

County Council Highlights for April 3, 2024

Warden Highlights Active Transportation, CR 46 Open House

Warden Hilda MacDonald highlighted Essex County's ever-expanding active transportation network Wednesday night ahead of her scheduled appearance this week on a Mayor's Panel at the Ontario Bike Summit in Waterloo.

"This year, the County of Essex is investing nearly \$6 million into its active transportation network. That includes more than 17 kilometres of paved shoulders, making traveling safer for cyclists and motorists alike," said MacDonald. "And we are going to keep building out that network until we achieve the 1,000-km goal envisioned in the draft CWATS Master Plan."

MacDonald promoted the Public Consultation Centre being held from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday, April 4 at the Ciociaro Club about improvements to the County Road 46 corridor. Learn more about that vital infrastructure project at countyofessex.ca/CR46.

Council was treated by the Essex Vocal Express to a rendition of O Canada to start the meeting. The local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society is celebrating their 80th anniversary this year.

County Road 18/15 Intersection Review

Council voted to receive a report summarizing a safety and traffic review of the intersection of County Road 15 and County Road 18 in Essex.

RC Spencer Associates was engaged to carry out a review of the intersection and **recommended against any geometric or traffic control changes at this time.**

Administration will continue to monitor the safety and operation of the intersection.

2025 Budget Meeting Schedule

Council will begin deliberating the 2025 Budget at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 28.

Administration recommended the change after County Councillors expressed the desire during 2024 Budget deliberations to schedule Budget meetings earlier in the day.

Should it be necessary, deliberations could resume at 4 p.m. at the meeting already scheduled for Dec. 4.

Council Approves Official Plan Amendment No. 5

Council **approved an amendment to the Official Plan** to align the designation of a parcel of land at 2362 Front Load in LaSalle with the designation from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

An applicant had requested the amendment “to correct the County’s Official Plan Schedules in accordance with the current, approved delineation of Provincially Significant Wetland on record with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and to enable future development.”

County to Consult with ERCA on Clean Water Green Spaces Program

Council directed Administration to consult with the Essex Region Conservation Authority “on the feasibility of reviewing and enhancing the Clean Water Green Spaces Program with an aim at achieving an accelerated rate of natural restoration in the County.”

Council also directed Administration to bring back a report and draft By-Law or policy to meet Municipal Act obligations regarding the protection and enhancement of tree canopy.

“ERCA is widely recognized for its forestry program having planted more than 7 million trees in the Essex region,” **said a report to Council**. “As such, there appears to be benefits to the County partnering with ERCA as the expert in tree and vegetation protection, to assist the County in fulfilling its statutory obligations.”

Council Approves Continuation of Paramedic Patient Navigator Program

Council agreed to fund the continuation of the Paramedic Patient Navigator program that has proven successful in improving the flow across the region of ambulances.

“The PPN position continues to hold great value in providing operational efficiencies for Essex-Windsor EMS, especially in creating a vital link that aligns Essex-Windsor EMS with the Ambulance Communications Centre and local emergency departments,” **said a Council report**.

“Ceasing to operate this position will undoubtedly have an impact on the flow of ambulances amongst our local hospitals, especially in periods of surge, and will likely contribute to increasing periods of code red and black, as well as increasing operational stressors on the front-line paramedics and management team.”

The program launched in 2022 with provincial funding and placed an EMS District Chief into the Central Ambulance Communications Centre.

Non-Union Salary Grid Strategy Endorsed

Council approved the implementation of new non-union salary grids and a recommended strategy to move non-union employees from the current state to a new P60 grid effective January 1, 2024.