

WELCOME HOME



CONNIE MCFADDEN PHOTO

Enniskillen/Oil Springs firefighters put their muscles in action pushing the new pumper truck into the fire hall in Oil Springs Saturday. It's part of a tradition in the firefighting community which imitates the earliest firefighters who removed their pumpers from the horses and pushed them back into the hall. This is the first new truck at the hall since 2000. The pumper - which is paid for by both Enniskillen and Oil Springs, cost \$650,000.

‘What is the cost of a life ?’

‘No reason’ for profit surgeries

Heather Wright
The Independent

Petrolia councillors want crosswalks in the downtown improved as soon as possible. So, during Tuesday’s budget deliberations, they added \$60,000 to the 2023 document for the equipment to put amber flashing lights at one of the problematic crossings. In 2019, council looked at a study which recommended removing sidewalks with road markings but no lights. The consultant said they aren’t legal crosswalks. The consultant wanted the amber crossing at the TD Bank improved and two more placed at the corners of Petrolia Line and Queen St. and Petrolia Line and Princess St. where children cross to go to school. But council shelved the report with Mayor Brad Loosley voicing concern at the time

about how adding the crossings would removed downtown parking. But earlier this month, Lambton County Development Services urged council to reconsider the study. One of the people supported by LCDS had been hit at the corner of King and Petrolia Line in the dark on Dec. 22. She was seriously injured. Executive Director Nick Salaris said this was the second person supported by LCDS hurt while attempting to cross Petrolia Line in eight months. Council agreed Jan. 9 to take a look at the issue, asking staff to get another study to determine what was needed, since, some said, traffic volume has increased. Staff placed \$10,000 in the 2023 budget for that study. But councillors, led by Debb Pitel, wanted more action.

SEE CROSSWALK PG 3

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

Every Ontarian should be very afraid and very angry about Premier Doug Ford’s plan to move into private for profit clinics, said Shirley Roebuck, chair of Sarnia Lambton Health Coalition. “It is being done to help Premier Ford’s business cronies,” said Roebuck. “There is no data at all to support this move.” She calls for the provincial government to fund the public health care system instead. Ford said Monday, there is a backlog of surgeries the Ontario health care system has accumulated since the pandemic, so the province has to expand the number of surgeries performed in privately run, for profit clinics. Ford said this will be a

permanent move, even if the backlog is eliminated. The province will start with surgical clinics in Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa perform an additional 14,000 cataract operations a year - about 25 percent of Ontario’s wait list for the procedure. The next phase will have private clinics offer MRI, CT scans, colonoscopies and endoscopies. By 2024, hip and knee replacements will be performed at for profit clinics. Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones stressed all of these procedures will be covered by OHIP and there will not be an additional cost to patients. They say if a private clinic will be allowed to upsell or offer a procedure not covered by OHIP.

SEE OPERATIONS PG 3

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Average Petrolia homeowner to shell out at least \$69 more in municipal tax

Heather Wright
The Independent

The average Petrolia homeowner could pay at least \$69 more for municipal taxes this year.

Town councillors had the first public look at the \$6,092,783 operating and \$3,958,576 capital budget. And instead of cutting the budget – which is normal in budget deliberations, the councillors added nearly \$80,000 to maintain some services offered in the past.

Town staff has recommended a three per cent tax increase in 2023. That comes after three years without a tax increase. The three previous years, the town passed along a one per cent increase.

A three per cent tax increase means homeowner with a house assessed at \$193,000 – the average in town – will pay \$69 more to cover the cost.

According to the budget, the administration planned to spend about \$192,320 more than planned last year and about \$100,000 more

than the town actually spent in 2022.

There will also be about \$54,000 more in revenue because of new housing. Mayor Brad Loosley believes that figure is too low estimating the assessment will likely grow by \$94,000 in 2023.

There are some larger than average increases in the budget – including council’s salaries which are up nine per cent more than the \$108,000 spent in 2022.

The cost of general administration is up four per cent, but there are some big increases in spending within the department including an 80 per cent increase in legal fees – with \$45,000 budgeted this year over \$25,000 spent last year. Over all, the town plans to spend about 13 per cent more on legal and professional fees this year.

