



Council Highlights

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Elgin County Council Approves 2024 Council Committee and Local Board Appointments

Elgin County Council has approved the Council Committee and Local Board Appointments for the year 2024. Warden Ketchabaw's recommended appointments received unanimous approval, signaling a collective commitment to community-driven governance.

Pursuant to Council's Committee By-Law, No. 23-01, these annual appointments play a pivotal role in shaping the county's governance landscape, ensuring representation that aligns with the community's needs. These strategic appointments not only embody a transparent and participatory governance approach but also echo the County's dedication to ensuring representatives are attuned to the evolving needs of Elgin County.



Council Navigates Future Growth with Endorsement of the Final Draft Elgin County Official Plan

In a pivotal move towards shaping the future of Elgin County, County Council has officially endorsed the Final Draft of the Elgin County Official Plan. The plan, subject to a comprehensive statutory review, marks a significant milestone in the County's ongoing efforts to strategically manage growth and development.

The comprehensive process began in the winter of 2021 with a statutory review of the County Official Plan, culminating in the completion of the updated Official Plan in March 2023 after extensive background research and public consultation. Despite facing delays during the summer of 2023 due to various factors, including the announcement of the PowerCo. battery plant in St. Thomas and organizational changes, dedicated staff persisted in refining the plan.

An essential component of the review involved a thorough examination of population projections and land need assessments by Hemson, the firm responsible for the original analysis. Notably, their addendum concluded that the County's existing urban land supply is sufficient to meet projected demand, with the cities of London and St. Thomas expected to absorb the majority of increased population and housing demand resulting from the battery plant.

The Final Draft of the Elgin County Official Plan incorporates changes based on feedback received during technical and public circulation in the spring of 2023. Staff recommendations for adjustments were influenced by planning application processes and further reviews. Noteworthy is the absence of comments from the Province of Ontario, as the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing indicated in June 2023 that no comments would be provided. While expressing concern, staff emphasized the County's expertise in crafting policy wording based on Ministry feedback.

With County Council's endorsement, the plan now enters the statutory adoption process. An integral part of the statutory approvals process outlined in the Planning Act involves hosting a public open house and public meeting. These gatherings provide an invaluable opportunity for the public to participate in the official plan review, pose questions, and express opinions on proposed policies and land use designations. The County is mandated to conduct these meetings, which may occur either in-person or virtually. Staff, drawing from their experience, recommend virtual meetings for their flexibility, ease of recording for public records, organized public input, and cost-effectiveness.

As Elgin County embarks on this exciting phase, it remains dedicated to fostering transparent, accessible, and community-driven planning processes that shape a vibrant future for all.

Elgin County Serves Up a Nourishing Future: Council Approves Innovative Meals on Wheels Agreement with WECHC

Elgin County Council has approved an exciting Meals on Wheels agreement with the West Elgin Community Health Centre (WECHC). The report, presented by the Director of Homes and Seniors Services, received Council's authorization for the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer to execute the agreement. This decision solidifies the partnership between Elgin and WECHC for the period spanning January 5, 2024 to September 30, 2025.

The agreement arises from the conclusion of the current arrangement with Bobier Villa, which prepares meals for the WECHC Meals on Wheels program. The new agreement not only introduces essential pricing adjustments for sustainable service delivery but also emphasizes Elgin County's commitment to enhancing community well-being. By providing crucial nutritional support to seniors in West Elgin communities, this decision reflects a proactive approach to fostering health and vitality among residents.

Budgeting Brilliance: Elgin County Elevates Budget Management with Questica Inc.

In a strategic move to enhance operational efficiency, Elgin County Council has agreed to award a contract for a Budget Software Solution to Questica Inc. This five-year agreement, with potential extensions up to a total of nine years, represents a significant investment in technology aimed at streamlining the budget process. The new software solution, as detailed in the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued on November 8, 2023, offers a comprehensive tool for managing data, calculations, workflow, and reporting capabilities across various budget categories, including operating budgets, capital budgets, position budgets, and reserve fund budgets.

Following the closure of the RFP on December 1, 2023, and thorough evaluations by the dedicated Evaluation Committee, Questica Inc. emerged as the preferred proponent, showcasing the highest-scoring and most qualified proposal. The financial implications of the contract, totaling \$361,380 plus HST over five years, align with the County's 10-Year Plan operating and capital budgets. Implementation is set to commence in late January, with the anticipated Go Live date for the new software slated for June 2024. This strategic investment not only ensures a robust budgeting infrastructure but also marks a significant step in Elgin County's commitment to embracing technological advancements for effective governance.

Voices Unveiled: STELIP's Trailblazing Survey Illuminates Immigrant Experiences in St. Thomas-Elgin

Council received correspondence from the St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership (STELIP) detailing the results of the survey they conducted in June 2023 to delve into the experiences, challenges, and recommendations of immigrants in the St. Thomas-Elgin area. This was the first year STELIP conducted the survey, representing a significant milestone as the first dedicated exploration of immigrant perspectives in the region. The comprehensive survey, open to immigrants aged 16 and above, revealed insights from 99 participants who lived, worked, or studied in St. Thomas or Elgin County at the time. While not statistically representative of the entire immigrant population, the findings shed light on the diverse perspectives and experiences of those who participated, paving the way for a deeper understanding of immigrant life in St. Thomas and Elgin County. Key findings include a diverse participant pool, varying lengths of residence in Canada, and high workforce participation, offering a valuable starting point for further exploration and community understanding.



For the complete **January 9, 2024 Agenda Package**, please visit the following link:
County Council Agenda Package