

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL

REPORT CL 13-2010

The Municipal Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara met in the Council Chamber, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on Thursday, November 4, 2010 commencing at 7:05 p.m.

The following individuals were in attendance during the Open Session of the Regional Council meeting:

ATTENDANCE

Council: Regional Chair Partington; Councillors Augustyn; Badawey; Baty; Bentley; Burroughs; Bylsma; Casselman; Cordiner; D'Angela; Forster; Gabriel; Goulbourne, Greenwood, Heit; Henderson; Hodgson; Katzman; Lepp, Marshall; Martin; McMullan; Puttick; Rigby; Salci; Saracino; Smeaton; Timms; Trombetta; Zimmerman.

Staff: Messrs. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Brothers, Commissioner, Public Works; Bergsma, Commissioner, Corporate Services; Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services; Robson, Commissioner, Integrated Community Planning; Mr. Cunnane, Chief/Director EMS; Kyne, Director, Legal Services; Bain, Regional Clerk; Ms. McManus, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

(Other): Messrs. Roberts, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair; Steele, Associate Director, Strategic Business Management.

CALL TO ORDER

441. Regional Chair Partington called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Council met in regular session, commencing at 7:05 p.m. with an Invocation by Councillor Forster followed by the singing of 'O Canada'.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

442. Moved by Councillor D'Angela
Seconded by Councillor Augustyn

That the Council Agenda CL 13-2010, be approved and adopted as presented.

Carried.

PRESENTATIONS

443. Unveiling of the War of 1812 Legacy Map

Ms. Jennifer Pothier, in honour of her husband Mr. Del Buono, assisted Regional Chair Partington in unveiling historic maps of the War of 1812-14 in this Bi-National region depicting battles of the war in this Bi-National region.

The Regional Chair, paid tribute to Mr. Vincent Del Buono (the first CEO of the Legacy Niagara 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council) and stated that early in this term of Council the Legacy Council of which we were instrumental in founding and thus commenced planning/working on Bicentennial events and celebrations with volunteer help only. He further stated that it was this council that came forward with a \$200,000 commitment to enable work to proceed as it did under Vince Del Buono's leadership; it is now left to the next council to continue the work with others on both sides of the border to prepare for and execute the bicentennial celebrations which will shine a world spotlight on this Region.

Life accomplishments of Mr. Del Buono were in part:

- first President of the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law
- Senior Counsel for the Law Reform Commission of Canada
- Senior Advisor to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna
- Attached to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Served as Deputy General of Amnesty International, London
- Headed the British Counsel Access to Justice program in Nigeria
- CEO of the Niagara 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council

Regional Chair Partington, stated that Mr. Del Buono was a man of immense experience and talent, Vince laid the foundation upon which this Legacy Council and Bi-National Region can celebrate the defining of the borders of the two great countries of Canada and the United States and the 200 years of peace that ensued.

CHAIR'S REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, REMARKS

444. Chair's Remarks

The Regional Chair thanked Bert DeBolster of Hanemaayer Greenhouses Ltd. in Vineland Station for the flowers that adorned Council Chambers and stated that the flowers will be donated to Deer Park Villa in Grimsby.

The Regional Chair welcomed everyone to the final meeting of the 2006-2010 term of Niagara Regional Council and congratulated everyone who ran for election on October 25th. He thanked each Council member for their commitment, cooperation and determination in meeting the challenges faced over this term of Council and turning them into victories for a better Niagara.

The Regional Chair reflected on the past term of Council, stating that he was proud of the strides made as a region to speak collectively with one voice on issues most important to our future. We learned that a strong, united voice is essential in getting the province and the federal government to listen and to respond.

By working together with municipalities and community partners like Brock University, Niagara College and the Niagara Health System, we secured major investments in Niagara from the governments of Ontario and Canada that are vital to our future. We've all seen the construction taking place across the street at Brock University, which received federal and provincial funding of more than 70 million dollars to build the Niagara Health and Bioscience Research Complex. The cranes have been busy at Niagara College too as it completes a 90 million dollar expansion project at its Welland campus and work is continuing on the new regional hospital. These investments are ones we worked together on, with our partners, to secure for our region. The new Niagara Falls Convention Centre to be completed by year's end and when operational by mid next year will create 500,000 hotel room occupancy need annually, directly employ 170 persons and generate about 1,000 jobs in the hospitality industry Niagara Region has also benefited directly from our "one voice" strategy, securing 67 million dollars in economic stimulus and other program funding. This allowed us to move forward on water and sewer improvements and road construction projects, including an upgrade to the Seaway Wastewater Treatment plant in Port Colborne and construction of the Frenchman's Creek Trunk Sanitary Sewer in Fort Erie and a much needed rebuilding at the Niagara District Airport in the town of Niagara on the Lake.

Regional Chair Partington stated that he felt sure the next Council would continue the "one voice" strategy in lobbying and planning for the replacement of the Burgoyne Bridge and the replacement of the Wastewater Treatment plant in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which top our list of infrastructure priorities. The bridge must be replaced and the wastewater treatment plant must be relocated to the west end of the Park's Canada Property.

