

### The Adventures of our Official Plan

Since November 2017, TIARA has been contributing to the **review of the township's new Official Plan**, replacing the existing 2005 plan. This started as a collaborative community effort. TIARA and many others attended meetings and made submissions, and encouraged all residents to do the same.

Unfortunately, the **review process turned negative and divisive** when in February, township councillor J.P. Jackson persuaded some landowners that the proposed Plan would severely restrict – or even remove – their rights to develop their property, particularly on the waterfront. It was fear-mongering, often misleading and in some cases incorrect. He listed some 27 sections of the Plan which he said should be removed.

TIARA and others tried to keep the discussion civil and productive. We explained that many of the “problematic” sections had already been clarified and amended. Most are mandated by the Province and the Counties. Some have been in our existing Official Plan for years without problems. Many are not unique to TLI, but are shared by other Ontario municipalities where healthy lakes and rivers are important to the economy.

Mr. Jackson dismissed TIARA and other associations such as the Charleston Lake Association (combined membership of more than 800) as “special interest groups”. He insisted, even after nine months of publicity, that acceptance of the Plan should be deferred to allow for yet more input. His supporters responded by sending a raft of emails to council and the planners.

Their complaints were listened to. A scaled-back Final Draft was released on August 31. TIARA was disappointed in some of the deletions which might have provided some valuable environmental protection, but overall we felt **the Plan was a compromise we could live with**. Council adopted it on September 10.

**Meanwhile, a municipal election was looming.** Mr. Jackson was running for Mayor. During his campaign, he continued to say that the draft plan should be deferred to allow time for more input. It could, he said, be dealt with by the incoming council—with himself as Mayor. However, on October 22, he lost. (See “Municipal Elections”, next page.)

The next pitch he made was on November 6, this time to the Counties' Planning Advisory Committee. It was the same request: turn down the Plan and let the 2019 municipal council deal with it. In the audience were Mayor-elect Corinna Smith-Gatke, and new councillors-elect Terry Fodey, Gordon Ohlke and Brock Gorrell.

Nevertheless, the Committee recommended that the Plan proceed to the Counties Council for approval.

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On November 22 was the final step. TIARA sent a delegation to the crucial Counties Council meeting. We continued to maintain that there had been ample opportunity for everyone to participate in the nearly year-long Official Plan Review process.

We were pleased when the Counties Council voted unanimously to approve the Plan.

The Plan is a compromise. It balances the need for economic development while still upholding the first pillar of the Township's Strategic Plan, “**Sustaining the natural environment**”.

### Our August 4 Annual Meeting

**New Directors:** At our AGM, we welcomed two new directors to our Board: **Roswitha and Charles Baker**, who live along the Parkway near Ivy Lea. They have been supportive volunteers for several years.



At the AGM: Sec'y Blu Mackintosh, Co-President Martin Bordt, guest speaker Brian Phillips, Co-President Mike Bell, guest speaker Don Ross.

We were honoured to have two eminent speakers. **Brian Phillips** brought alive the history of Rockport,, particularly the Customs property, with his illustrated talk. He told stories starting back in the 1880s of ferries and fires, cheese factories and blacksmith shops, boat builders and customs officers.

**Don Ross** explained the science showing how natural shorelines contribute to the health and beauty of our River in many ways.

We are grateful to have people like Brian and Don in our community, reminding us of the fascinating human and natural history which enriches us all.

We would like to be able to email our members when there's something important to tell you and time is short. However, we don't have everyone's email address.

**Please take a moment to send us a line at tiara@tiaraweb.org and then we'll have it. Many thanks!**

And if a membership slip is enclosed with this newsletter, it means we are looking forward to receiving your 2018/2019 renewal. We appreciate your support!