

Solar Program Details Nearing Completion

By Maurice Rees

(Because this is a new program, and wording needs to be exact so property owners understand what is involved, the Shoreline Journal decided to copy and paste, exactly what staff presented to council, during second reading on February 28th as outlined in the following paragraphs.)

Colchester council and staff is moving ahead as quickly as possible to finalize last minutes details of the new Solar Energy Program for area residents. Second reading to the new by-law was presented at the February 28th meeting.

A new by-law was necessary because financing for the up to 10 year program will come from the county, which residents will re-pay over a 10 year period. Because of the financial involvement, a by-law was necessary to enable the county to put a lien on the property in the event of payment default.

Here is an outline of details presented by staff for second reading to adopt the Solar Colchester Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) By-law.

Background:

- The draft By-law was first presented at the Council Committee meeting on January 10, 2019, where Council directed staff to revise the By-law and bring forward to January Council First Reading of the By-law with the discussed amendments.

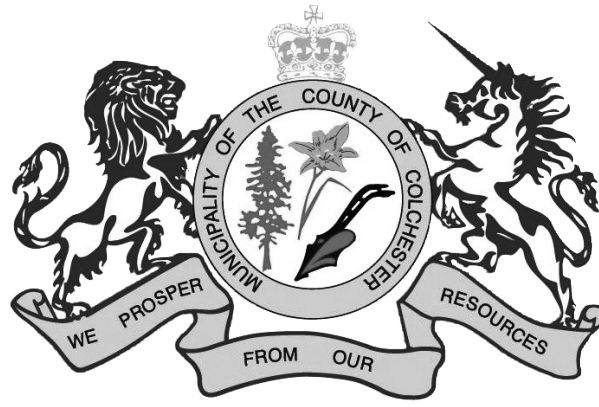
- Council directed staff to consider changes to the structure of the program. Council's concerns pertained mainly to the financial and legal risks taken on by the Municipality by purchasing and supplying solar equipment.
- A summary of the changes made by staff following the January 10th meeting is presented below.
- Council passed the amended By-law at First Reading on January 31.

Analysis of Key points of the Solar Colchester PACE) By-law include that it:

- Establishes the Solar Energy Improvement Charge, which will be levied against a property annually to recoup project costs; Establishes a payback period of 10 years; Enables the Municipality to charge interest on the Solar Energy Improvement Charge at a rate established through the Solar Colchester PACE Policy, and register a lien on a participating property. (The interest rate will be fixed for the 10 year period. However the rate will be will adjusted each year for new participants, and will depend on Canada's prime rate variances)
- Requires a \$1,000 deposit from property owners to ensure commitment and demonstrate that the property owner is in a financial position to make the annual payments.
- Releases the Municipality of liability for the quality of the equipment and installation.

Resource Implications:

- The Solar Colchester program will also help the Municipality meet its goals for the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) pro-



gram and support greenhouse gas emissions reduction objectives described in the Integrated Communities Sustainability Plan (ICSP).

- Summary of changes made to the draft By-law following the January 10th debate which included Council's concerns pertained mainly to the financial and legal risks taken on by the Municipality by purchasing and supplying solar equipment.
- The Program has been adapted so that the Municipality does not incur any financial commitments for a solar project until it is complete.
- The Solar Contractor, rather than the Municipality, will purchase the solar equipment once projects are confirmed and will still be able to benefit from bulk pricing. Once installed, the Contractor will submit a Certificate of Completion to the Municipality, at which point, if the property owner has opted for financing, a charge will be levied against the property and a lien will be registered. The Municipality will reimburse the Contractor and recoup payment from the property owner over the term of the agreement.
- Other changes to the By-law include: \$1000 deposit due when the property owner signs the Participant Agreement, (When an installation is completed, the deposit will be returned or applied against the account); a requirement all financing periods be exactly 10 years rather than up to 10 years; the removal of the requirement for all participants to complete a Home Energy Assessment; and a change to the time of year the Solar Energy Improvement Charge will be due - it will be payable at a different time than taxes, similar to other improvement charges (e.g. paving) administered by the Municipality.

There will be no cost for interested property owners to apply for the program and receive a quote. The language in the By-law allows for future growth in the program, in terms of types of properties that qualify and the contractors eligible to participate.