During this last term, we witnessed one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression. We experienced a further erosion of our manufacturing base as our economy continued to transition from traditional industry to new and emerging fields. People lost jobs and savings. Some even lost their homes. It's been tough for many residents. In the past year we have seen a 20 per cent increase in our social assistance caseloads.

We responded to the economic challenges in a number of ways:

- We made taxpayer affordability a priority. We managed our finances to keep tax hikes to a minimum. By holding tax increases to an average of 1.07% over the past five years, we tried to help residents stabilize their household budget.
- We made poverty reduction a priority. In 2009, Council approved the investment of \$1.5 million to increase prosperity in some of our poorest neighbourhoods. That investment was renewed in 2010 and today the Niagara Prosperity Initiative is funding more, almost three dozen projects aimed at reducing and preventing poverty and leveraging the resources in the non-profit and business communities to do even more to help those most in need.
- We made strategic investments in our public institutions, supporting the expansion projects at Brock University and Niagara College, the construction of a new hospital in St. Catharines and a new convention centre in Niagara Falls – all projects that will bring jobs and greater prosperity to our region; and
- We invested in our infrastructure which is vital in helping our communities prepare for future growth and development.
- These investments support our local economy as it continues to evolve and adapt to the changing global marketplace. Exciting things are happening across the region. For example:
- Toronto-based renewable energy company, Oneworld Energy, is partnering with the City of Welland to develop a solar energy hub in Welland that could help lead to a thousand new jobs in Niagara.
- Earlier this year, Biolyse Pharma celebrated the opening of its new multimillion dollar high-tech production facility at its laboratory in St. Catharines. The facility allows the company to produce and package its medicines, including an innovative cancer treatment drug; and

- Port Colborne has become home to a company called North America Traffic - the world's leading manufacturer and supplier of portable work-zone traffic control devices. The company was founded by Port Colborne entrepreneur Peter Vieveen, and has grown 500 per cent in four years with customers around the world.

These are just a few examples of Niagara's changing economy.

Highlights in Transportation:

Effective and efficient transportation systems are a linchpin of a stable economy and vital to future growth. One of Council's greatest achievements was the decision to move forward on the issue of inter-municipal transit – a key goal in the Council Business Plan for 2007 – 2011. The Regional chair noted that in his inaugural address to Council on December 14, 2006, he spoke about the need for the Region to work with the local transit authorities to establish an inter-municipal transit system that can be accessed by all our residents.

This past June, a pilot project was approved that will provide hourly bus service between St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland with additional links between Niagara Falls and Fort Erie and Welland and Port Colborne. Funds in the amount of \$3.7 million in capital will be provided and \$1.9 million in operating funds to initiate the project – funds that represent an investment in the regional economy which depends not only on a skilled workforce, but a mobile one.

During this past term, the GO Bus and a summer GO Train service was brought to Niagara. Securing regular train service to and from Toronto is the next objective and I'm pleased that that is under active consideration by Go Transit; also solid strides toward the expansion of our main highway corridors. The commitment of the Government of Ontario to extend highway 406 to East Main Street in Welland is a great accomplishment and one that we long advocated for. Our MPP from St. Catharines, Jim Bradley, worked hard to make this project a reality and he deserves our thanks.

Preliminary work underway and completed this past year – Merritt Road overpass and road corridor from Merritt Road to the Old Canal. Construction will advance aggressively in the Spring of 2011 to be completed in 2013.

Effective transportation – including the development of a major east-west corridor in South Niagara – features prominently in our 2031 Growth Management Strategy which Council developed and approved this term.

The Environmental Assessment is proceeding and final route selection should be presented to this Council next year.

Creation of a Culture Plan:

The development of the Region's first culture plan is another significant achievement. This plan provides a framework for promoting and building upon our many cultural assets and activities. It will create opportunities for communities to work together, and to market Niagara as a destination of choice for businesses, residents and visitors. This plan represents a big part of the Region's commitment to supporting a safe, healthy, diverse, and culturally rich community where people of all ages and incomes enjoy a high quality of life.

2010 Overview:

At the start of the year, three key policy objectives were identified that would go hand-in-hand with our 2010 Tier One Business Priorities for the remainder of our mandate:

- The implementation of an inter-municipal transit network
- Improving waterfront access to the public, and
- Securing federal and provincial recognition of Niagara as an Economic Gateway Zone and Centre.

These initiatives – which will contribute enormously to the economic and social wellbeing of Niagara – are well underway.

The development of a Waterfront Enhancement Strategy will enable the Region to maximize public access to our shorelines, preserve our heritage, and ensure the environmental sustainability of our waterways. The strategy will bring a consistent approach to how we manage and protect this valuable resource for future generations. The Region's purchase of 400 feet of outstanding beachfront property in Wainfleet was a great start to this initiative; encouragement was given to the New Regional Chair and the next Regional Council to continue on with this important initiative.

