
TIARA Newsletter

Autumn 2010

TIARA gives grades on the Township Council's own report card

With its four-year term of office winding down, the **Council of Leeds and the Thousand Islands** recently developed its own **self-assessment form**, listing its own Objectives and the corresponding actions ("Accomplishments"), under Economic, Social and Environmental headings.

TIARA examined these claims and **gave them grades** of its own. Sadly, under the eleven Objectives, we found we were only able to award a B to one set of accomplishments, followed by one C, two D's and seven F's.

Council's Objectives are disappointing. We gave Council an F for their Objectives under "Environmental Measurements" which, amazingly, deal only with waste management and roads. They **don't even mention** inspecting septic systems, preventing water pollution in our township's lakes and rivers, protecting our fragile well water supply, our unique Biosphere and ecology and disappearing wetlands.

At a recent All-Candidates Meeting, when the **incumbent mayor and councillors** were asked if Council regarded these **omitted environmental issues** as unimportant, it was extraordinary to hear Mayor Kinsella maintaining that Council had little power to affect the environment one way or another. He completely ignored the Township's **land use planning powers**, and the enormous impact of its planning decisions, such as the one (thankfully since reversed by the Ontario Municipal Board) to reduce the setback for housing on Red Horse Lake. Even when given a chance to defend themselves on this issue, not a single incumbent Councillor had anything to say, and none had any apparent interest in offering any examples of how they had protected – or even hoped to protect - the environment.

Another Objective (under "Economic Measurements") to "*promote our natural attributes, waterways, rivers and lakes*" listed no concrete actions, and nothing was said about protecting our natural values or encouraging sustainable tourism. And the aim of "*promoting new businesses*" made no mention of attracting those in harmony with our unique ecology, geology and environmental values.

So it would seem that anyone concerned about the environment in this Township might want to think twice before re-electing any of the incumbents.

To read **TIARA's full Report Card**, including our reasons for the grades it gave, please see our website www.tiara.on.ca

Municipal Elections

It's municipal election time again, and this year voting will be particularly easy for cottagers or those who aren't actually in the Township on

Election Day. For the first time, votes can be cast in three ways: **in person** at the new Municipal Building in Lansdowne, **by telephone** or **on the internet**.

Voting can take place any time **between 9 a.m. on October 18 and 8 p.m. on October 25**. Electors should be receiving their voting packages soon in the mail, with full instructions included.

Unfortunately for our American members, to qualify as an elector, you have to be a Canadian citizen; at least 18 years old; residing in the municipality or "an owner or tenant of land there, or the spouse of such owner or tenant; and not otherwise prohibited from voting".

Here is a list of the candidates for office (a four-year term) in TLTI (**I = Incumbent**):

Candidates for Mayor:

Bruce Bryan, Frank Kinsella (I), Dennis Reid

Candidates for three Councillors for Ward 1

(former Front of Leeds & Lansdowne):

Heidi Conarro, Geraldine Dickson (I), Harold Emmons, Robert Jeffs, Tom Lawlor (I)

Candidates for two Councillors for Ward 2 *(former Rear of Leeds & Lansdowne):*

Charlie Kellington (I), Velma Kelsey (I), Brigitte Tye-Lesage, P. Joseph Tye

Candidates for one Councillor for Ward 3 *(former Front of Escott):*

Andrew Hodge (I), Wendy Merkley.

If you need assistance with the voting procedure, the Township staff will be happy to help. They are going out of their way to make the process as understandable and easy as possible.

TIARA's AGM

Members who attended our Annual General Meeting on August 28 were fascinated by the presentation by Adam Fenech of **Environment Canada** about the real impact of **climate change** on the social, economic and ecological sectors of our region. A copy of Adam's informative presentation is available on our website.

