



Council News & Notes

From Tuesday, June 25, 2024

Upcoming Meetings

Council Meeting
July 9

9 am

Regular
Council Meeting

Council Meeting
August 13, 2024

6 pm

Regular Council
Meeting

[View Calendar >>](#)

Mayors' Message

On June 12th I hosted and chaired the County Small Business Enterprise Facilitation working group at my home. Christine McLean from Hastings County along with a local client walked us through the challenges and opportunities facing small business. There were 15 in attendance.

On June 13th I attended the County Community and Human Services Committee meeting. On the 15th I made my way to the Tweed & Area Chamber of Commerce Classic Car event with over 50 stunning vehicles on display. Later I enjoyed many of the musical performances around town as part of Front Porch Rukus. From there I made my way to the Legion where I was afforded an opportunity to thank the Tweed Musical Festival Group for all their hard work in pulling off such a wonderful event. It was wonderful to walk around town witnessing young and old alike strolling our streets moving from one porch to the next, many with babies in hand and dogs in tow. There was such a community vibe in the air....absolutely exhilarating. What a spectacular day and thank you to all the volunteers that made it happen.

I started the 18th by Chairing the County Planning & Development Committee which was immediately followed by the County Finance, Personnel & Property Committee. That afternoon I participated in the Mayor's Golf Challenge...oh my ..it was a challenge!! A great deal of fun raising money for Community Living.

On the 19th I brought greetings and congratulations to the Community Futures 35th anniversary dinner celebration. On the 20th I made my way to Loyalist College where I attended the Children's Foundation 2024 Reach for Success Awards night. On the 22nd I, along with Councillor Flieler, attended the installation of the Evan Morton Memorial Plaque at the Heritage Centre. The gardens were dedicated to Evan. Troy Flieler crafted a stunningly beautiful sign. A picture will be appended to my Mayor's remarks. That evening I was honoured to be the guest speaker for the Tweed & Area Heritage Centre 35th Anniversary celebration hosted at the Pavilion. Councillor Flieler was also in attendance. It was an absolutely wonderful evening. I will share my speech from that evening.

On June 24th I attended the official opening of the new Paramedic Base in Stirling. What a beautiful facility. And this morning I participated in a Source Water Protection webinar.

I have also been working behind the scenes in my pursuit of essential funding to help with our infrastructure deficit as well as looking to secure funding to help with new housing developments.

On June 11th I had a 30 minute telephone conversation with MPP Marit Stiles, leader of the NDP and Queens Park Opposition. She was following up on her commitment at the OSUM conference to continue our discussion on rural issues. It was an in depth discussion of what we are facing in the Municipality of Tweed. I cited our latest blow which is the Queensborough bridge. I noted that

all small rural municipalities are on the brink of financial ruin. We are all struggling with how to repair/replace our aging infrastructure some of which is well over 100 years old. MPP Stiles was deeply concerned and has arranged for me to talk with others in the party.

On June 21st, MPP Ted Shu, the Liberal member from Kingston, joined Ryan Reid, our Public Works Manager, and I for a bridge tour. Again we laid out what we have coming down the pipeline re infrastructure costs and how we do not have the tax base nor financial resources to fund these essential projects. We visited three bridges and the first on our list was Queensborough. He asked many questions, took many notes as well as photos. He was here for over two hours. We finished with a tour visiting some of this Municipality's many highlights. MPP Shu found our financial dilemma disconcerting especially when I started citing what our neighbouring municipalities are also experiencing. He was alarmed that OPP costs consumed 20% of our \$5.5 million in tax revenues. I noted that we are also required to set aside a \$11.5 million per year for the next 15-20 years to replace aging infrastructure.

I mentioned to all three parties, NDP, Liberal and Green, that it seems surreal to me to think that they are interested in hearing our story, and that of small rural Ontario, when they really do not have much of a chance of winning this riding. To my surprise all three noted that they represent all Ontarians and they need to be well versed on all rural issues especially when it comes to lobbying for support or if they should form the next government. That certainly warrants some intense reflection. What might we actually achieve if we became a swing riding!

On Monday the 24th I meet with MP Shelby Kramp Newman. She, being a Councillor at one time, completely understood our frustrations and fears. I encouraged MPP Kramp Neuman to lobby the government to reintroduce the 1/3 1/3 1/3 program in partnership with the province and municipalities. I noted that if substantial infrastructure funding is not forthcoming, then will be forced to close a number of bridges. We also discussed the completely unacceptable response we received from Minister Sajjan re the lack of financial support for our 2022 tornado residents. Together we will re-engage that Ministry in a concerted effort to revisit their decision.

