

Council Highlights

**Tuesday,
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Woodlands Conservation By-Law Updates from Elgin Tree Commissioner

The Elgin County Tree Commissioner/Weed Inspector provided an overview of activities under the Elgin County Woodlands Conservation By-Law for the first and second quarters of 2024, along with updates on weed inspection efforts.

For the period of January 1 to March 31, 2024, a total of 26 applications for harvest were submitted, involving an estimated 570,000 board feet of timber over approximately 670 acres of forested land. In the second quarter, from April 1 to June 30, 2024, there were 17 applications, with a total harvest of 540,000 board feet over 426 acres.

Two Council Exemption for Woodland Clearing applications were received in the first quarter of 2024. These involved clearing approximately 0.435 hectares in West Elgin and 0.18 hectares in Bayham. Both applications were approved in the second quarter following the required public consultation process, under the condition that they adhered to the County's "No Net Loss" policy for woodlands.

In the first quarter of 2024, there were no weed complaints received. However, in the second quarter, two weed complaints were reported. One complaint was negative for Giant Hogweed, while the other was addressed by the landowner. No Weed Destruction

Orders were issued during this period.

The Tree Commissioner's report also included information about the Spotted Lanternfly, an invasive insect native to China and Vietnam, that continues to spread across North America. Although no established populations have been found in Canada, nearby populations have been detected in Buffalo, New York. The species is particularly damaging to agricultural industries, such as grape growing, fruit, and horticulture, and poses a threat to native trees. The adults are approximately one inch long and feature brightly colored, spotted wings.

Draft Plan of Subdivision Approved for Rodney

County Council approved a draft plan of subdivision application for lands on the south side of Queens Line, east of Rodney Cemetery, covering 3.14 hectares (7.75 acres) with 59.1 meters of frontage on Queens Line and 20.1 meters on Harper Street. The lands are currently vacant. The proposed plan includes 28 single-detached dwelling lots, 2 townhouse blocks, and a new public road. The lands are designated as Tier One settlement area in the Elgin County Official Plan, which supports full municipal services and new growth. The West Elgin Official Plan designates the lands as Residential, supporting infill and redevelopment, particularly in the Rodney area. The application has gone through the standard process, including technical studies, agency circulation, and public meetings. The Municipality of West Elgin has endorsed the subdivision, with County staff confirming it meets all relevant planning requirements.



County Approves Bayham Official Plan Amendment No. 38

As approval authority, the County of Elgin has approved Official Plan Amendment No. 38 as previously adopted by the Municipality of Bayham.

OPA No. 38 pertains to a property on Part of Snow Street in the Village of Vienna, currently an unopened road allowance. The property is vacant, with a frontage of 15.2 meters and an area of 804.5 sqm. The proposed amendment seeks to redesignate the land as 'Residential' to allow for the creation of a new residential lot. The land is municipally owned and marked for surplus sale. The lands are within a Tier 1 Settlement Area in the County of Elgin, which allows for residential development. However, because the property is a road allowance, it lacks a formal land use designation or zoning. Therefore, a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA) is also required to rezone the property from Institutional 'I' Zone to Village Residential 1 (R1).

The proposal underwent a standard review process, including technical studies, agency circulation, and a public meeting on October 3, 2024. One letter of support was received, while a delegate expressed concerns over the loss of parkland.

County staff reviewed the amendment and confirmed it complies with the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and both the County of Elgin and Bayham Official Plans, deeming it appropriate for the area.

Adjustment to Planning Fees Starting January 1, 2025

County Council has approved an increase in planning fees, effective January 1, 2025. Elgin County is tasked with ensuring that its planning services comply with the Planning Act and the Provincial Planning Statement. The County provides a wide range of development application services, each with associated fees that municipalities are allowed to charge to help offset service delivery costs. Historically, some of these fees have been supported through the tax base. The County's methodology for setting these fees has not been reviewed for some time, and increases have been minimal, failing to keep up with inflation or development industry standards. Additionally, fees have not fully accounted for the time invested by staff or indirect costs such as overhead.

After reviewing the current fee structure, County Council approve a phased increase in planning fees over the next three years. These increases are outlined in the report titled County Planning Fees Amendment contained in the November 26, 2024 Agenda Package.

Elgin County Unveils Bold Strategic Plan for the Future

The County of Elgin has approved a new strategic plan following the end of its previous plan in 2022. Changes in leadership and in the regional environment, presented an ideal opportunity to develop a fresh strategic plan to guide the County's future.

A Steering Committee, including key County officials, was established to collaborate with a facilitator in guiding the process. County Council and the Executive Leadership Team met three times to work on developing the County's new corporate mission, vision, values. These discussions focused on identifying challenges and opportunities, leading to the creation of strategic priorities aimed at better serving residents in the present and future.

The County is beginning to implement a continuous management cycle approach to business planning, with the strategic plan forming the initial phase. This plan will inform annual departmental and organizational business plans.

The strategic plan will ensure internal alignment, clarity in decision-making, and prioritization of efforts to achieve the County's goals. It also aims to improve resource allocation and operational efficiency. The full plan can be found in the November 26, 2024 Council Agenda Package. Further details on the plan, including a detailed workplan and metrics to measure success, will be available in the coming months.



For the complete **November 26, 2024 Agenda Package**, please visit the following link:
[County Council Agenda Package](#)