

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 18, 2010

Here are the highlights from the regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council meeting held March 18.

More Funding Granted for Limerick Forest: Council authorized the Warden and CAO to amend an agreement with the National Trails Coalition to receive an additional \$40,000 for the Limerick Forest Interpretive Centre. The matching funds were offered to the counties thanks to unspent funds for other coalition projects. The counties incurred additional costs due to issues related to building code, groundwater, wiring, accessibility, fire code, water treatment and security. Geoff McVey, Limerick Forest Manager, reported that because the counties had already committed more to the project than the required matching amount, this additional funding actually saves the counties \$20,000. The project is expected to be completed at the end of this month. For more information, contact Geoff McVey, Limerick Forest Manager, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2416.

Raising Mental Health Services Concerns: Following a presentation by the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, councillors concluded they must champion not only for the possibility of job losses, but also for the provision of services in the area as programs are lost at the Brockville Mental Health Centre. In a recent presentation, George Weber, president and CEO of the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, outlined restructuring and future plans for the centre, including the transfer of beds to the Brockville General Hospital once the hospital receives funds for an addition or renovation that would not take away existing physical care beds. Although some supports are available, council expressed concerns regarding the discharge of individuals into the community and long-term care facilities from the geriatric psychiatry and rehabilitation services, as well as increased pressure on general practitioners to treat mental illness and the waiting list for teenagers to see specialists. Mr. Weber confirmed political support and community backing are needed to break the impasse at the provincial and federal levels and allow the centre to grow. For more information, contact Steven Silver, Counties CAO, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

Seeking Funding for Fire Communications: Council passed a resolution calling upon the federal and provincial governments to provide funding assistance to municipalities to improve fire communications systems for the benefit and safety of citizens. This comes as the radio communications industry shifts towards digital technology, resulting in few technical supports for the traditional analog systems. Migrating to digital provides improved communications capability and the ability to adjust to future changes, but the costs are unaffordable and there is no federal or provincial assistance. The Leeds and Grenville fire chiefs have also drafted a resolution seeking funding support to be presented to the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs which, if supported, would go on to the Canadian association and on to the provincial and federal governments. The counties' resolution will be tabled at the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus meeting this week. Staff are also studying the issue of amalgamating communications systems for fire, police and emergency medical services. For more information, contact Nigel White, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2332.

Addressing Long-Term Care Funding: Council passed a resolution calling on the provincial minister of health and long-term care to provide more flexibility in the way funding is delivered for long-term care residents. The resolution notes Ontario municipalities contribute more per capita to health care and social services than other municipalities in Canada and Bill 140, which adjusts the regulatory and funding formulas for long-term care, will increase the cost of delivering services to residents. This consumes already-stretched local property tax dollars and limits municipalities' abilities to deliver other programs to residents, including care to the aged. The resolution asks that municipal council be allowed to consider all partnerships – public, private and local outreach – when considering delivery options. For more information, contact Dorothy Theobald, Director of Human Services, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2293.

Upcoming Meetings – Joint Services Sub-committee, April 6; Public Works, April 7; Governance and Finance, April 8; Joint Services Committee, April 21; Counties Council, April 22. 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. 2304.

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