

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 23, 2008

Here are the highlights from the regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council meeting held Jan. 22.

Gearing Up for Budget: The budget meeting schedule kicks into high gear in February as committees begin to review draft departmental budgets compiled by staff since early November. On Feb. 3 the joint services sub-committees will be addressed, followed by public works on Feb. 4, governance and finance on Feb. 5 and economic development on Feb. 18. The consolidated budget is to be reviewed by directors on Feb. 17 and by governance and finance on March 5 with final approval expected by the end of March or early April. Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer Nigel White gave council a brief overview at a special governance and finance meeting following council on Thursday. He outlined preliminary calculations and possible issues, including uploading and downloading of services between the province and municipalities and local efforts to protect property tax rates. Council also passed a motion seeking clarification from the province regarding a definition in the Assessment Act that could affect the way assessment is calculated for tenanted commercial buildings. Budget meetings are open to the public. For more information, contact Nigel White, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2332.

Providing Input Regarding Accessibility Law: Citing support from both the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus and Leeds and Grenville's accessibility advisory committee, council has passed a resolution urging the province to rethink the implementation of draft communication standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. At an accessibility consultation session in January, stakeholders indicated the property tax system cannot support the communication standards, which outline how businesses and organizations may be required to provide accessible public information in various formats such as online, print (e.g. Braille), verbal and digital to accommodate people with disabilities. The resolution suggests the province should provide funding and technical support for these services. It adds the cost-impact analysis is unrealistic and that local requirements for the services need to be taken into account. For more information, contact Steven Silver, Counties CAO, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

ATV Policy Defined: Council has passed a motion reaffirming its policy from 2004 regarding road use by ATVs. The policy indicates ATV access to the municipal road system is generally not acceptable, but if it can be demonstrated that a specific section of municipal road is needed to complete an established trail system, the counties or municipality may consider limited access to that specific section on a trial basis. Safety and nuisance concerns would have to be satisfactorily resolved. The resolution follows requests by ATV users and sparked concerns over enforcement and damage. Staff indicate the policy supports approval for access to specific roads when requested if a proposed trail system is presented. For more information, contact Les Shepherd, Director of Works, Planning Services and Asset Management, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2412.

Hazardous Waste Depot Costs Down: Council heard the 2008 household hazardous waste collection program, representing 1,100 households, saw fewer vehicles but collected more waste last year. Costs to the counties for hosting the two collection events dropped by \$10,500 to about \$49,500 because of an agreement with Stewardship Ontario. Council approved a motion to negotiate a contract extension with Drain-All for continued services with this program. Potential dates for 2009 will be presented in February. For more information, contact Geoff McVey, Public Works, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2416.

Upcoming Meetings – Joint Services Sub-committee, Feb. 3; Public Works, Feb. 4; Governance and Finance, Feb. 5; Joint Services Committee, Feb. 18; Counties Council, Feb. 19. All meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the council chambers, 25 Central Ave. W., Brockville, unless otherwise noted. *Please note: Non-emergency delegations are heard at committee meetings.* For more information contact 613-342-3840, ext. 2307.