



**The Corporation of the Township of Norwich
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday April 25, 2023
Regular Council Meeting**

In Attendance:

Council:

Mayor Jim Palmer
Councillor Scholten
Councillor Stubbs
Councillor Gear
Councillor Couwenberg

Staff:

Kyle Kruger, CAO
James Johnson, Director of Finance
Kimberley Armstrong, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

1. Call to Order

The regular session of the 2022-2026 Council of the Township of Norwich was held in the Council Chambers, Norwich, commencing at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Palmer presiding.

2. Approval of Agenda

Resolution #1

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear;

That the Agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

3. Public Recognition / Presentations

None

4. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures were reported.

5. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

None

6. PUBLIC MEETINGS / HEARINGS

6.1 The Municipal Act

None

6.2 The Drainage Act

None

6.3 The Planning Act

None

6.4 Other

None

7. DELEGATIONS: 7:05 p.m.

As per Section 8.1.4 of the Procedural By-law - Delegations shall be limited to speak for no more than ten minutes and where a delegation consists of a group of two or more persons, shall be limited to fifteen minutes.

7.1 Dr. David J. Lipsy

Re: The two competing “notice of motions”

Dr. Lipsy provided an overview of his background, including being a minister of the gospel. He spoke to the two conflicting motions commenting that they are irreconcilable because people disagree about beliefs which are part of their identity. He expressed his opinion that we should only promote an identity that we all share and offered discussion with anyone who wished to engage. In response to a question for clarity, he commented that the use of symbols to bolster an identity is counter productive and triggering.

7.2 William and Edwin Van Lagen

Re: Division in our community must stop

Mr. William Van Lagen advised spoke to the power of community and the wish to build a strong community, however differences in personal opinion is dividing and deteriorating it. He advised that he heard many opinions when canvassing for the election. He spoke to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and commented that the right of religion is equal to the other freedoms. He encouraged Council to only fly the government flags since certain flags are divisive and by flying one they must fly them all.

Mr. Edwin Van Lagen encouraged everyone to join local groups, treat each other with respect so peace will come back to Norwich township

There were Council comments with respect to years of division in the community, that some groups require additional supports and that there is no wish to repeat what happened last year.

7.3 Oxford County Pride (Tami Murray and Elizabeth Quinto)

Re: Pride banners / flags

Ms. Quinto advised that the goal of the group is to make Oxford County safe and inclusive, highlighting businesses that promote inclusivity in the community. She read a letter provided by

the owners of Gunn's Hill Cheese which stated that they expected their tax dollars to be spend on good foundational decisions form Council and for people to feel safe and included in the community. Further commenting that their business is inclusive and has put down a pride sidewalk, however many do not feel safe in Norwich Township.

Ms. Murray read definitions of diversity, inclusion and equality. She spoke to the recent amendment to the proposed motion which identifies pride flags, commenting that no one that is putting this motion forth is unsafe or needs security. She expressed concerns with youth suicide, the violence that took place in 2022 and questioned the values of those that judge, dictate to others and justify hate with faith. She expressed concern as a tax payer in Oxford County that this proposal is contrary to Oxford's DEI objectives and the Charter of Rights.

7.4 Tyler Zacher-King
Re: Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities
Re: Flag By-laws

Mr. Zacher-King spoke to the fact the chambers and outside the municipal office is filled with people which clearly shows a need to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. He commented on the township growing, becoming more diverse, with many speaking languages other than English in their homes. Mr. Zacher-King referred to Norwich making headlines once again due to the progress banners which the previous council voted for unanimously, later backtracking. He further made reference to a Human Rights case which involved the London Mayor and resulted in fines for discrimination.

7.5 Kalen Bartlett and Scott Aldinton
Re: Flag By-law

Mr. Scott Aldinton stated that this is no longer about flying pride flags, this is about discrimination about LGBTQ community and urge you to vote against this by-law.

Ms. Kalen Bartlett advised that she is a teacher at CASS and shared comments from students that live within our community. She explained that the 'Rainbow Knights' creates a safe space for youth and that hanging the pride flag shows a symbol of support so everyone knows they are a valued member of the community. Ms. Bartlett commented that we cannot let the intolerant few continue to make people feel lonely and scared, everyone has a right to feel safe in their community and home. She advised that this is not about promoting one group over another, this is about safety and a by-law will only embolden those who stole flags.

7.6 Jennifer Wild
Re: Motion Re: flag and banner policy

Ms. Jennifer Wild commented that with the change to the proposed motion, it is now an outright declaration against the LGBTQ community. Many have felt unsafe in Norwich due to vandalism and hate speech and this impacts their ability to work in the community. She spoke to living in Canada which is known worldwide for cultural diversity and inclusivity including flying the pride flag on Parliament Hill. Which acknowledges liberation from oppression and is visible support to those that need it. Ms. Wild also provided an overview on the statistics of abuse, hate crime and suicide.