The town expects to contribute more to the operation of the YMCA in 2023. Taxpayers will foot \$487,225 of the bill to run the centre. That’s up from \$435,426 in 2022.

About 21 per cent more will be spent to market the town and its businesses. About \$10,000 of that will be for marketing local merchants under a new business improvement group.

Town administration is hoping the arena deficit will be lower. Last year, the town paid \$243,877 – about \$46,000 more than was expected - to cover the arena deficit. In 2023, the town hopes the arena will need \$211,966 to cover its deficit.

The town also plans to collect enough taxes that it will be able to put \$1,531,458 into working reserves at the end of the budget year – it’s slightly less than the town put into the working capital reserves last year.

Rick Charlebois, town treasurer and chief administrative officer, says the town has built its reserves to \$8,904,238.

NEW EMPLOYEE

The 2023 budget also calls for the creation of a new job. The town hopes to hire someone to take care of its asset management

plan. That plan keeps track of what repairs are needed on the town’s buildings and equipment and is used to help apply for government grants. That may cost between \$50,000 and \$80,000 with salary and benefits.

Councillors also expect the new employee to work on applying for grants.

CYBER PROTECTION

The town also wants to spend money to protect its information systems. There is also about \$11,760 in the budget to back up town files to a cloud-based program.

Laurissa Ellsworth, director of marketing, arts and communication, says that would allow the town to be up and running again in 12 hours should there be a disaster at town hall or a cyber attack.

Lambton County was hacked in June 2021. The county’s business grounded to a halt with access to the computer systems compromised for weeks. Loosley says the county “lost a lot of

material” in the breach.

\$4M IN CAPITAL

The budget also lays out nearly \$4 million in capital spending – about \$1.7 million of that will come from grants from upper levels of government.

Included in the list of projects this year is yet-to-be explained \$200,000 project to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Petrolia, about \$100,000 in consultants for everything from a crosswalk study to a pay equity study.

The town also plans to rebuild Derby and Holland Streets as well as Tank Street. The reconstruction of Tank, from the community centre to Discovery Line is estimated to cost \$895,000 and would include the new parking lot planned for the soccer fields there.

SOME CUTS

There was also concern about some of the spending. Councillors turned down a request for a \$500 grant to the Lambton Plowmen’s Association for the annual plowing match.

SEE BUDGET PG 5

Petrolia council commits cash to build new crosswalk in downtown

CON’T FROM PG 1

Mike Thompson, director of operations, said the town would wait until the theatre season before starting another traffic study. That would be until at least May.

“We want him here for the first show of the season when the town is its busiest,” he told council.

But Councillors Pitel, Joel Field, Chad Hyatt, Bill Clark and Liz Welsh wanted action now. Pitel first suggested the town start an education program on crosswalk safety with some of the money set aside for the study.

Field said the new study wasn’t

necessary for council to act.

“We’re going to have more traffic, we know that.

“We should look at the crossings that are not legal and act on them... remove them,” he said. “Could we not start to act...getting rid of the crosswalk at the top of the hill?”

That lead to other suggestions with Welsh saying the painted crosswalks were “terrible” and suggesting at the minimum, the town should remove one of the parking spots in front of them now so drivers can see that someone is crossing.

Clark suggested the town should

start by installing a new crosswalk with amber lights at Princess and Petrolia, where there is currently a crossing guard.

But Loosley cautioned council against making a concrete decision during budget.

“I don’t think you should rush into this,” he said adding council had to consider what more crosswalks would do to the “character of the downtown.”

Councillor Ross O’Hara also urged caution saying “Main street parking is very important to people. They don’t want to park out behind (a business)

somewhere and walk out to the main street.” It’s estimated installing a crosswalk would take one or two parking spaces out of the downtown.

That didn’t sit well with Field. “I would caution council about talking about parking spots over the potential of losing a life,” he said. “What is a the cost of a life?”

Pitel and Hyatt then came up with a plan to put \$60,000 into the 2023 budget so at least one new crosswalk with overhead lights could be installed.

“I cannot support the delaying of this when we can earmark \$60,000

for port-a-johns (which had been approved moments earlier in the budget process) and then say this is not about safety.”

Council then approved placing the cash in the budget, spending about \$7,000 for another traffic study and \$5,000 to help educate people to be aware of pedestrians in the downtown and the proper use of crosswalks.

