



## **TOWN OF MINTO**

**DATE:** March 31, 2017

**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Chris Harrow

**SUBJECT:** Rea and Walter Act – MPP Randy Pettapiece

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### **STRATEGIC PLAN:**

6.3 Support the Fire Department's mission to service the community with high standards of emergency response and fire prevention programs to ensure a safe environment for residents and to protect business and local property.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2016, Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece sponsored a Bill to safeguard firefighters when attending fires in buildings with lightweight construction. The Bill was scheduled to be introduced in the Legislature in the Fall of 2016. When the Legislature was prorogued, the Bill lost its standing and had to be re-introduced by Mr. Pettapiece. The Bill was re-introduced and will receive first and second reading on April 6, 2017.

The Bill was constructed to address the issue with Lightweight constructed industrial and commercial buildings. In 2011, the Dollar Store fire was a lightweight constructed building which Minto Fire attended with North Perth, and where Firefighters Ken Rea and Ray Walter tragically lost their lives. The construction type was a key factor in why the building roof collapsed on the two firefighters. This new Act will address the issue and hopefully prevent another incident from occurring again.

### **COMMENTS:**

The Bill has been in the works for a couple of years now. The Fire Chief worked with Mr. Pettapiece and his staff from the beginning stages on the details of the Bill. The main component is a requirement that commercial and industrial building owners place placards on their buildings to indicate the building is constructed of lightweight materials. This will allow the arriving Incident Commander to quickly identify the hazard and prepare an action plan accordingly.

The placard will identify two possible items present in the building, lightweight constructed floors and/or lightweight constructed roofs. The Incident Commander with this knowledge will be able to make the appropriate tactical decisions to protect firefighters from the potential of collapse. The reason it has been proposed for only commercial and industrial buildings is most homes built now are constructed of lightweight materials. Firefighters now assume until proven otherwise, that a residential structure is lightweight and always take the proper precautions.

It is recommended Council to support this legislation and MPP Pettapiece. The cost for a building owner will be minimal, the price of the placard and the installation. If passed, the legislation asks the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management in cooperation with the fire services to come up with regulations to enforce the law of placarding of buildings. Many States in the U.S. have similar laws regarding the issue. Creating new regulations in Ontario would not be a difficult task for those involved. The Fire Chief was asked by Mr. Pettapiece's office to attend the Bill's introduction to the Legislature and plan on doing so with North Perth Fire Chief Ed Smith.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

No financial considerations for supporting the legislation and no financial implications are anticipated if the Bill is successfully passed by the Province.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Council receives the Fire Chief's March 31, 2017 report and pass a resolution of support for the proposed Rea and Walter Act and send the resolution of support to MPP Randy Pettapiece.

Chris Harrow  
Fire Chief