

# THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** December 5, 2023

**TO:** Committee of the Whole

**FROM:** Melanie Knight, Acting Director of Development Services and Engineering

**SUBJECT:** Request for a resolution for support from COMPASS Renewable Energy Consulting Inc.

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### RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Council pass a resolution in support for battery energy storage systems, with a condition that the proposed development be subject to all applicable Municipal and Provincial by-laws and standards as determined by the Municipality, including any applicable Official Plan and Zoning By-law requirements.**

### BACKGROUND:

The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) is the crown corporation responsible for operating the electricity market and directing the operation of the bulk electrical system in Ontario. IESO has initiated several programs, including battery storage since 2014. Battery storage stores low-cost power during off-peak periods and feeds it back into the electricity grid during peak periods when the demand for electricity is the highest.

A staff report was provided on [January 17, 2023](#) Committee of the Whole meeting recommending that Committee of the Whole support the requested resolution by COMPASS. At that time, the property proposed for the establishment of the battery storage facility was 1442 Ramsay Concession 8.

COMPASS has recently approached the Municipality with a new location for the battery storage facility. The facility is no longer proposed at 1442 Ramsay Concession 8 and is now proposed at 6299 County Road 29. According to COMPASS, as part of their IESO approval, any relocation needs to be within 2 km of the original site.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

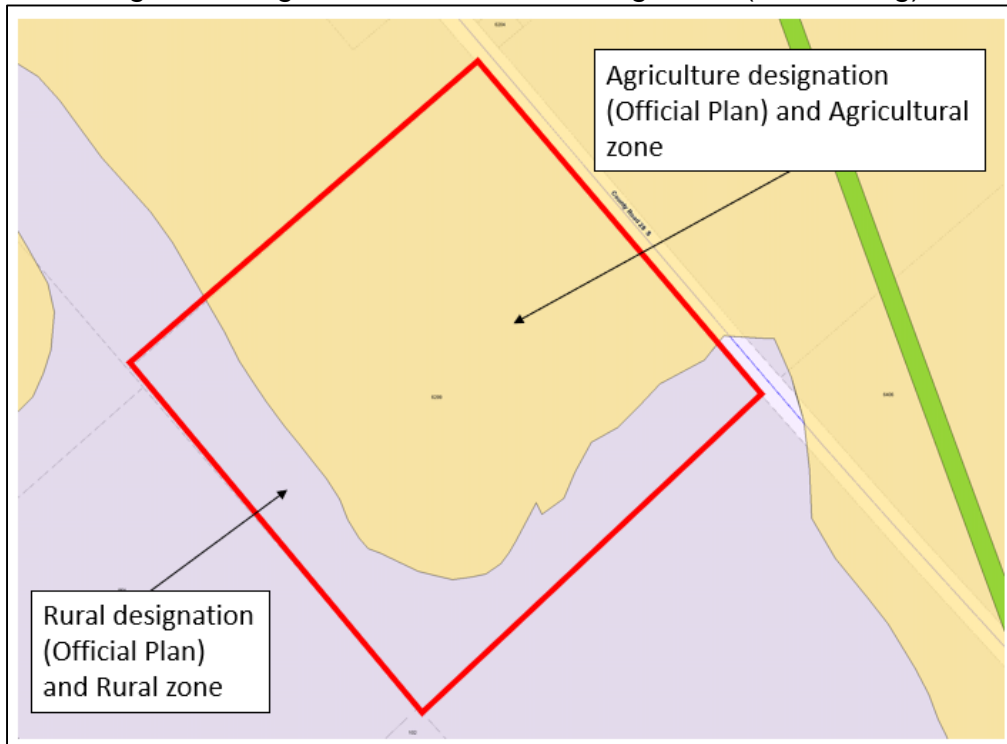
The property is in Ramsay Ward, approximately 1.2 km from the original site. Figure 1 illustrates the location of the new site. The property is split designated Agricultural and Rural in the Community Official Plan and zone Agricultural and Rural in the Zoning By-law. COMPASS has proposed that the battery storage facility be located on the area of

the property which is designated and zoned Rural. As part of Official Plan Amendment 29 (LEAR) the property is proposed to be entirely designated Agriculture (removal of the Rural designation). Figure 2 illustrates the designation and zoning of the site.

Figure 1 – Aerial image of the subject property



Figure 2 – Agricultural and Rural designation (and zoning)



## **DISCUSSION:**

As previously mentioned, the Official Plan designation is Agriculture and Rural, in the Community Official Plan. The Agriculture designation identifies lands that are considered Prime Agricultural land from a Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) perspective, which generally should be preserved for agricultural use or agricultural-related uses. The Rural designation is reflective of (generally) lower soil quality than land within the Agriculture designation and the policies permit more diverse land uses.

As noted in the staff report of [January 17, 2023](#), if Council support was provided, staff recommended that this support be contingent on adherence to the Municipality's by-laws as well as the Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law provisions. Since January 17, 2023, Planning staff have had an opportunity to analyze the Official Plan policies, Zoning By-law and have also reviewed other municipalities' approach to these types of requests. Planning staff are of the opinion, that in absence of specific Official Plan policies permitting this new type of "utility" that battery storage could be permitted within the Rural designation by way of a site-specific Zoning By-law Amendment. This opinion is with respect to the current Official Plan designation on the property at the time of writing this report. Staff acknowledge that Official Plan Amendment 29 (LEAR) was passed by Council; however, has yet to come into effect as the County has not yet approved Official Plan Amendment 29. As a result, staff's opinion on the required Zoning By-law Amendment is with the caveat that a Zoning By-law Amendment application is made for the battery storage facility located within the Rural designation (and zone) of the property, prior to Official Plan Amendment 29 (LEAR) coming into full force and effect.

It is important to note that Planning Staff are also of the opinion, where any future battery storage is proposed within the Agricultural designation, in addition to a Zoning By-law Amendment, an Official Plan Amendment would also be required to address the Agricultural policy requirements of the Official Plan and provide satisfactory justification that it was consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

For the subject property before Committee, the battery storage facility is proposed to be within the Rural designation of the Official Plan and Rural zone. As a result, staff require an approved Zoning By-law Amendment and subsequent Site Plan Control approval for development to proceed.

## **OPTIONS:**

Three options have been developed and evaluated:

Option 1: Decline the request.

Option 2: Endorse the request.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

COMPASS has advised the Municipality that a public meeting will be held on November 30, 2023. The notice is contained in Attachment C.

### **SUMMARY:**

As noted in the report, COMPASS has requested a new resolution from Council for a new site for the proposed battery storage facility. Staff have no objections to the request subject to the conditions contained in the Recommendation Section of the report are implemented.

Respectfully submitted by,



Melanie Knight, MCIP RPP  
A/Director of Development Services  
and Engineering

Reviewed by:



Ken Kelly  
Chief Administrative Officer

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Attachment A: Almonte BESS Evidence of Municipal Support
2. Attachment B: Almonte BESS 2 Draft Resolution
3. Attachment C: COMPASS Notice of Meeting