Staff will return to council with suggestions on the next steps. Clerk Mandi Pearson added changes like this should go to a public council agenda as residents may want to weigh in on the issue.

Health care advocate says Ontario’s should be ‘very afraid’ of private operating clinics

CON’T FROM PG 1

Critics are looking for guarantees that those costs would not be borne by the patient. For example, in cataract surgery, the province provides a standard lense to implant. Doctors can offer what they consider a superior lense

at the patients costs. “A cataract surgery takes seven minutes,” said Roebuck. “There is no reason it can’t be done within the walls of a public hospital.” She is afraid extra costs will be charged to OHIP by the private facilities. She knows of an individual who had a hernia


operation at a private facility. He spent three days at the private facility in recovery. Roebuck, who previously worked as a registered nurse, said this type of recovery time was common years ago, but is not the practice today. She feels these private clinics will charge

extra administration or registration fees to either OHIP or to patients.

She is also afraid the best doctors and nurses may go to the private clinics, as they may offer better salaries and work schedules.

“Every person in this province should be against private health

care,” said Roebuck. She urged residents to contact their local MPP and voice their displeasure. The Ontario Healthcare Coalition also launched its Fight Back campaign last March against the Ford government’s privatization of healthcare plans.



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Editorial

A plan to save lives

Petrolia councillors are putting public safety ahead of politics and it is about time.

During the 2023 budget deliberations Tuesday, councillors put their money where their mouths are to make sure pedestrians will have safer crossings in the downtown.

You might remember that Lambton County Developmental Services asked council to do something about the crossings on Petrolia Line just after one of the people they serve was hit while crossing the street near King. The crossing there is merely marks on the road way with little opportunity for passing cars to see people waiting to pass and vice versa. It was the second time in 2022 an LCDS client was hit while crossing.

In 2019, council did look at improving the downtown crossings. A consultant told them the painted crosswalks without lights weren't legal, but still three remain; one at the top of the hill at Oil Street, one at King and one near Canada Post. Council at the time didn't want to make Petrolia Line a place to stop and start or take away downtown parking spots.

Some of those concerns were raised again Tuesday by the mayor and a senior councillor. Thankfully, other voices prevailed.

While the exact plan is not in place, councillors ensured there is \$60,000 cash in the budget to install at least one new crossing. Of course, Petrolia could easily put up all the proper crossing it needs, since it puts away more than \$1.5 million a year for projects just like that. But we digress.

So what should be done; we think a suggestion by former mayoralty candidate Richard Poore makes sense. He says a flashing crosswalk at Petrolia Line and Oil Street would calm traffic heading into the downtown. The same holds true for the busy crossing at the post office.

Those two crossings coupled with the existing crossing at the TD Bank and the stop light on Centre Street should eliminate the need for painted on crosswalks and, in the long run, will save lives.

Letters to the Editor

The Independent welcomes Letters to the Editor.

