

# THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** December 7, 2021

**TO:** Committee of the Whole

**FROM:** Ken T. Kelly, Chief Administrative Officer

**SUBJECT: Direction for Land Evaluation and Agriculture Review (LEAR)**

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### RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT**, Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to confirm that another statutory public meeting is to be held to seek public comment on the revised proposal for Official Plan Amendment 29 –Prime Agriculture Area Designation Review followed by a summary report of the public’s comments to Council to seek approval to make the submission to Lanark County for a revised schedule A – Rural Land Use Plan (OPA 29).

### BACKGROUND:

The Municipality completed a Five Year Review of the Official Plan as required under the *Planning Act*. This review resulted in an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) No. 21 being submitted to Lanark County who under the *Act* is the approval authority for Mississippi Mills Official Plan and any amendments to the plan. OPA 21 was approved with modifications by Lanark County on December 4, 2019 and was deemed to be consistent with the Lanark County Sustainable Community Official Plan (SCOP) and the Provincial Policy Statement which came into effect on April 30, 2014.

The County’s Notice of Decision for OPA 21 did not include a Prime Agriculture designation on Schedule “A” – Rural Land Use. The County requested that the Municipality complete an Agricultural Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR). The purpose of OPA 29 is to complete the Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) to delineate the Prime Agriculture designation to be included on Schedule “A” – Rural Land Use plan. This will be submitted to Lanark County so that it can consider making the changes to the SCOP.

On March 25, 2021 a report to Committee of the Whole by consultant, Marc Rivet of JL Richards, provided this background and sought approval to hold an information session and statutory public meeting. The virtual information session was held on Wednesday April 28, 2021 to provide the public with background and prepare them to make submissions at the public meeting. Notice was provided for the public meeting and materials were made available on the Municipal website. The statutory public meeting was held on May 4, 2021 for the purpose of giving the public an opportunity to make

representation regarding the proposed OPA 29 by-law amendment for the Prime Agricultural Area Designation Review.

Following a statutory public meeting the public is provided the opportunity to continue to submit comments up until such time as Council adopts a by-law for the Official Plan Amendment. Council has not adopted the by-law and instead directed staff to extend the period for written submissions until September 30, 2021. Following this extensive period for public comment the proposed Schedule A map for Rural and Prime Agriculture designation was tabled with a working group established by the Municipality's Agriculture Advisory Committee. The LEAR Working Group held meetings during the summer and early fall to make specific recommendations on public comments and the addition or removal of specific parcels of land to/from the proposed Schedule A – Rural Land Use Map. Letters were also sent to landowners that would be impacted by a change in their land designation to either Rural or Prime Agriculture from its current designation.

The LEAR working group is presenting its findings to the Agriculture Advisory Committee to be approved for submission to Council as the findings and recommendations of the Agriculture Advisory Committee. The LEAR Working Group included input from many local representatives of the agriculture community and its associations.

To conclude this process of consultation and incorporate the recommendations of the Agriculture Advisory Committee a summary report from the consultant is generally submitted to Council to capture all of the input and recommend a proposed by-law and schedule to be adopted. This by-law and schedule will be submitted to Lanark County for their consideration.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The consultation process changed from the process that was originally proposed for the LEAR project.

## **OPTIONS:**

### **Option 1:**

Council direct staff to hold another statutory public meeting to present the revised Rural Land Use Map and the recommendations of the Agriculture Advisory Committee followed by a summary report from the consultant to Council for consideration.

### **Option 2**

Council direct that the consultant submit the summary report based on the current public comments and the recommendations of the Agriculture Advisory Committee for Council's consideration and no additional statutory public meeting is required.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

A staff report was brought forward in the summer of 2020 to engage a planning consulting firm to complete high priority planning projects. Council directed staff on July 23, 2020 with the following resolution:

Funding of Planning Consulting Services

### **Resolution No. 264-20**

**Moved by Councillor Maydan**

**Seconded by Councillor Guerard**

**THAT** Council direct staff to engage a firm by standing offer to complete the following projects to an upset limit of \$120,000.00 in the following order of priority:

- (1) a comprehensive report to be submitted to the County of Lanark for Official Plan Amendment 22;
- (2) the Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR); and
- (3) the Reserve Street Parking Plan

**AND THAT** this expenditure be funded from any remaining 2020 salary and benefit savings for the Planning department, by reallocating 2020 budgeted capital expenditures for the Planning department and from reserves that will be a contribution back to reserves in 2021, if required.

OPA 22 has been completed and received approval from Lanark County. This Amendment has been appealed which will result in additional unforeseen expenditures for legal and consulting services. The Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) has reached its budget. Additional consultation throughout the summer, additional meetings with the LEAR working group and a potential public meeting have increased the cost of this project. The consultant has estimated that an additional \$15,000 is required to complete the project. To complete the Reserve Street Parking Plan will require additional funding in Budget 2022 of approximately \$20,000.

**SUMMARY:**

Staff seek Council direction on the need to conduct an additional statutory public meeting.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Ken T. Kelly,  
Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed by:

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Melanie Knight,  
Senior Planner