

Johnson's Repaving Pressure

By Maurice Rees

Colchester Councillor, Tim Johnson is applying pressure, like not seen before, to have the municipality develop a plan to repaving of 112 Km J-Class roads. Information presented to council committee on April 15th there are 31 Km of county owned roads. The thorny matter of repaving roads, which have been untouched for upwards of 20 years, has been brought before council several times over the years. In each discussion council failed to develop a plan to go forward.

Since his election to council in October 2020, District 5 councillor, Tim Johnson has been unrelenting continuing to apply pressure for action. During their January meeting, Council defeated a motion to fund J Class Paving via the general tax rate and the gas tax. A repaving program requires a 50% contribution from the county, with the province covering the other 50%. Historically, the County's 50% cost share for J Class Road paving has been funded by the residents, pending a successful petition. However petition attempts, which require 66% approval, have been disastrous pitting neighbour against neighbour and causing local councillors tremendous grief.

During the meeting, Public Works director stated repaving costs to the county would be reduced to \$182,000 if the formula was changed to 25% from county coffers general tax revenues based on 20 year rotation. (See separate story on discussion at April 15th committee meeting).

Michelle (Newell) Boudreau, Director of Public Works presented a report to council indicating a breakdown of J-Class Roads for each district, assessment values, length of roads, and impact on individual tax bills and estimated annual costs based on 15 and 20 year rotation.

In her report the public works director noted, "In recent years, the Province has budgeted \$10M annually for their 50% share of J Class Road paving projects province wide".



The Director's report was very detailed, and broke out the costs for each of the municipalities 11 electoral districts. However, another portion included looking at the total assessed value of homes fronting on J Class Roads in the County and reviewed the option of applying an area rate to this group of properties. The total assessed value of County roads was also reviewed and revealed: 112 Km of J-Class roads contain property assessment of \$878.9-Million, costing \$485,333 per year for 15 years for an area rate of (\$0.061 per \$100 assessment) with a tax property tax increase of \$61.00 per \$100,000 of assessment for a 15 year rotation. This means if your property was assessed at \$300,000 the tax bill for having all J-Class roads in the county repaving on 15 year rotation would be \$183.00.

On 20 year rotation, the annual cost would be \$364,000 for an area rate of (\$0.046 per \$100 assessment) with a tax property tax increase of \$46.00 per \$100,000 of assessment. This means if your property was assessed at \$300,000 the tax bill for having all J-Class roads in the county repaving on 20 year rotation would be \$138.00.

Another piece of data provided by Public Works Director indicated there are 31 Km of county owned roads which would cost \$134,333 per year, tax rate of \$0.055 per 100 assessment, (\$55.00 for each \$100,000 of property assessment) for 15 year rotation. On 20 year rotation the tax bill impact is \$100,750 per year having individual tax bill rate of \$0.042 per \$100 assessment, creating a tax payer cost of \$42.00 for each \$100,000 property assessment.

These illustrations of impacts on tax bills would be ongoing, because at the end of 15

or 20 years, the repaving process would start all over again.

One of councillor Johnson's suggestions was to have the costs of a repaving program shared with Province 50%, County 25% as part of the general budget, and 25% covered by an area rate within each of the 11 electoral districts. (A separate table broken down by electoral district is presented elsewhere).

At their February 2021 meeting, Council directed staff to bring forward additional options including seeking funding programs to support J Class Paving. The estimated cost of repaving a road is \$120 to \$140 per metre. The County's total J Class length of 110 km, a 15-year rotation for paving would result in the resurfacing of about 7km of road per year. A 20-year rotation would result in the repaving of 5.5 km per year. With the Province would fund 50% of the work, the County's annual contribution towards J Class paving would range between \$500,000 and \$350,000, for 15 and 20-year paving rotations respectively.

As a sample the report indicated Ice Pond in District 5 shows an area rate of 6 cents per \$100 for 10 years, (\$60.00 per \$100,00 assessment, and an area rate of \$0.046 (4.6 cents) per \$100, \$46.00 per \$100,000 assessment based on a 20 year rotation.

In addition to considering area rates by district or rates by road frontage, there is also the option of levying uniform charges for people fronting on the street paving project. As a very high-level example, the repaving of Ice Pond Drive (800 metres) would cost \$104,000 and 50% of this would be divided among 39 property owners based on frontage. The rough cost per property would be \$1,300, to be paid over 10 years. Given that the average assessed value on Ice Pond Drive is \$215,000, this \$130 per year would be equivalent to an area rate of \$0.06 per \$100 of assessment for 10 years.

To give a general idea of impacts, an area rate increase of \$0.020 (2 cents) on a \$150,000 assessment would result in a tax bill increase of \$30 per year. For a \$200,000 assessment, the increase would be \$40 per year.

New Email Address for Poetry Committee

The Oxford Poetry Committee has a new email address oxfordpoetryfestival@gmail.com In addition to saying, "Happy Poetry Month" Ruthie Patriquin, on behalf of the Oxford Poetry Committee Member encouraged people to follow the committee activities at

<https://www.facebook.com/PoetryAtLargeOxford>

Visitors have a chance to win a Wild Blueberry Poetry Basket of goodies in addition to enjoying the local talent featured throughout the month.

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Taggart Offers for PC Nomination

Continued from page 1
sumed Rankin will try to go in advance of the Feds, which could also offer an early fall possibility. Currently the Liberals have a one seat majority with standings being Liberals, 26; Progressive Conservative, 18; New Democrats, 5 and Independent, 2.

Whenever it's called, the number of MLA's will be increased from 51 to 55 seats, following redistribution, when four new ridings were created.



Tom Taggart

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