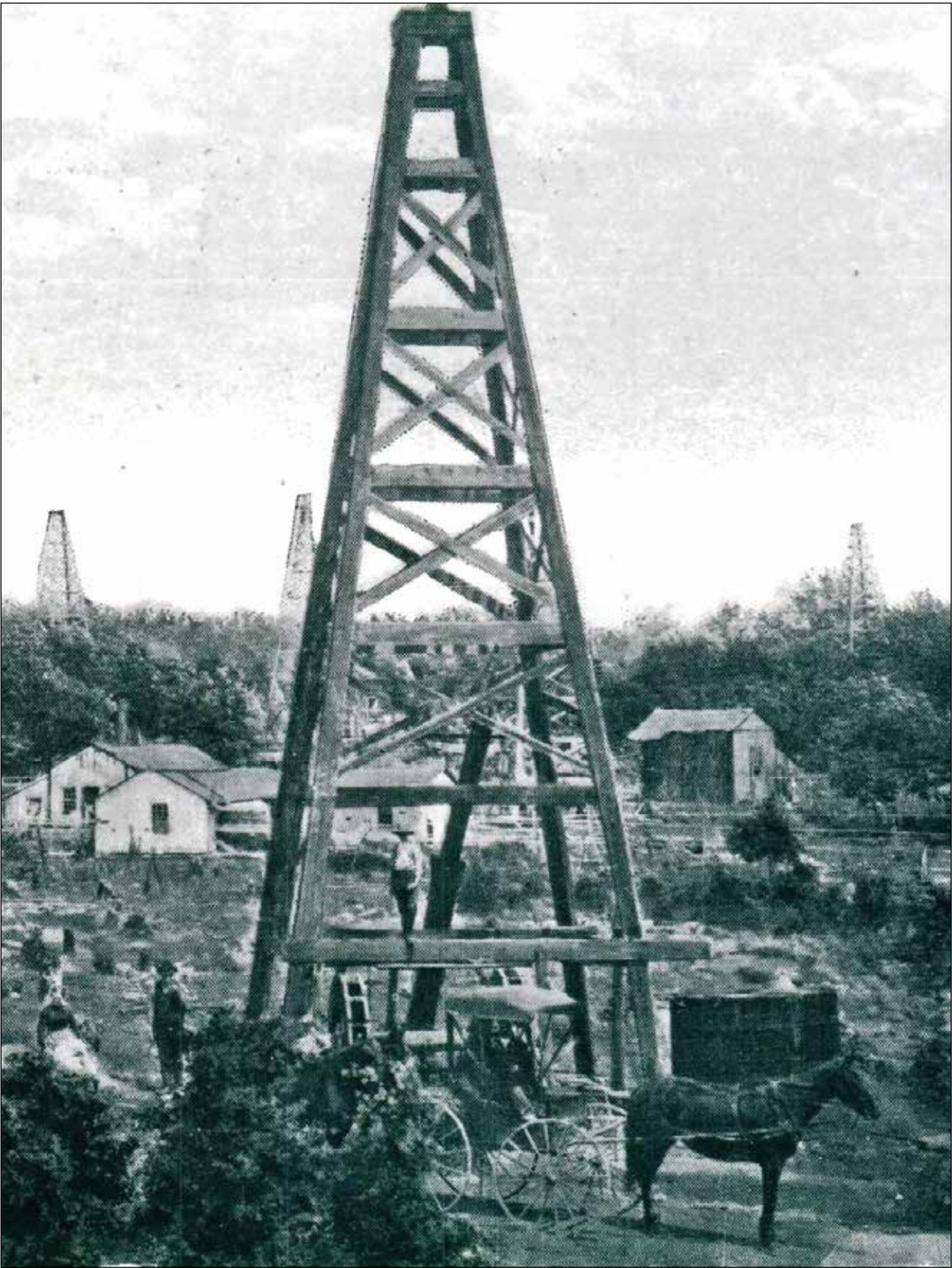
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You can also deliver letters to *The Independent* at 4156 Petrolia Line, Petrolia or drop them in the mail at *The Independent*, Petrolia, ON, N0N 1R0.

The Independent reserves the right to edit letters for brevity and clarity.

All letters need to be signed and must have a phone number for verification.

Our Story



FROM THE DAVE BURWELL POSTCARD COLLECTION

Apparently, people at the turn of the century were not as safety conscious as we are today. This photo shows 'The Heart of Oil Country' in Petrolia.

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Petrolia taxes to go up at least three per cent

CON'T FROM PG 3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Councillor Liz Welsh expressed concern about “what is essentially a \$12,000 taxi service” for the curbside collection and transportation of leaves to Sarnia.

Welsh also noted there is no money in the budget for home composters; the town is required by law to provide the units to taxpayers at cost.

The town nixed that idea when it reopened the transfer station on Maud Street.

Welsh convinced council to allow the town to again offer composters at cost to residents hoping it will encourage people to reduce the amount of food waste going to the curb. The councillor says she diverts about five to 10 pounds of food scraps a week to her home composter – that’s waste the town doesn’t have to pay to put in a landfill.

Town staff expected the cost of the composters could be covered by the suggested budget without adding any extra cash.

EXTRA POTTIE CASH

But councillors did add some funding for washrooms. During the pandemic, business owners came to the town asking for access to public washrooms. People were coming into their businesses looking for a washroom – but business owners didn’t want to allow just anyone in.

So, the town made the public washrooms available for longer hours and added 11 port-a-potties at town parks.

That cost a great deal more than what the town normally paid to maintain washrooms – about \$71,000 in 2022.