Long time TIARA supporter Jean King warned the membership of the scourge of the **Asian Carp**, now only a few kilometres from entering the Great Lakes at Chicago. In Jean's words "**Should they reach the Thousand Islands, your children and grandchildren will most certainly not enjoy the River as we have.**"

Imported and farmed as an edible delicacy, Asian Carp have made their way into the Mississippi River system **devouring absolutely everything** aquatic – fish and plants! They grow to be over a metre in length, weigh up to 100+ lbs., can leap ten feet into the air and have been known to break bones and knock people from their boats! Jean urged everyone in attendance to contact their local members of

Parliament or U.S. congress and register their concerns. Use your web browser's search engine for 'Asian Carp' for details about this very real threat to our natural environment and local economy.

Heritage River Project

TIARA is working hard towards our goal of obtaining **Heritage River status** for the stretch of the **St. Lawrence River** from its origin near Kingston to the Québec border. We have received support from all but one municipal council along the River, as well as all area provincial MPPs and federal MPs.

As we reported in our Spring newsletter, we have hired professional journalist Alan Morantz to prepare the nomination document. We have also established the **St. Lawrence River Heritage River Committee**, consisting of TIARA Board members Pam Bliss, Pierre Mercier and Peter Macklem and Executive Director David Bull (ex officio), as well as representatives from Gananoque (Jacques O'Shea from Trinity House), Morrisburg (Dr. Traer van Allen, whose family owned Chrysler Park for many generations), Cornwall (Environmentalist Elaine Kennedy) and Curtis Lazore of Parks Canada (representing the First Nations).

This committee will identify stakeholders on both sides of the River to be consulted for support and ideas during the development of a Management Plan for the River. It will then determine the basic requirements of such a Plan, and develop a list of potential candidates to form a **Stewardship Council** to ensure that the management plan is effective.

We hope that by next summer, the nomination will be submitted, the management plan written and the Stewardship Council established with representation from both sides of the River.

This important project is gaining considerable momentum and support all up and down the River. For more detailed information, or if you would like to be involved or consulted, or if you know of someone who might, please let us know at info@tiara.on.ca.

A series of CAOs at TLTI

There has been an unsettling series of new CAOs at the Township office of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. **John Theriault** had taken over from **John Trudgen**, the previous CAO, in early 2004. When Mr. Theriault left in mid-2009, the position was then filled by **Stephen Clark**. This would not last long because Leeds Grenville MPP Bob Runciman was appointed Senator, and Mr. Clark (who had once been Mr. Runciman's assistant), decided to run for the position of MPP to replace him, and was elected in February 2010.

Malcolm Morris was appointed as TLTI's new CAO this May. Born and raised in this Township, he is well qualified for the job, having been Director

of Transportation for the City of Kingston. We wish him well in his new position and offer our full support.

Township Planning

Recent changes in the Planning Staff at TLTI offer the Township a tremendous opportunity to get its planning process strengthened and back on track, **this time** with a trained and certified Registered Professional Planner on board, so the many battles that TIARA has had to fight in the past, reacting to the Township's poor administration of its own planning documents, do not have to recur.

So often TIARA has found itself fighting to defend the Township's planning principles, with – ironically - the Township itself taking the other side, against its own Official Plan. We are grateful for our members' support as we have taken bad Township planning decisions to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), costing both TIARA and the Township money. This shouldn't have been necessary.

While we recognize that when it comes to such decisions, there are often competing interests (development vs. nature), we continue to uphold the balance outlined in the Township's carefully crafted Official Plan which recognizes the unique and fragile nature of our environment, and we expect the Township to do the same.

We also recognize the practical problems faced by our planning officials, with much of the vulnerable shoreline of our lakes and rivers not visible from roads. Whole buildings contravening planning regulations can be (and in fact have been) erected without permission because township staff were unaware of what was going on, and then "retro-approval" was granted. We hope that a fresh approach will mean that co-operation between land-owners and the township can put good planning enforcement back on track.

Thousand Islands Area Residents' Association

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