

**TOWN OF MINTO****DATE:** February 24, 2016**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council**FROM:** Bill White, C.A.O. Clerk**SUBJECT:** OGRA ROMA Conference Summary

STRATEGIC PLAN:

12.7 Demonstrate innovation in all aspects of municipal business acknowledging the importance of training, succession planning, transparency, communication and team-based approaches to municipal operations.

BACKGROUND

Members of Council and staff attended the 2016 Ontario Good Roads Association and Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in Toronto last week. This is a key event for training and networking by staff and Council with a variety of educational opportunities of interest to smaller municipalities.

The conference includes a number of plenary speakers, workshops, “bear pit” session (Minister Q & A) and speeches by the Premier and opposition leaders. The Theme of this year’s conference was the value proposition on the basis that municipalities are “the order of government with the biggest impact on the daily lives of citizens”.

Frank Graves, President, EKOS Research Associates a leading Canadian applied social researcher spoke about public opinion trends toward all levels of government and the issues of most concern to people. Municipalities tend to have the highest level of trust compared to Ontario and Canada, but that trust has decreased over time as people have lost confidence in all levels of government. Issues of key concern to Canadians include infrastructure and climate change, although financial and taxation concerns being less so when it comes to these two issues. Essentially many Canadians will pay more for good infrastructure and improving the natural environment.

Mike Moffat, Chief Economist, Mowat Centre, Assistant Professor Business, Economics and Public Policy Ivey Business School spoke of his interests that “relate to the intersection of societal issues, public policy and economic growth”. He spoke about four “acts” in the economy since early 1990’s and the impact of the aging baby boomers on the economy. He believes the next “act” from now through 2019 will be more Asian trade (where over 50% of the world’s population lives within 4,000km), low oil prices and the continuing low Canadian dollar. These conditions existed in the early 1990’s when the baby boom was in prime income earning positions. Now in the midst of retiring, the boomers will slow income growth meaning fewer Canadian customers. Interest rates will remain low and growth will occur in advanced manufacturing, internet services and “agri-food” as rising Asian populations look for clean healthy food sources. This demand will lead to policy issues such as improved rural transportation, broadband and improved airport capacity shipping capacity.

Premier Wynne announced more funding for municipal infrastructure adding to Connecting Link and Ontario Community Investment Fund programs. Connecting Links will be increased from \$10 to \$20 million next year and \$30 million in 2018-19. The Town has applied for

design and re-construction of Elora Street in Clifford in this merit based program. The Ontario Community Investment formula based amount will double next year from \$50 to \$100 million and increase to \$200 million within three years. If the Town's current allocation remains the same the amount should grow from \$131,000 to \$262,000 and upwards of \$524,000 in 2019. The \$50 million merit based funding in OCIF will double within three years. Approved projects under this program are James Street and Jane/Inkermann in Palmerston. New rules allow OCIF to be banked for up to five years to pay for larger projects and applications using good asset management will be rewarded.

Both Patrick Brown PC and Andrea Horwath NDP spoke in opposition to the sale of Hydro One even though the proceeds of the sale are apparently directed toward the increased infrastructure funding referred to by the Premier. Both indicated concerns with Health Care cuts and reduced OMPF grants. Andrea Horwath spoke of the increase in utility costs resulting from a variety of Provincial initiatives. Patrick Brown noted the Province's lack of attention to joint and several liability despite unanimous support of Perth Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece's 2014 motion asking the Province to address rising insurance costs.

Other conference themes were Ombudsman oversight, climate change and infrastructure resiliency to name a few. Acting Ombudsman Barb Finlay spoke of new oversight authority over municipal activities. John Mascarini Aird and Berlis Law spoke of the Ombudsman's oversight theming his speech "who will guard the guards themselves". He believes the newly appointed Ombudsman (February 17) Paul Dube will bring a professional and reasoned tone to the office, and encouraged municipalities to upgrade their complaint tracking policies, and re-consider use of current municipal Act tools such as the Code of Conduct, Accountability Officers and similar to formalize complaint handling. The City of Guelph has taken the opportunity to modernize and enhance complaint response and customer service approaches to ratepayers.

Union Gas and Canadian Cement Association spoke of their companies' approaches to climate change initiatives. The Green Infrastructure Coalition discussed how naturalizing and "at source" storm water retention helped reduce atmospheric carbon, but were not counted in cap and trade proposals. Union Gas is testing several combined heat and power and renewable natural gas programs in their market. They believe their product has a lower carbon footprint than oil, and intend to in cap and trade without causing consumer's rates to increase. The Cement Association indicated Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions are already 6% below 1990 levels so reductions needed to meet Paris targets will be a challenge. Concrete is more resilient in building construction, and concrete roads use 66% less energy than asphalt, are 7% more fuel efficient, and lower lighting requirements by 24%. They believe cement roads will help achieve carbon reduction by replacing asphalt.

COMMENTS:

The attached information was provided to Minister of Environment and Climate Change Glen Murray in the Town's delegation February 24. He encouraged the Town to continue its environmental initiatives and confirmed that any funds under "cap and trade" legally must be directed to programs to reduce carbon emissions. He talked about linkages with Nova Scotia and California "cap and trade" programs. Mayor Bridge spoke of the many Town initiatives as well as MPP Ted Arnott's private members bill calling for 150 million trees to be planted beginning in 2017 to celebrate Ontario's 150th anniversary within Confederation.