When reflecting on our aging infrastructure, I can't help but empathize with the Mayor of Calgary and Calgarians as they respond to the failure of their water system. As the Mayor noted, what is happening in Calgary is just the tip of the iceberg when considering the aging infrastructure in this country. She cited trillions of dollars will be required to address the infrastructure deficit. They are hoping their provincial government and the federal government will step in and help. The financial magnitude of what they are facing is much larger than the financial impact we are facing. However, due to our size the implications of not receiving funding borders on catastrophic. Our biggest fear is that once the federal and provincial government recognize the severity of what lies ahead, it will be too late for small rural Ontario. The dollars will be going to large urban areas.

Yesterday's Globe editorial, British Columbia Premier David Eby noted that in Ottawa, some provinces are more equal than others. He noted: "My concern is about fair treatment for British Columbia from the federal government,". "The B.C. Premier cited that Quebec and Ontario have been showered with federal dollars while his province's requests have been rebuffed." Sound familiar? Your Council has been making the same claims albeit with a slight twist. Both the Federal and Ontario provincial governments have been shoveling money to large urban centers while neglecting small rural Ontario. Hope somebody out there is listening.

The other day Councillor Valiquette shared a CBC article that dealt with the current financial dilemma facing the Municipality of Brampton. Their strategic reserve went from \$200 million to \$9.5 million in three years. Councillors have noted that "the city will face a bigger financial squeeze as a result and that new taxes or infrastructure levies may be needed in the future". Mayor Brown has frozen taxes since 2018 and eventually that strategy catches up with you. Running a small rural municipality is fraught with challenges especially when you have aging infrastructure including 52 bridges, 800 lane kms of road and a very small tax base. Nonetheless, we will get through this...we always have.

"The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide that you are not going to stay where you are." (JP Morgan) This Council is on the move and making some very bold decisions.

Tweed & Area Historical Society 35th Anniversary - Mayors Speech

Tammy, when you asked me to speak at today's celebration I noted it would be an honour to do so. On behalf of Council and the residents of the Municipality of Tweed I extend a heartfelt congratulations to the Tweed & Area Historical Society on your 35th Anniversary. What an accomplishment...

Ten years ago I was asked to MC the 25th Anniversary of this great institution. I believe that event was hosted at the Stoco Hall. And then I was invited to speak at a Christmas dinner event in 2019 hosted in Houston House. Geez...if I keep this up I am going to become one of your artifacts!!!

As wonderful as all this is....and it is indeed wonderful; today is also a bittersweet moment as I have the distinct honour and privilege of celebrating you and all of your achievements but doing so in the absence of your biggest champion, this community's brightest light, Evan Morton. I know we all miss Evan terribly. We miss his quick wit, dry humour, love for community and all those who live within its boundaries. His passion for local history and his fervent desire to keep it alive and accessible to all. Evan was indeed a renaissance man living in a time when chivalry is pretty much non-existent. Nonetheless, I think we can all agree that Evan is here with us in spirit, and we welcome that spirit, a spirit that continues to touch the lives of all of us in this room in so many beautiful and wonderful ways.

This afternoon it was heartening to witness the installation of a plaque at the Heritage Centre dedicating the Heritage Centre gardens in memory of Evan. Thank you Jim and Troy Flieler for creating a master piece that honours this great gentle man.

I would like to share with you the letter I wrote on behalf of Council in our support for the nomination of Evan for the Ontario Historical Society's Presidents Award.

It is a distinct honour for me to write this letter of support for the nomination of Evan Morton for the Ontario Historical Society's President's Award. Evan Morton, the Curator and Protector of the culture and heritage of the Municipality of Tweed and Area, passed away on his birthday at the age of 82 in August 2023.

Our Evan was truly a renaissance man having touched our lives in so many wonderful ways. He was a teacher, a librarian, a Municipal Councillor, a curator, a world traveller, a story teller, a writer, a visionary and a kind considerate gentle soul. He documented, protected, celebrated and shared our heritage with residents and visitors alike.

I recall not too long after my partner and I arrived to make Tweed our home, there was an announcement of an Ontario Heritage Trust historical plaque dedication commemorating the small pox epidemic that devastated so many families in 1884. I decided to attend that dedication. I remember sitting in the audience as visitors talked about the importance of the plaque. The podium was then turned over to Evan Morton and I sat there in awe as he stoically...reverently and with a heartfelt passion listed each family and the family members by name ...and without a note...naming those who suffered great losses in this very sad time in our history. I was completely blown away so to speak.