7.7 Sydney Van den Hoek

Re: Councillor Scholten's proposal and the Effects on the Community

Ms. Van den Hoek advised she has been a resident of Norwich for six years and subject to hate and recrimination for too long. She spoke to the effects of hate on members of the community and ask Council to reflect on if it were someone close to them and something as small as flying a flags can help change someone's life. Ms. Van den Hoek spoke to the violent hate crimes, higher risk of depression, increased risk of suicide and asked Council to think of their family when voting today.

7.8 Wendy Martin

Re: Flag By-law and June Pride Month

Ms. Wendy Martin advised that she visited Norwich for years before moving here a few years ago. She expressed her support for the proposed Flag By-law. She commented that when we allow one flag to be flown we have to let every flag be flown and a Flag By-law is the fairest way our community. She questioned if they are trying to remove the word woman and make the adult female less than we are, stating we need to accept each other and not put labels on each other. She commented that you shouldn't need anyone's approval to be who you are.

Resolution #2

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear;

That the Delegations of: David J. Lipy, William and Edwin Van Lagen, Tami Murray and Elizabeth Quinto of Oxford Pride, Tyler Zacher-King, Kalen Bartlet, Scott Adlinton, Jennifer Wild, Sydney Van den Hoek, and Wendy Martin, regarding the two proposed notice of motions be received as information.

Carried

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Petition

Re: Request only National, provincial and municipal flags in our community

8.2 Petition – Free Reformed Church of Oxford County

Re: Support for Councillor Scholten's motion

8.3 Collection of Correspondence received regarding the Notice(s) of Motion

(The attached is correspondence that staff are aware of, there may be additional items that were shared with Council members only. Also, anonymous correspondence has not been included)

Councillor Stubbs commented on the many emails received and thanked everyone who did so in a respectful manner, acknowledging it is difficult to make change and dialogue is a step in the right direction.

Resolution #3

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear;

That the Petitions and Correspondence as listed in Agenda Items 8.1 to 8.3 be received as information and further that all correspondence be supported.

Councillor Stubbs requested a recorded vote:

Councillor Stubbs	Nay
Councillor Couwenberg	Yea
Councillor Gear	Nay
Mayor Palmer	Yea
Councillor Scholten	Yea

Carried

9. COMMITTEE MINUTES

None

10. REPORTS

10.1 Planning and Development Services

None

10.2 Fire and Protective Services

No report

10.3 Drainage Services

No report

10.4 Building Services

No report

10.5 Public Works Services

No report

10.6 Community Development Services

No report

10.7 Medical Centre Services

No report

10.8 Financial Services

No report

10.9 Administrative Services

10.9.1 Request – Membership – Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities

Councillor Stubbs

Report CAO 2023-13

Mr. Kruger provided an overview of the report, advising guides were provided from the Coalition. It is recognized that smaller municipalities have fewer resources so they have suggestions for proceeding, however it is suggested that it would still require dedicated time equivalent to ½ a full-time position in order to commence the process and actions plans for the first few years.

Mr. Kruger commented that discussions are ongoing within Oxford County regarding DEI initiatives and there may be opportunity to utilize partnerships.

There was Council discussion with respect to establishing a DEI Committee to work through the steps outlined by the Coalition, the core values of the Township Strategic Plan lists diversity and membership would be directly related to the Safety & Wellness Plan.

Moved by Alisha Stubbs, seconded by Shawn Gear;

Report No. CAO 2023-13, Request for Membership in the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities be received as information; and further That Council authorize and direct staff to pursue discussions with Oxford municipalities regarding joint EDI initiatives, including possible membership in the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.

Councillor Gear proposed amending the main motion

Resolution #4

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Alisha Stubbs

That the motion regarding membership in the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities be amended to include the following: That the Township establish a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee prior to joining membership to Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.

Councillor Stubbs requested a recorded vote:

Councillor Stubbs	Yea
Councillor Couwenberg	Nay
Councillor Gear	Yea
Mayor Palmer	Nay
Councillor Scholten	Nay

Lost

Resolution #5

Moved by Alisha Stubbs, seconded by Shawn Gear;

Report No. CAO 2023-13, Request for Membership in the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities be received as information; and further That Council authorize and direct staff to pursue discussions with Oxford municipalities regarding joint EDI initiatives, including possible membership in the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.

Councillor Stubbs requested a recorded vote:

Councillor Stubbs	Yea
Councillor Couwenberg	Nay
Councillor Gear	Nay
Mayor Palmer	Nay
Councillor Scholten	Nay

Lost

10.9.2 Proposed Motion – Flag and Banner Policy - Amended Councillor Scholten

Moved by John Scholten, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg;

That a by-law be established to:

- Provide that only the three official government flags (Federal, Provincial, and Municipal) be flown on any Township property,
- Provide that only banners comprised of the three official government flags be flown on Township owned streetlight poles
- Provide that the Township participate in the Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee

Councillor Stubbs raised a Point of Order with respect to Councillor Scholten providing a motion that is different from what appeared on the agenda which and also different than what was provided in the Notice of Motion, questioning the intent.