Later that day Minister Murray introduced the Climate Change Mitigation and Low Carbon Economy Act. This law requires annual reporting on greenhouse gas reducing programs, enshrines emission targets (37% below 1990 levels) in law and allows for transition periods for high carbon emitting industries. The full impact of this legislation will be assessed and debated in the coming months, but the addition of nearly 5 cents per litre to gasoline prices to help fund cap and trade may not sit well with the public.

The Premier's infrastructure announcement and the Town's timely delegation on climate change are interesting insights into how municipal provincial discussions at these events translate into public actions. Council received plenty of feedback on Ombudsman oversight, climate change, and infrastructure resiliency leading up to the conference. These issues remain key concerns moving forward in the coming years.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The annual OGRA ROMA conference cost is covered within existing budget allocations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receives the C.A.O. Clerk's January 27, 2016 report regarding OGRA ROMA Conference Summary.

Bill White, C.A.O. Clerk



Climate Change Funding Glen Murray Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Attendees

Mayor George Bridge (Warden Wellington County)

georgeabridge@gmail.com

Councillor Ron Elliott Councillor David Turton

Councillor Mary Lou Colwell Councillor Judy Dirksen

Councillor Jean Anderson

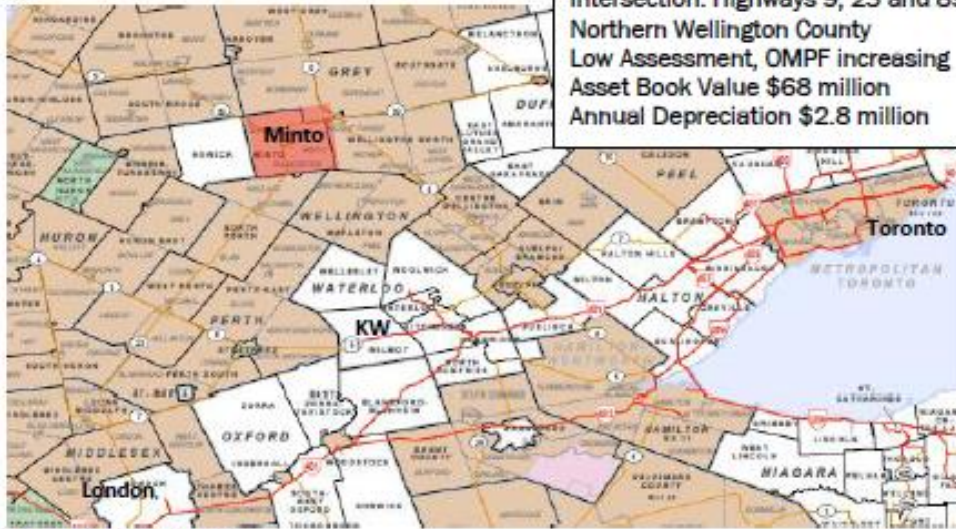
CAO/Clerk Bill White (bwhite@town.minto.on.ca)

MPP Randy Pettapiece

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Minto Facts

Population 8,500
Formerly: Clifford, Harriston, and Palmerston
Intersection: Highways 9, 23 and 89
Northern Wellington County
Low Assessment, OMPF increasing
Asset Book Value \$68 million
Annual Depreciation \$2.8 million



Environmental Accomplishments

- 2011 Integrated Sustainability Community Plan; 2013 Strategic Plan includes ISCP action items
- Host 8 microFIT sites on Town land, and 7 more if current FIT 4.0 approval received
- Community Gardens Harriston and Clifford
- LED street light conversion cut hydro usage by over 70%
- Trees for Minto Committee formed in 2013 to work on environmental issues



Mayor Opens Community Garden



LED Street Lights Downtown

- Variable Frequency Drives in arena technology (Minto has 3);
- Energy efficient technology assessed for our three waste water facilities and pilot project through Dr. Hamid Salsali, Adjunct Professor, School of Engineering, Guelph
- Distributor under Wellington County Green Legacy Program; 4 acres naturalized municipal office under Warden Tree Planting initiative



VFD Technology



Naturalizing Town office

- 2015 inclusive water meter program results in +/-20% reduction in consumption
- Approved one cent per litre transfer from Town fuel budgets and the voluntary donation of one cent per kilometer from staff and Councillor mileage claims to the Trees for Farms; funds collected be reserved only for tree planting programs
- Applicant Provincial Electric Vehicle Charger Program; 4 sites; potential link to solar
- Updating floodplain mapping for Harriston to increase accuracy and ensure climate resiliency; includes more watershed monitoring in partnership with Maitland Valley Conservation Authority.

Minto Supports

1. Collaboration of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Union of Quebec Municipalities (UQM) to enhance support municipal climate action in our provinces. We added to the resolution:

- That reporting required for existing local Green Energy Plans not be enhanced or increased as pre-condition to receiving funding for climate change programs so that valuable local municipal staff resources can remain focused on program execution.

2. Adequate, stable and long-term funding resources to invest in local greenhouse gas reduction initiatives.

Funding Crunch

- Completed \$20 million of infrastructure work 2011 to 2015
- Plan for \$20 million more infrastructure work from 2016 to 2020 which will require increased borrowing, tax increases, additional infrastructure funding and alternate revenue sources
- OMPF increases have been turned directly into capital or reserve contribution
- Borrowing has increased, and Town has been successful in OCIF and SCF merit based funding

Questions:

What infrastructure upgrades will Province require to meet climate change resiliency goals?

Will municipalities receive funds through “cap and trade” to address climate change resiliency upgrades?

How will “cap and trade” impact on the cost of goods and services, energy, infrastructure and similar for business and residents?

Can climate change initiatives be integrated with existing Green Energy reporting?