

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, May 26.

**Council Endorses Actions Following Housing Meeting Series:** Council has approved motions resulting from a series of meetings about housing and homelessness that were held in March and April. The purpose of the meetings was to improve understanding of the housing and homelessness situation in the county and explore ways to expedite the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

The first meeting provided an overview of existing services offered by the Housing Services Department and the service manager role. The second highlighted municipal planning tools and opportunities to encourage development of more affordable housing in communities, and the final meeting featured non-profit organizations and ways they have supported housing and homelessness initiatives.

As a result of the meetings, council re-endorsed the 10-Year Plan, which was developed by staff and committed to two actions:

- Council authorized staff to issue a request for proposals to hire a consultant to conduct a study on affordable housing demand and make recommendations on municipal planning tools that improve outcomes. Costs for the consultant are covered by municipal COVID-19 funding provided to the county by the province due to the increased demand on housing since the onset of the pandemic.
- Council created a small working group of community representatives to make recommendations on Action No. 8 of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, which focuses on development of rent-geared-to-income housing, rent supplement spaces and the portable housing benefit. This working group will consist of county staff (CAO, Director of Social Services, Planner, Treasurer, Housing Services Manager), as well a representative from Lanark County Mental Health, the Lanark County Situation Table, a non-profit housing provider in the county, Lanark County Interval House, and a developer. The group has a short term mandate in order to be able to make recommendations for the 2022 budget process, which begins in the fall. The working group will report to the community services committee.

For more information, contact Emily Hollington, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101.

**Warden Proclaims June as PRIDE Month:** Warden Christa Lowry (Mississippi Mills Mayor) has proclaimed June as PRIDE Month in Lanark County and encourages residents to reflect on the ongoing struggle for equality faced by members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community while celebrating the contributions that enhance the county.

The proclamation expresses support for every citizen to experience equality and freedom from discrimination, and notes all people, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, genetic characteristics or disability, have the right to be treated on the basis of their intrinsic value as human beings.

“Lanark County accepts, welcomes and celebrates people of varied backgrounds and believes a diverse population leads to a more vibrant community. The Two Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and + communities contribute to the cultural, civic and economic successes of Lanark County,” Lowry said. “While we as a society at large are slowly embracing new definitions of sexuality and gender, we must also acknowledge that the need for education and awareness remains vital to end discrimination and prejudice.”

Lowry highlighted the significance of this proclamation. “I am proud that Lanark County Council has proclaimed June is PRIDE Month and that for the first time ever the rainbow flag will fly at the county offices. This is a true sign that we are slowly embracing everyone in our vibrant communities, that we stand as allies and celebrate with pride being who we were born to be.”

To help raise awareness of the continuing evolution of the 2SLGBTQ+ PRIDE movement, the county will display the rainbow flag, representing light, healing, sun, calmness, art and spirit, in front of the county administration building for the month of June.

For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk/Deputy CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.

**County to Submit AMO Delegation Requests:** Council has passed a motion to request a number of delegations with ministers at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference scheduled for Aug. 14 to 18. This gives municipal politicians an opportunity to present concerns or requests on specific issues with various ministry representatives.

One request is to meet with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide feedback on concerns related to the Code of Conduct and Integrity Commissioner legislation that go beyond the scope of a consultation process currently being administered by the ministry. A number of recommendations and comments have been compiled by a county working group created to examine the current legislation.

Another request is to meet with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services regarding the permitted sale of after-market parts (e.g. exhaust, studs) to replace original equipment manufacturer components on ATVs and snowmobiles, which are illegal and cause substantial disruption, particularly to those who live adjacent to or near the county’s trails.

The county is requesting a meeting with the Ministry of Transportation to express concerns related to the lack of a left-turning lane onto Concession 5A off in Ramsay off Hwy. 7. The request is in response to heavy traffic flow on the highway, which sees vehicles waiting for the opportunity to turn and creates a build-up of traffic and the potential for accidents. The county will seek data from the OPP related to accidents and hopes to learn from MTO about plans for this intersection.

The county is asking to meet with the Ministry of Environment to provide feedback and engage in dialogue regarding the environmental and economic benefits of electric vehicles, the need to encourage, accelerate and provide incentives for their use, and to make the province aware of the county’s incentive program for local municipalities to help them begin purchasing electric vehicles for their fleets (funding provided to match the federal grant).

Finally, the county is seeking a meeting with the Ministry of Health to express concerns related to the exponential increase in client referrals to Lanark County Mental Health (LCMH) over the past year and to discuss the inadequate level of resources available to attend to this surge and the increasingly complex needs being seen in the community. LCMH is funded by Ontario Health to provide services to the whole county, but was already lacking enough capacity and resources to address need before the pandemic and the resulting surge in referrals. LCMH is the only mental health agency in the county and has about 24 clinical staff. It has received more than 3,600 new referrals and request for services in the past year alone. LCMH is seeking equitable and consistent funding across the regions, including additional funds to attract and retain psychiatrists in the county.

For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk/Deputy CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.

**Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, June 9, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, June 9 (following County Council); Corporate Services, June 9 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, June 23, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, June 23 (following County Council); Economic Development, June 23 (following Public Works). Watch for details about public access to meetings on agendas and through online notifications. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!

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