

VILLAGE OF POINT EDWARD MINUTES

Council Meeting – October 10, 2007

6:00 p.m. – Council Chambers, Point Edward Municipal Office
135 Kendall Street, Point Edward, Ontario

Council Members Present:

Mayor Kirkland Deputy Mayor Robson Councillor MacKenzie
Councillor Hand Councillor Churchill

Staff Present:

CAO Cramp

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

DELEGATIONS

Resolution #1

Moved by Deputy Mayor Robson

Seconded by Councillor MacKenzie

THAT Stuart Walker, Andy Brandt and Dave Brown, be invited within the Bar.

CARRIED.

1. Stuart Walker, Point Edward Charity Casino re: Proposed designated Lane off St. Clair Street for Nexus card holders.

Mr. Walker advised that he was present to discuss the proposed use of Bridge Street as a NEXUS only entrance to the Bridge. He advised that at least 50% of the Casino visitors are from the U.S. Over the last couple of years, there has been a significant decline in U.S. visitors. The OLG has been very active in promoting the NEXUS card as a way to get over the Bridge quicker. For their top players, they plan to pay the application fee for NEXUS and help to complete the application together with other promotions. However, even with the NEXUS, it has been difficult to get across the Bridge. It has been the worst this summer. Although the amount of traffic is dropping, the lines have become longer. With the direct lane for NEXUS users, the visitors would be able to return to the U.S. quicker. Blue Water Bridge Authority will monitor the entrance and it will allow an easy access across the Bridge. He noted that the Village of Point Edward has a vested interest in the success of the Casino.

2. Andy Brandt, Sarnia Bay Marina re: Proposed designated Lane off St. Clair Street for Nexus card holders.

Mr. Brandt advised that he is Chairman of the Sarnia Bay Marina Advisory Committee. The Committee provides ideas and initiatives to improve the service for Sarnia Bay. Although it is located in the City of Sarnia, there is a tourism impact in the Village. The low Canadian dollar previously was an inducement to come to Canada from the U.S. Now that the dollar is at par, it is no longer a bargain. Additionally, there are long line-ups at the Bridge and threats of the need for a passport. They did not want the problems to defeat them. Their customers come by boat and many by land. They are increasingly finding the Bridge to be an inconvenience. They have partnered with the OLG to encourage people to come here. They want them to enjoy the restaurants, tourist locations and, of course, the LCBO. They have added a number of additional services to Sarnia Bay as a tourist attraction including: garbage pick-up, ice, coffee, newspapers, and coupon discount programs. They have received some funding through the Ministry of Tourism for a pilot project to encourage U.S. people to come to Canadian marinas. This leads to new tourist dollars and jobs. He is present tonight to ask that serious consideration be given to open Bridge Street for NEXUS customers only so that they don't have to go to the end of the line. A NEXUS entranceway will streamline traffic flow for preferred customers who use the Bridge frequently. Many of these persons are customers of the Marina, OLG and other restaurants. There is no cost involved to control the access as this will be done by the Blue Water Bridge Authority. Bridge Street has been an existing entrance for many years and he is asking that it be re-opened to facilitate NEXUS card owners. It will provide them with a convenient access to the U.S. In the meantime, they can spend their American dollars here. He requested Council's consideration.

3. Dave Brown, Bridgeview Marina re: Proposed designated Lane off St. Clair Street for Nexus card holders.

Dave Brown advised that this is a very important issue or they would not be here to request that the Blue Water Bridge Authority proposal to open Bridge Street for NEXUS users, be approved. They are collectively associated in their objectives to make it easy for tourists to get here and get home. They have been encouraging U.S. customers to apply and obtain NEXUS cards and have reimbursed the NEXUS application fees for cards up to four per family. The effect on the three parties attending tonight is significant. Council, as ambassadors, is outstanding and has difficult tasks. There is a positive nature of the Village of Point Edward. This is a welcome mat for the entire area. They want to get them on the Bridge quickly. They have tried to make it easy and simplistic for the U.S. customers to get NEXUS, which gives them the privilege to get to the front of the line. The BWBA is entertaining the opening of Bridge Street for NEXUS users. They will show their card and you will be flowed through. There will be manpower or a mechanism to get into the NEXUS lane through Bridge Street. Their objective is to continue their efforts to promote NEXUS. They request Council's consideration to aid this. Sarnia Bay and Bridgeview have lost approx. 10 – 15% of their U.S. customers. The OLG depends on approx. 50% Americans. It is a very important issue to the three businesses but also to the community as a whole. He feels strongly that Council should entertain and endorse the BWBA proposal.

Councillor Hand asked why there was no one present from the Bridge.

Mr. Brown advised that they did not approach the Bridge. As leaders in the community, they felt that it was warranted to come to Council. It was their idea to come to Council. There is already a street with the ability to turn around and it is an ideal situation.

Deputy Mayor Robson asked if there are any surveys to determine if the Americans want a NEXUS card. Are there any promotions on their side?

Mr. Walker advised that a large promotion has been undertaken by the Casino, Tourism Sarnia-Lambton, Blue Water Bridge Authority and the Duty Free Shop. A web site has been created and in the last two months, there have been 25,000 hits on the site. They have a number of ads in Port Huron and Tourism Sarnia-Lambton provides matching funds. The NEXUS sign-ups in this area are the highest in the Province. OLG has done a direct mail to promote NEXUS as well. Tens of thousands of dollars is being used for the promotions.

Councillor Hand advised that the hours of operation for NEXUS are inadequate. It is not opened early enough.

