

Sheralee Mitchell-MacEwan

Subject:

FW: EHM Council Meeting 18 January 2022

Sent: Friday, January 21, 2022 1:15 PM

To: Walter Tingley <wtingley@easthants.ca>; Kim Ramsay <kramsay@easthants.ca>; Sheralee Mitchell-MacEwan <smacewan@easthants.ca>

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Subject: EHM Council Meeting 18 January 2022

Comments on GAP Project 18 January 2022 Council meeting

I am submitting this in response to Councilor Perry's desire for community input into the project and can be shared with all councilors and project OPI's.

1. I am going to offer my comments on the Council Meeting in regards to the GAP project and the first item was the Corridor versus Rural Area regarding the elusive money sharing issue once again. The vote division supports this perception. This action confirms my belief that East Hants needs to be split into Corridor and Rural Municipalities. Strong thoughts but the theme keeps coming to the forefront. I also strongly feel that a Mayor is needed as a Warden as leader does not work in my beliefs. The Mayor's position is to represent all vice the theme of Warden and then representing the District becomes the priority.
2. The 25% cost assigned to the Scenario 2 Project. This is a breakdown of Councilor's to Staff communications. There was a severe communications failure when the Item being debated by Council is lost in the discussion and another line item, Municipal cost share percentage, becomes the main issue because of an administrative issue that should have been previously resolved or other options provided to negate the negativity that dominated the issue. Communicate, Communicate, and Communicate some more. This current GAP project has been in progress since May 2021. The last GAP issue was in 2010 and no action, 12 year gap, until letter submitted by residents that brought the issue to the forefront once again. Then in public at a Council Meeting the main focus is on the percentage assigned versus the GAP Project itself.
3. The issue raised about Mount Uniacke receiving money for a not-on-the-books GAP project and then a bridge issue which was not part of the discussion, and then learning that there are no GAP ROADS took away from the issue on the agenda. A Rural versus Corridor position.
4. I live on a GAP ROAD, Acorn Avenue, that requires going over under serviced, continually pot holed gravel roads to reach my home. If the GAP ROAD was on the top of the street and residents want it that way, good on the resident as it affects no one but themselves and the gravel road is their issue. But when residents are responsible for providing an environment, in this case a gravel road, that does not meet current road way standards then homeowners or the municipality needs to be accountable: when actions affect the assets of car ownership, home ownership, paved driveways, constant presence of dust, walking, safety, health, quality of life of someone else then there is an obligation on either the homeowner, the municipality or both. The paved roads of Federal, Provincial and Municipal are for homeowners benefit and all homeowners and others use at the expense and benefit of everyone else: there is an acceptable premise that everyone contributes to make the area good for everyone. As a resident on the top end of a GAP ROAD then I am paying for the maintenance of a 25 year old gravel road that should have been paved to reduce maintenance, so therefore municipal taxpayers are funding unnecessary long term maintenance with no timeline for this extra expense to be on the books of the taxpayer and the municipality. The Acorn Avenue residents are not looking for anything that is not the standard for the rest of the Municipality.
5. The Councilors keep raising the issue of increased cost to home owners when it is convenient and lays out items that may or may not be applicable to families: ie: many are double income families, many own two cars or in some driveways up to four cars, some have a car for their teenage children; many go on vacations, many are involved in sports that come at a cost, some have four wheelers, some have cottages, some have mobile trailers/fifth wheelers; some have businesses in their homes: some own animals some do not; some use the library and some do not. The roads are used by RCMP, Fire Services, Municipal Equipment, contract equipment, business (CAB Drivers, UPS/FEDEX/PURULATOR/Others, Restaurant/ Pizza delivery, grocery delivery, Hants East Rural Community Ridership,

Home Care, VON,)in East Hants, family friends who live in other parts of East Hants, so there is pay back in so many ways to the general community. My point here is, do not cherry pick items to make a point: home ownership comes at a cost and paving gravel roads in the East Hants corridor community is a cost. The issue of home owners affordability comes always to the forefront: let's say that a petition was raised and it passed then the home owner has no choice but to pay the road improvement tax. It happened on Oakmount Drive, Lantz in 2003 - some home owners were not pleased, but the good of the community trumped individuality and the cost of home ownership was invoked. Recently this road was completely repaved, when a partial fix was probably all that was required. What is the rationale to repave a street when there is a GAP road attached to Oakmount Drive: Brookside Avenue. The Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) has increased assessments year after year, with a significant jump in 2022, that will increase taxes for all, does arbitrary non-municipal tax increases cause councilors concerns or is the matter directly related to home ownership: home ownership has its cost and as long as the cost is not out of the normal cost of owning a home then home owners all pay for the good of the community: one out of necessity and others mostly begrudgingly, and it is what it is.

6. The GAP ROADS do not exist without cost to those who have to use the road to get to their residence. Home owners have to wash the outside of their house, windows, decks, clothes, driveway, garage floors because of the dirt accumulated in the tires 365 days a year. All of the before mentioned items cause home owners additional expenses in water bills and environmental increased water usage and waste water, sewer and as such needs to be rectified by having the GAP ROADS paved. These GAP ROADS exist because of past municipal policies and as such need to be remedied and then policies enacted to ensure the issue never comes to the forefront in the future.

7. The Council continues to bring up issues relating to individuality and income: most seniors are on fixed income, do not have children in school, but all taxpayers pay; most do not need RCMP services but all taxpayers pay; most have not used the Fire Services but all taxpayers pay; most do not use the Hockey Facilities or the Dome but all taxpayers pay; most do not use the Aquatic Centre but all taxpayers pay, many do not use sidewalks or Street Lights but all taxpayers pay. All these items are for the greater good of the Municipality. Reality, but always arbitrarily neglected or omitted in conversations.

8. The residents who live in the Rural Area do not expect to have paved roads and have different needs or else their concerns would be before council, so why does rural issues always come to the surface as fodder to the actual subject. If rural residents want paved roads then they can put in a petition and then pay for the service and then and only then should it be raised in council sessions.

9. Let's talk about the Municipal Road Fund. What was/is its origins and mandate. How does the balance get to be in the amount of \$350,000.00 and not used for 12 plus years. If the fund is going to be used at 10% then if you use the GAP ROAD scenario at \$60,000.00 per project then the fund would take six (6) projects or \$3,500,000.00 dollars of known work in the GAP ROAD magnitude to get fully expended. When one gets narrow in scope with regulations then little gets done in the process. Flexibility is need in all situational matters. It is council directives and therefore council can amend. This could also be done after approving a project and then have more scenarios in drafting guidelines. Rules are guidelines and never meant to go "straight down the line": communities always need, want and must be able to adapt. **Point to consider:** In order to cease this endlessly unproductive chatter then one either accepts that the money is for the greater good of the community or Council once and for all take all accounts and pro rate/split them up as funding for corridor projects and rural projects.

10. The review should detail in dollars the amount the Municipality has paid over the last 25 years to maintain the gravel roads, I use Acorn Avenue as an example, and what is the future savings to pave roads that are costing taxpayers money not to pave. Was or is the money coming out of the GAP ROAD FUND or out of general revenue. This is also part of the solution: all costs identified.

FOR DISTRICT 7 COUNCILLOR

11. I have asked previously for a policy on Claims Against The Municipality For Vehicle Damage, and was told that there is no policy and it is looked at on a "case by case" basis. I am requesting that this item be a future agenda item with the goal to have staff develop a policy.

Thank you,

Harold MacNeil, Lantz,

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