

THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ARMOUR

PUBLIC MEETING NOTES

June 21, 2019

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Armour, Corporation of the Township of Ryerson and the Village of Burk's Falls held a public meeting on Friday, June 21, 2019 at 6:00 p.m., at the Armour, Ryerson and Burk's Falls Memorial Arena to discuss "After the Flood – Mitigation and Preparation for the Future".

Officials in attendance were: Armour's Reeve Bob MacPhail; Ryerson's Deputy Mayor Barb Marlow, Burk's Falls Mayor Cathy Still; Fire Department: Chief Dave McNay and Deputy Chief and Fire Prevention Officer Joe Readman; Ontario Fire Marshall: John Stothers, North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority: Crystal Barnes; Emergency Management Co-ordinator Amy Tilley and Municipal Staff: Armour: Charlene Watt, Deputy Clerk; Alison McGregor, Deputy Treasurer; Jason Newman, By-law Enforcement Officer. Ryerson Staff: Judy Kosowan, Clerk and Nancy Field, Deputy Clerk. Burk's Falls Staff: Nicky Kunkel, Clerk. A list of public attendees is attached.

Amy Tilley, Emergency Management Co-ordinator welcomed guests and informed the public that the MNR was invited but could not attend the public meeting due to budget cuts. Regrets from Ryerson Mayor, George Stirling. The public was encouraged to sign up for CodeRed.

Comments from Councils:

Reeve Bob MacPhail welcomed guests and stated that the meeting will be held in three parts: (1) comments from Councils; (2) reports from the province – OFM and NBMCA; and (3) comments and questions from the public. Armour will be completing an after action report and have a record of lessons learned, areas for improvement, and mitigation – such as placing a storage container in the Katrine area that will be filled with sandbags in the fall and stored for spring flooding emergencies. Provincial meetings were held with MMAH, Vic Fedelli - MPP of Nipissing and they are looking for ideas for future planning. The challenge for Armour is that Katrine is built on a flood plain and flooding is getting worse every year. The province has a policy and we cannot change the flood plain, fill is not permitted. The province is to put out new flood plain mapping which may impact property values. Armour Council does not want people to leave. Armour wants a "one time fix" provincial relief from flood plain building restrictions, whether it is funding to raise a driveway, flood proof a basement or raise a dwelling. Armour is encouraging the province to provide funding to bring properties not just to repair, but to allow preventative improvements. There is a unique flooding situation in Katrine. Armour activated an Emergency Control Group during the flood of 2019 and did not declare a state of emergency. MMAH declared a state of disaster for the residents of Katrine which permitted them to apply for funding.

Mayor Cathy Still addressed guests stating that Burk's Falls is different than Armour but the same areas flood every year. The municipalities are looking for realistic ideas from residents. Residents are encouraged to sign up for CodeRed.

Deputy Mayor Barb Marlow indicated that the Township of Ryerson reached out to their impacted properties and a flood damage bin is available to these residents on June 29, 2019 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Township Office. A voucher was issued to properties that qualify. It is encouraged that cottagers that have flood concerns should secure loose items in their yard, especially propane tanks and lift items off their basement floors in the fall.

Fire Chief Dave McNay addressed the public as the Incident Commander and encouraged the public in flood plain areas to have propane tanks anchored and to tidy up properties in the fall. Automatic aid agreements are in place with other municipalities.

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Deputy Fire Chief and Fire Prevention Officer Joe Readman encouraged residents in flood plain areas to not forget about their electrical systems. Shut off breakers in the basement, garages and boathouses. The ESA was not involved in this year's flooding but they may be next year. Flooding and loose propane tanks are a serious hazard.

Comments from Provincial Organizations:

John Stothers, Ontario Fire Marshall addressed the crowd and recommended that everyone be prepared for environmental disasters. A 72 hour kit should be in every home. Municipalities are encouraged to have emergency plans and to practice exercises. A risk base plan for flooding is strongly encouraged.

Crystal Barnes from North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority indicated that flooded properties need to limit or stop the use of septic systems. When septic systems are not being used, unplug them and plug the floor drains. Property owners are encouraged to not pump their septic tanks in the fall as the water in the tank keeps them in the ground. Get your septic tank inspected and get the tank pumped after the ground has dried up. Check electrical components. Future planning in regards to septic tanks is getting better. Raised beds is a new option in flood plain areas. Zoning by-laws are encouraged for septic systems in flood plain zones with requirements for raised beds and anchored tanks. Concrete tanks are suggested in flood plains. If residents are concerned about a contaminated well, contact their local health unit. In regards to mitigation, a watershed program is encouraged.

Public Questions / Comments:

Anthony Rizzo, Katrine: MNRF lacks accountability and is hiding behind climate change as an excuse. The resident has seen changes in Katrine over the last 15 years. MMAH may supply funding for losses but are not fixing the problem. We need to manage the water flow, pull a log from the dam once in a while and be proactive. The dams no longer support climate change and precipitation levels. The resident urges Councils to push MNRF for dam controls at a local level. Water levels increased in Katrine by nine feet of variance, sand bags don't work.

Karrie Lepoudre: Karrie informed Councils and residents that a self-reporting portal (Ministry of Environment) can be implemented and allows a water taking committee to report for their own area. It's a preventative measure with a committee between municipalities. Another option is to build a berm with MMAH funding. She recommended that the berm be kept in place and to beautify it. A berm is in place in Mattawa and saved a number of homes this year. Ice jams were a problem at dams this year.

Edward Brown, Katrine: MNRF knew well in advance that Katrine was going to get flooded. Ever since the digital dam was installed at Doe Lake by the MNRF, residents get flooded. OPG is to blame too. Watts Dam needs to be fixed and not managed through a computer system.

Les Eliot, Katrine: This resident's business is predicated by the levels on Doe Lake. He installed docks for peninsula residents a few weeks ago, boats are now going under the docks. He has been told by MNRF that residents are in an acceptable level of water, constant excuses. MNRF representatives are unprofessional and hang up on him or do not return phone calls. Watts Dam is useless, it only controls Doe Lake and when logs are removed at Watts Dam, it does not have a large impact on Burk's Falls. There has been extensive property damage, year after year to his property and business, his boardwalk is beyond repair this year. Local management of the local dams should not be a MNRF responsibility, someone is not doing their job at MNRF and Councils need to do something about it.

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Summary:

Reeve Bob MacPhail addressed the public and stated that Armour will talk to the other Councils, recognizing that we may need to organize a Magnetawan River Group for municipalities that run along the river. We will look into hosting a meeting with Norm Miller, MPP and the MNRF to deal with the flooding issues and to suggest that Watts Dam be controlled by Armour Township.

The public meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Original signed by Bob MacPhail

Bob MacPhail, Reeve

Original signed by Charlene Watt

Charlene Watt, Deputy Clerk