Mr. Walker advised that he hears that as well. As sign-ups increase, there will be more hours. Something is better than nothing. They will push in any way they can.

Councillor MacKenzie advised that Council would love for the problem to go away. He noted that the hours of operation are not workable. He noted that Bridge Street is not closed and remains a public street. Something would be required to be done to allow it to be used for this purpose. He commented that the Village had three accesses to the Bridge. Marina Road is now gone. The Bridge has control over the other two – Bridge Street and Front Street. The Bridge has advised that they plan to build a dedicated lane to get people onto the Bridge and in to the community. Council does not want to lose that. He asked if the BWBA would pick up all related costs.

Mr. Brandt advised that it was his understanding that the BWBA would pay to man the entrance or provide a mechanism at the gate.

Councillor MacKenzie stated that Council wants to see the traffic moving. He advised that Bridge Street is short and the vehicles could get tangled up resulting in back-ups on St. Clair Street causing safety concerns. There are hurdles and they have to satisfy the people in the Village. There have been enough problems when Marina Road closed. The manpower on the U.S. side is the problem and we cannot control that.

Mr. Brandt advised that this will not solve the problem. For an interim period, it will be a bandaid solution to ease the problem.

Councillor MacKenzie noted that the Village has already lost the Bingo Hall and \$160,000 in revenue.

Mr. Brandt noted that the Village will lose more if the OLG does not do well. If you want their cheque to go down, do nothing. He knows that Council recognizes the importance of the OLG cheque.

Mr. Walker stated that there is a problem. We have to face it and help to correct it.

Councillor Churchill asked about the use of Bridge Street as a public road.

It was noted that when the Bridge traffic is not busy, it will be opened to the public. When it is swung closed due to traffic, it will be NEXUS only.

Mayor Kirkland advised that the Port Huron Mayor needs help. They are getting no where with MDOT. He wants the NEXUS lane open longer.

Mr. Brandt commented that MP Pat Davidson has been following up on the problems. Politicians are concerned. It is a ridiculous situation. By driving back to Modeland Road, they cannot facilitate access to the NEXUS lane. If the proposed lane is approved, they will facilitate an educational program through the Marinas and OLG.

Mayor Kirkland commented that it is not convenient for Point Edward residents to sit for two hours to get over the Bridge. Port Huron is losing nurses from this area. We need the dedicated lanes. The Village will be meeting with the BWBA to talk about the NEXUS lane.

Mr. Brown stated that it could possibly start as a pilot project to ensure there are no problems.

Deputy Mayor Robson stated she was concerned with the car back-up on St. Clair Street.

Mayor Kirkland stated that Council should ask that the County support the MP and MPP to continue to work with the U.S. to deal with the Bridge issues. We will be meeting with the Bridge representatives to discuss the issues. We need a dedicated lane to the U.S.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Report from Peggy Cramp re: Amendments to the Municipal Act, 2001 – Bill 130 Provisions – New Requirements and Recommendations

Resolution #2

Moved by Deputy Mayor Robson

Seconded by Councillor Hand

THAT the report from Peggy Cramp regarding the Municipal Act requirements, be referred to the Finance Committee for further consideration and that their recommendations be brought back to Council for the November 13, 2007 meeting.

CARRIED.

BY-LAWS

1. By-Law Number 34 of 2007, being a By-law to Confirm the Resolutions of Point Edward Council which were adopted up to and including October 10, 2007

Resolution #3

Moved by Deputy Mayor Robson

Seconded by Councillor Hand

THAT By-Law Number 34 of 2007, being a By-law to Confirm the Resolutions of Point Edward Council which were adopted up to and including October 10, 2007, be given a FIRST, SECOND and THIRD READING and FINALLY PASSED this 10th day of October, 2007.

CARRIED.

BUSINESS FROM COUNCILLORS

Mayor Kirkland

Blue Water Bridges

Resolution #4

Moved by Councillor MacKenzie

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Robson

THAT a letter be forwarded to the County of Lambton to request their support for the M.P. and M.P.P. to move forward and take action to deal with the ongoing problems and back-ups at the Blue Water Bridges.

CARRIED.

Michigan Ave.

Mayor Kirkland discussed the need to complete Michigan Ave. between Christina and Front Streets with County Warden Jim Burns. He has indicated that the work will proceed this year providing the weather holds.

OLG letter

Mayor Kirkland advised that he spoke with Jake Pastore regarding the request for installation of lottery equipment in a local convenience store.

Resolution #5

Moved by Councillor MacKenzie

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Robson

THAT the letter from the OLG regarding the regulations for installation of lottery equipment, be sent to Steve Ash, Village Variety.

CARRIED.

Deputy Mayor Robson

Fire Prevention Week

Deputy Mayor Robson reminded everyone of Fire Prevention week. The Escape Plans will be reviewed by firefighters tonight with residents. She noted that she read the Proclamation at Bridgeview Public School on Tuesday.

Surgery

Deputy Mayor Robson advised Council that she would be having surgery on her right knee on October 31. After January 19, her left knee would also require surgery.

Councillor Hand

Councillor Hand advised that there is a need to complete a small portion of paving leading to the shed from the road at the corner of Michigan Ave. and Front Street.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolution #6

Moved by Councillor MacKenzie

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Robson

THAT the Council Meeting be adjourned at 7:22 p.m. until the October 23, 2007 call of the Chair or at such time as a Special Committee meeting is held to discuss legal matters, property matters or personnel matters.

CARRIED.

Mayor Dick Kirkland

CAO Peggy Cramp