Mr. Kruger made reference to the Procedural By-law Section 6.9.2 which advises a notice must be filed with the Clerk no later than 4:30 pm the Wednesday prior to the meeting, advising that Council has the opportunity to suspend rules in the procedural by-law and also that the Councillor that proposed the motion has the opportunity to not proceed on the motion.

There was Council discussion regarding each of the proposed motions, the stressful situation and many people being in attendance regarding the issue. Councillor Scholten advised that the change was made in order to have correlation between the flags and banners.

The Chair and Council determined to move forward with the proposed motion as was included on the agenda.

That a by-law be established to:

- Provide that only the three official government flags (Federal, Provincial, and Municipal) be flown on any Township property,

- Provide that only banners related to promotion of downtown businesses or for downtown beautification be installed on Township owned streetlight poles, which excludes Progress or Pride banners
- Provide that the Township participate in the Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee

Councillor Stubbs requested permission of the Chair to bring forward an alternative motion regarding a Flag By-law if the motion on the floor is lost.

A Motion was put forward to amend the main motion.

Resolution #6

Moved by John Scholten, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg;

To amend motion 10.9.2 to exclude the wording progress and pride flags and add banners only to use the Canadian, Ontario and Township banners.

Councillor Stubbs requested a recorded vote:

Councillor Stubbs	Nay
Councillor Couwenberg	Yea
Councillor Gear	Nay
Mayor Palmer	Yea
Councillor Scholten	Yea

Carried

Resolution #7 (as amended)

Moved by John Scholten, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg;

That a by-law be established to:

- Provide that only the three official government flags (Federal, Provincial, and Municipal) be flown on any Township property,
- Provide that only banners related to promotion of downtown businesses or for downtown beautification be installed on Township owned streetlight poles, and include banners only to use the Canadian, Ontario, and Township banners
- Provide that the Township participate in the Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee

Councillor Stubbs requested a recorded vote:

Councillor Stubbs	Nay
Councillor Couwenberg	Yea
Councillor Gear	Nay
Mayor Palmer	Yea
Councillor Scholten	Yea

Carried

Council members expressed their appreciation to the community and others for coming forward and sharing information, their thoughts and experiences in a respectful way.

10.9.3 Proposed Motion – Proclamation of Pride Month in Norwich

Councillor Stubbs

Human Rights Code - Information

Presentation

[Safe & Well Oxford Communities \(norwich.ca\)](http://norwich.ca)

Councillor Stubbs provided an overview her presentation, speaking to the equity and inclusion toolkit, the danger of the single story and that stereotypes are incomplete, questioning the narrative of Norwich with respect to privilege and power and advising that we need to look beyond what we know.

There was Council discussion with respect to wanting proper supports in place and having a DEI committee in place to build from.

Resolution #8

Moved by Alisha Stubbs, seconded by Shawn Gear;

WHEREAS the Municipality of the Township of Norwich supports the rights of every citizen to experience equality and freedom from discrimination, and

WHEREAS all people regardless of age, gender identity, race, colour, ethnicity, nation of origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or disability, have the right to be treated equally as human beings, and

WHEREAS the Municipality of the Township of Norwich accepts and embraces diversity in its population as a means to grow the social fabric of the community, and

WHEREAS the Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (2SLGBTQ) communities contribute to the successes and vibrancy of the Municipality of the Township of Norwich, and

WHEREAS while progress has been made, further recognition, awareness and education related to the 2SLGBTQ+ community is needed to prevent discrimination and promote inclusivity.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Mayor and Council of the Township of Norwich proclaim each June as Pride Month in Norwich Township, beginning June 2023, and encourage and promote equality for the 2SLGBTQ+ community throughout the municipality.

Councillor Stubbs requested a recorded vote:

Councillor Stubbs

Yea

Councillor Couwenberg	Nay
Councillor Gear	Nay
Mayor Palmer	Nay
Councillor Scholten	Nay

Lost

11. NOTICE(S) OF MOTION
None

13. BY-LAWS
No. 22-2023 To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council

13.1 First and Second Reading of the Following By-law
Resolution #9
Moved by John Scholten, seconded by Shawn Gear;

That the following By-laws as listed, be introduced and taken as read a first and second time.

No. 22-2023 To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council

Carried

13.2 Third Reading of the Following By-law
Resolution #10
Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by John Scholten;

That By-laws 22-2023 as listed, be taken as read a third and final time and passed and signed by the Mayor and Clerk and the Corporate Seal be affixed thereto.

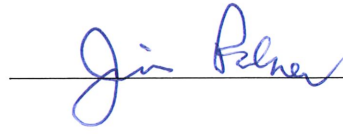
Carried

14. Adjournment – 10:07 p.m.
Resolution #11
Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear;

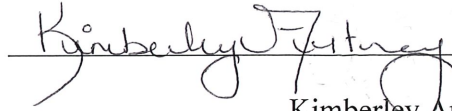
That this Council do now adjourn.

Carried

These minutes adopted by way of Resolution No. 2 as approved by Council at its meeting on the 9th day of May 2023.



Mayor
Jim Palmer



Clerk
Kimberley Armstrong