Now there have been many people over the years who have helped ensure that our Tweed & Area Heritage Centre survived and we are grateful to those individuals for their efforts. And Evan, without hesitation, would be the first to recognize that this was a journey only made possible because of the help of so many. However, every great idea...every great cause....every great dream ...needs a champion and we all agree that the person with the vision...the person with the dream...the person with the drive...our champion, was Evan Morton.

Evan gave selflessly of his time and energy in keeping our Heritage Centre operational, relevant and sustainable. He was thrilled to welcome visitors and was in his element when he took them on a tour. He was a champion of local history and shared his wealth of knowledge in a weekly column in our Tweed News. He worked tirelessly to raise funds to keep the centre open and to secure local treasures to ensure that our history could be shared by all for all time. He set up an endowment fund which would ensure that our Tweed & Area Heritage Centre would be able to operate if he should have to step down. He set-up the Tweed & Area Historical Society to oversee operations and to assume control of the Centre if became incapacitated.

Our community is grateful for his passion, commitment, and undying loyalty to recording, preserving, sharing and celebrating our history. On behalf of the residents of the Municipality of Tweed and Tweed Council, we humbly submit Evan Morton, a remarkable and honourable man, for the Ontario Historical Society's President's Award.

Evan was the glue that kept it all together. I think we all regretted the day, the thought, of Evan no longer being with us. What would happen to the Tweed & Area Heritage Centre? How would the Tweed & Area Historical Society survive? And lo and behold he built a Team that is as passionate about this community's history and the Heritage Centre as he ever was. Your commitment, dedication and perseverance has kept Evan's dream alive...a dream that you can now call your own.

The Municipality of Tweed is envied by many in that we have a centre, a museum, that has captured our local history which is readily available for all to share. Our Tweed & Area Heritage Centre is located in Houston House. It is a must stop for every resident, history enthusiast or

curiosity seeker. A tour of our Heritage Centre is a step back in time...actually many steps back in time. There are so many well preserved artifacts from historical families and businesses and numerous local family trees. Copies of the Tweed News back to the 1800s. Actually it is difficult to fathom the treasures in our Tweed & Area Heritage Centre if you have not taken the time to sense the history captured in the displays, on the walls or in the filing cabinets. There are few rural communities across this great country that can boast having a museum that rivals many in larger urban areas. In addition to which it doubles as an eclectic art gallery hosting the beautiful creations of so many local artists as well as showcasing its own beautiful collection of art over the ages.

It all started 35 years ago and over those years a dedicated group of residents offered an invaluable service, gathering, recording and preserving the moments of today, ensuring that they will be memories for tomorrow. How many of your troop have come and gone? Each and every person who has been part of this journey has created a legacy that celebrates who we are and who we were; where we live and where we came from; our joys, our sorrows and our dreams and our accomplishments throughout time. If you step back and you think about it so much has been achieved by so few. And that is why it is important today to not only celebrate today's champions but to acknowledge the contribution so many others have made to ensure that a first year anniversary became a 10 year anniversary and then a 25th anniversary and here we are today celebrating an amazing "mind blowing" 35 years. To this day I continue to marvel at what you have accomplished, what you have sustained. You have created a gift like none other for the residents of the Municipality of Tweed.

As I have noted, there have been many volunteers over the years who have contributed to the success of our Tweed & Area Heritage Center. At this time we would like to recognize those who currently sit on the Tweed & Area Historical Society Board. As I say your name would you please rise:

President: Jack White

Vice-President, Treasurer & Office Manager: a bearer of many hats, Tammy Meeks

Secretary: Debbie Boomhower

Directors: Councillor Jim Flieler, Sylvia & Gerry Heaysman, Penni O'Connor and Mike McGuire

Please join me in thanking these community leaders, historical enthusiasts, and I dare say, these gluttons for punishment, for all that they do to keep our Tweed & Area Heritage Centre open and accessible to all.

I now ask that everyone who is and was a volunteer with the Tweed & Area Historical Society and the Tweed & Area Heritage Centre, to please stand. Join me now in a rousing show of appreciation and support for all those who keep the dream alive.

Remember: "Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless, it is because they are priceless." That is a quote from Sherry Andersen

In closing, Council would like to present this certificate of celebration and appreciation to the Tweed & Area Historical Society on your 35th anniversary

Ontario Clean Water Agency

Amber Coupland and Derek Chapman of Ontario Clean Water Agency made a presentation speaking to the successful install of the PLC at the water plant. This project provides a significant upgrade to the control capacity of the facility and provides protection for Well #3 from the danger of catastrophic failure.