Goldie Chisholm, Becky Penney, Sheila Stewart and Anne Leggett at the Provincial Annual Meeting near Dartmouth on April 13 (Sheila Stewart Photo)



Becky Penney, Caroline Blair and Goldie Chisholm enjoying snack time at the April 15th meeting. (Sheila Stewart Photo)

Colchester Trefoil Guild Notes

By Sheila Stewart

Colchester Trefoil Guild met in the Community Room, Truro Mall on Monday, April 15, 2019 with nine members present. We enjoyed having our meeting in this new meeting place and hope to meet there again in the next few months.

On Saturday, April 13, the Provincial Trefoil Guild AGM was held near Dartmouth, NS. Of the 38 present, four were members from our Guild: Anne Leggett, Becky Penney, Goldie Chisholm and Sheila Stewart. All enjoyed the day, learning much about the workings of the organization at the meeting in the morning, meeting old friends over lunch, and participating in song sessions in the afternoon. All especially enjoyed the Campfire, a time of singing the old familiar Guide songs and re-learning some of the old favourite singing games.

Several members reported that they had banded together to take in some of the theatrical offerings during the past month - the Hubtown presentation of The Great Kooshog Lake Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby and CEC's Newsies.

We have been blessed to be part of the wonderful Girl Guide organization and, in turn, have been recognized and thanked by our Provincial Commissioner, Lorena Fortune and by our Provincial Trefoil Liaison, Darlene Duggan.

We are looking forward to



Mary Beckett with her Swedish Woven Basket. (Sheila Stewart Photo)

supporting the Colchester Rangers, Girl Guides of Canada, who will be travelling to Europe in July 2020 by attending their Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction being held on April 26 at the Bible Hill Fire Hall. No doubt some will take advantage of the take-out option while others will opt for either the 5:30 seating and others the 6:30 one.

Caroline Blair provided us with a Program making Swedish Woven Heart baskets with a Spring theme. There was much tongue twisting and finger tugging as we learned to weave two folded pieces of paper into a lovely basket, ready to be filled with spring flowers or perhaps a tiny Easter bunny!

Our next meeting will be on May 27, a week later than usual to allow members to enjoy the Victoria Day weekend.

Pac Report to Council Recommends First Reading

By Maurice Rees

The Planning Advisory Committee of the Municipality of Colchester advisory to council was included in the media package for the April 25th meeting. Notes from Tom Taggart, chair from the April 1, 2019 meeting included:

Phil and Brenda Leil - The Committee reviewed a request by Phil and Brenda Leil to re-zone 10.5 acres of land, from General Commercial, C-1 & Residential, R-2 to Highway Commercial, C-2 and R-2. The existing 5 lots would be re-configured, resulting in 2 lots being created.

Frontage and access for a proposed service center for MBW Courier and Fero Waste & Recycling would be off Parkway Drive, with a staff entrance off Truro Heights Road. The Committee reviewed the staff report including development patterns, zoning and future land use and information on on-site water supply.

The civil design work, including the storm drainage plan were reviewed and dis-

cussed in detail with the Applicant's engineer. The Committee has requested engineering stamped plans be submitted prior

to First Reading, which has been done. Numerous property owners from the surrounding area addressed the Committee, with questions and concerns ranging from storm water drainage issues, impact on well water, traffic impacts, increase in noise, loss of future residential land, effective screening and

hours of operation. After consideration of citizen concerns and clarifications made by the applicants, the Committee recommended that Council approve this application, as presented. The matter was brought forward to the April 25th meeting for approval of first reading of amendments to Central Colchester Land Use by-law. A Public Hearing will be held during second reading.

Calder Creelman Letter - The Committee reviewed a letter from Calder Creelman,

seeking advice for developing his property on Onslow Road. This letter was submitted in October of 2018, but a response was put on hold until the Creelman development agreement application was decided on by Council.

Jon Creelman addressed the Committee and discussion followed, with Committee members expressing some concern about providing advice on how developers

should develop land. Mr. Creelman was reminded that both the developers and the Committee have heard from residents in terms of what was objectionable and this should be used as a guide for any future applications. Following the public meeting during which residents objections were heard council voted to deny the Creelman application.

Oxford Receives Geophysical Testing Funding

By Maurice Rees

Even though the Oxford sinkhole has not increased in size since last fall, there's a worrisome dip in the pavement on adjacent Hwy 104. ACOA and the Province have committed funding for specialized geophysical and geotechnical testing of the downtown sinkhole and surrounding areas including Hwy 104.

Sources have indicated

when the highway was constructed there was one particular area where the contractor had a backfilling problem. The funding is non-repayable. This project will help the Town understand potential impacts on public safety, infrastructure stability and the local business community, and will help identify measures to mitigate those impacts.

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