Recognition of Niagara as a Gateway Economic Zone and Gateway Economic Centre is an issue we're keeping front and centre with the governments of Ontario and Canada. Niagara is pursuing this in order to secure both funding support for infrastructure and regulatory changes which we need to support the movement of goods and people across the international border. It will also help foster the development of Niagara's growing green economy, which includes advanced manufacturing, agri-tourism and other emerging sectors.

As KPMG has noted, Niagara offers one of the most attractive and competitive business environments anywhere and the Region has only begun the job of selling ourselves internationally, but support is needed from the province and federal government to maximize our competitive advantages.

Much was achieved however; there are great things to look forward to.

Next June, the Region will host The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Conference in Niagara Falls, showcasing our Region – especially the shores and beaches – to an international audience.

Next Fall the Region will host the CANAM Bi-National Trade Alliance bringing experts from across Canada and the United States to deal with all aspects of cross border trade – showcasing and promoting our Niagara Gateway.

In 2012, the Region will commence celebrating the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 – 14, a war that defined the borders of our two great countries – Canada and the United States and the 200 years of peace that has ensued - a tremendous opportunity to shine a spotlight on this region and all that it has to offer.

In 2015, Niagara will provide a number of venues for the Pan Am Games, again bringing an international audience to see and experience this great region.

The Regional Chair stated that about a year ago, he started to seriously consider his future, as much as he enjoys the role of Regional Chair and serving as a Regional Councillor for St. Catharines, he knows that he has made the right decision and that he is ready to pursue other interests and challenges. Public service has its challenges and its rewards, the rewards come with working together toward the common goal of making the community a better, richer place and he is proud of all that, together, we've accomplished. He stated that he is indebted to each member of Council for the support during his tenure and for the work you do in serving our citizens.

The Regional Chair acknowledged and thanked senior staff and the Corporate Management Team, his office staff (including Neal Roberts, and Elaine Aldridge) and his wife Betsy for her steadfast support.

445. Chair's Comments Respecting the Outgoing Councillors

Regional Chair Partington noted the accomplishments of outgoing Regional Councillors Casselman, Cordiner, Gabriel, Garcia, Goulbourne, Henderson, Lepp, Puttick, Salci, Saracino, Smeaton and Trombetta. He further stated that he would be remiss if he did not mention Councillor Mike Collins who passed away in office. Mike continues to be remembered by all of us for his dedicated public service, for his passion for the issues and for the people he represented, and for his love of this chamber and the discussions and debates to which he was often a spirited contributor. He will be missed for a long time to come.

446. Chief Administrative Officer's Comments Respecting Staff/Council Relations

Mr. Trojan on behalf of the Corporate Management Team and the employees of the Niagara Region thanked Regional Council for their dedication to Niagara Region and its residents.

447. Outgoing Councillor's Comments

The outgoing Regional Councillors thanked Regional Chair Partington for his leadership, their families; colleagues; the Corporate Management Team and all Regional staff for their professionalism and dedication to the residents of Niagara.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

448. CL 12-2010

Moved by Councillor Goulbourne
Seconded by Councillor Salci

That Report CL 12-2010, being the minutes of the Proceedings of Council of Thursday, October 14, 2010, be approved and adopted as presented.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

449. Moved by Councillor Cordiner
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That Communications C7595 to C7600, be received and dealt with as noted in the Council Agenda, which reads as follows:

C7595 Card of thanks from the Batcules family for the kind donation to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario in memory of Maria Batcules a retired employee of the Corporate Services Department.

Received.

C7596 A letter from Doug Earle, Executive Director, The Campaign for a Bold New Brock (October 12, 2010) respecting the External Scholarship Program.

Received.

C7597 A letter from Minister Chuck Strahl, Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities (October 8, 2010) respecting the proposed Burgoyne Bridge project and Niagara's interest in the Building Canada plan.

Received.

C7598 A letter from J. Robert S. Prichard, President and Chief Executive Officer, Metrolinx (September 17, 2010) respecting the appointment of a Bruce McCuaig as the new President and Chief Executive Officer of Metrolinx and his appointment as Chair of the Board of Directors of Metrolinx.

Received.

C7599 A letter from Minister Deb Matthews, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (October 19, 2010) advising Regional Council of the approved one-time funding of up to \$8,000 (at 100%) for a Public Health Inspector practicum field placement in Niagara's health unit.

Received.

C7600 A letter from Minister/Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (October 2010) respecting the call for nominations for the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism in Ontario.

Received.

Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

450. **T. Roy Adams Humanitarian Award Committee**

Moved by Councillor Casselman
Seconded by Councillor Bentley

That Report 1-2010, being the minutes of the T. Roy Adams Humanitarian Award Committee meeting held on October 18, 2010, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Carried.

CONFIRMING BY-LAW

451. Moved by Councillor Henderson
Seconded by Councillor Burroughs

That the following Bill be now read and do pass:

Bill 134

A By-law to Adopt, Ratify and Confirm the Actions of Regional Council at its Meeting held on the 4th of November, 2010.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Peter Partington
Regional Chair

Lisa McManus
Legislative Assistant

Kevin Bain
Regional Clerk