideas, but no mention or consideration in the plan for safety and security issues and impact on adjacent residents. For example, there was a Feb 26 Public Meeting where over 15 residents expressed very serious concerns about the Beach Access initiatives. Not only is there no mention of these concerns in the Plan, but also the initiative seems to be expanded.*

To sum up there are a lot of great ideas, but how many are practical and can be managed effectively at a reasonable cost, both in dollars and the impact on affected citizens?

Therefore, this plan as it stands leaves me with concerns.

Vahid Ghomashchi
Town Planner

What I can explain about the process. First of all you mention about the statistically evaluation process. You are probably right but, if you look at the nature of this study and the process. We didn't do a survey and we did not intend to claim that this study was statistically evaluation. The Town decided that instead of getting one or two people to review study and make a recommendation, we had approximately 20 people from the community, along with Council,

Planners, and Managers, came together to review the document. In total about 50 people reviewed the document. It wasn't our intention to go for statistically evaluations.

The second point where you mention about the nature of this application and implementation or policies. If you look at the chart the Official Plan our vision and objectives look like a list of wishes, it is a guideline, it is a framework for our actions. When we develop our Development Bylaw or if any department wants to develop their work plan, we need to follow the Official Plan and see what the direction is the department. The Official Plan has 176 actions but when we want to act we need to do more study and obtain more information and evaluate and then decide. In most cases we will go back to the Committee for consultation and get their final approval. This plan is a high level strategically policy document.

Carl Hamm

I'm not a resident – in order to get out I have to drive through Stratford. I was wondering if you are making changes to the sidewalks in your new plan. The sidewalks are terrible in Stratford and people won't use them especially at night. The older people won't use them because the design of the sidewalk dips at each driveway, which causes an uneven walking surface.

Mary Ellen MacMillan
Trout Point Lane

I'm wondering about page 66 number 6 which states (recognize shore access as the right of residents and increase the number and size of access points.) I'm curious how this arose and how does it fit into the grand scheme of things when it comes to property rights, the right to protect environmental sensitive areas and who are the residents that you are referring to.

Vahid Ghomashchi
Town Planner

During the last public meeting we explained that this item was already in the previous Official Plan and we believe that Shore Access is a Public Access and we should facilitate and open this to the public. We have residents that have asked for public access and the Citizens Reference Panel looked at this item and decided to leave this in the Official Plan.

Mary Ellen MacMillan
Trout Point Lane

I believe that you're leaving yourself open to litigation as you are conveying it in this document as a right. If you are not allowed to walk on environmentally sensitive areas but yet you have the right to access, then which right takes precedence? I think that phrasing this as a right is a very dicey area to get into.

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Vahid Ghomaschi
Town Planner

Thank you for your comments and we will look at this item.

Mary Ellen MacMillan
Trout Point Lane

Throughout the Official Plan there are a number of references to the trail system, running the rail system through natural areas. When you go through your background documents and look at what those trails are, some of them are 2.5 meters wide and they are hard surface. I question how you are going to run some of those trails through those very narrow riparian zones without doing a tremendous amount of environmental damage. Also, when it comes to some of the access points, many of them are located within the Coastal Zone that in danger of flooding. Environmentally I'm really quite concerned because I have asked a number of times if you have done Environmental Studies on some of these things and have yet to see an Environmental Study come forward and particularly with some of rose ravines and natural water courses and we already have examples, in the Town, where those have been at least altered or damaged by running trails through them. I think you have to be very sensitive to the riparian zone, which is stated in one point, and yet contradicted when you look at where the trails are going. I have a really big concern about that area, as well.

Deputy Mayor Clow,
Thank you for your comments and we will take that under advisement.

Mary Ellen MacMillan
Trout Point Lane

We keep referring to shore line access and beach access. There is a difference and we raised this seven months ago and I would like the Town to, in this document, define which one they are referring to and to consistently use it.

Vahid Ghomashchi,
Town Planner,

We will clarify that, we mean shore access. The document will be consistent.

Councillor Emile Gallant

You were talking about future development and it might be put in the bylaw that the developer will have to construct sidewalks and trails in subdivision that they build. Is this something that has been discussed with developers? If they have to do this it will increase the cost of the property that they are selling.

Vahid Ghomashchi

Town Planner

In our existing Bylaw in the Core Area, residential zone development we need sidewalks on at least one side of the road. We will do more study to expand this and we will look at this during the Development Bylaw review. We will ask for this requirement if we find that it is feasible.

Muriel Siemers

Appledore Lane

I know that you don't want the Trans Canada Highway to cut the town in half. In fact it does. You may want to think of aqueducts/ underpass so people can get across. There is no safe to cross the TCH except at the lights.

Deputy Mayor Clow

Thank you for your participation and your valuable comments. We will review and consider all your comments at the next planning Board meeting. The Planning Board makes any necessary revisions to the current document and will recommend the final draft of the Revised OP to Council. Council will review the document, and if they find the final draft satisfactory, they will approve the OP and send that to the Minister for final approval.

Adjournment at 7:30 p.m