

Wollaston firms up no-spray resolution

By Jim Eadie

Wollaston Township council has tidied up a matter from their Jan. 28 meeting where a resolution passed resulted in a letter being written to Hydro One requesting that they not spray Garlon RTU or similar herbicides within the township's boundary for maintenance of their hydro-line corridors. This action was taken in response to a large delegation by a community advocacy group Citizens for a Better Wollaston (CFBW) which opposes the herbicide spraying.

Council has learned that they have no jurisdiction over private land holdings in the municipality, and only the landowner can make that request pertaining to their land. It is however, appropriate if council wrote an amended letter covering any lands that they own including road allowances. The original resolution was amended to request no spraying of Garlon RTU or similar herbicide on Wollaston Township property.

Hydro One is not required by law to seek permission for their spraying on corridors, but as a matter of policy they follow and adhere to that procedure. Municipal clerk Jennifer Cohen told council that Hydro One has told her that they will honour the township's request.

‘It was great to have council united behind the idea of reducing the use of herbicides and pesticides on township property,’ said CFBW spokesperson Paul Ordanis. ‘It shows their commitment to protect the environment.’

During the meeting, Ordanis reminded councillors that their own strategic plan says: ‘Council must protect the environment in every decision made.’

‘Hydro spraying is damaging our brand? Live Naturally, Play Naturally, that continues to attract a lot of new people, and a lot of people with young families to the area,’ he said. ‘Our brand tells people our core values, and you are supporting that brand with your actions. Helping Hydro One might be hurting that commitment. A clean policy on township property? we can walk forward with that.’

Ordanis suggested that there should be policy developed at the highest level to address uses of herbicides and pesticides on township property.

On a different note, council continued to establish new up to date fire department bylaws. The new rules and regulations were reviewed and approved. Cohen advised council that there has been substantial work done on a training document, human resources package, and fire prevention policy. This will be brought to council for review and approval shortly.

Councillor David Naulls asked council for a review of the animal control bylaw, as he is aware there has been a recent complaint. His request would be to review the wording relating to backyard chickens, pet potbelly pigs, or ponies for example. ‘Are they recognized as domestic pets, and not livestock?’ he asked. This matter will be returned to a future council regular meeting.

Cohen told council that recording equipment has been purchased, and staff are awaiting installation in the township council chambers. Council meetings should be audio recorded by the next regular meeting.

Council agreed to hold a public budget meeting to engage the ratepayers in budget decisions at a time when more people can attend. The meeting will be held in the evening of April 11 at the Coe Hill Legion hall, at a time to be determined. More information can be obtained by calling the township's office at 613-337-5731.