Councillors decided to maintain the porta potties doubling the \$30,000 budget.

Councillor Ross O’Hara said it’s a very important service particularly as the town tries to draw people to the area.

“We don’t want people going behind trees,” he said.

TREE PROGRAM REVAMPED

Council also added another \$3,000 into the tree program. The town gave away 180 trees in the annual event. It cost nearly \$20,000.

Town staff put \$5,000 in the budget for the program.

Council agreed to add another \$3,000 in the budget so 100 trees will be given away. The program may be restructured so people can apply for a tree and then the names will be drawn randomly instead of a flood of calls one day of the year.

BENCHES BENCHED

The town is also suspending the Memorial Bench program. Dave Menzies, the director of Parks and Recreation, says the cost for the program shot up during the pandemic. The town spent over \$30,000 on the benches – two thirds more than expected.

Menzies says the town is going to look for a better supplier and bring the program back in 2024.

Council did save some cash – councillors have agreed to move forward with a better audio and visual system to broadcast town council meetings, but they’ll spend less.

It’s expected about \$45,000 will be spent on the system instead of \$60,000. Councillors felt it wasn’t necessary to have the presentations viewed at council available on the live feed.

The town will hold a public meeting on the budget Feb. 13 and council is expected to approve the document Feb. 23.

BY THE NUMBERS

- ✓ \$ 8,600,078 in revenue
- ✓ \$ 6,092,783 in operating costs
- ✓ \$1,531,458 to go into a working capital reserve
- ✓ \$8,904,238 already in reserves
- ✓ 10.4 per cent - increase in public works budget
- ✓ \$435,426 - deficit to run the Y/Community Centre
- ✓ \$487,225 expected Y deficit in 2023
- ✓ \$1,315,876 in capital projects at the Y in 2023
- ✓ \$593,156 federal/provincial grants to cover some of the Y work
- ✓ \$225,000 for splash pad infrastructure including plumbing and electrical
- ✓ \$243,887 - 2022 arena deficit
- ✓ \$211,966 - projected arena deficit in 2023
- ✓ \$146,275 - budget for community events in 2023
- ✓ \$41,284 for Canada Day
- ✓ \$21,068 for Harvestfest
- ✓ \$17,522 for Christmas events
- ✓ \$14,935 for the Barn Dance
- ✓ \$77,275 anticipated revenue for 2023 community events
- ✓ \$200,000 for a yet to be explained Legacy project celebrating Petrolia’s 150th
- ✓ \$1.6 million in road work with \$634,164 from municipal taxpayers
- ✓ \$100,000 in consultants for capital projects including \$10,000 for a crosswalk study and \$20,000 for a pay equity study
- ✓ \$7,181,638 outstanding debt at the end of 2022
- ✓ \$6,509,087 by end of 2023
- ✓ 2037 Last loan paid in full

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Local farmer concerned new rules will hurt his prospects

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

Lawyers for an Enniskillen farmer say new rules governing where cannabis operations can set up shop could prevent someone from buying his property.

Monday, Enniskillen council looked at bylaw changes to keep cannabis operations at least 300 meters from homes. But Scott Snider, a lawyer with Turkstra Mazza, representing Enniskillen Pepper Company owners Jack and Christine Greydanus, said the bylaw is damaging his clients prospects.

The bylaw lists the greenhouse as a legal non-conforming use. Snider says it puts a lot of uncertainty around the property, to the point where most banks will not be interested to lending to the property owners.

Snider wants the property will be clearly recognized saying it existed before the amendments, and expansion to the existing operations will not be allowed without a further process.

And there were more issues for the company. Ken Melanson, manager of planning services in Lambton County, which helped write the changes to the bylaw, noted Enniskillen Pepper Company still has some outstanding issues in its site plan. He suggested Enniskillen Township Council could

grant an extension so the issues with the site plan could be dealt with. Otherwise, the site plan would not be valid.

That was news to Snider. He suggested the matter could be referred back to staff.

“I don’t want to negotiate a site plan on the floor of council,” said Enniskillen Township Clerk/Treasurer Duncan McTavish.

Council referred the matter back to staff so more details about the site plan could be obtained.

Enniskillen Pepper’s concerns had dominated the public meeting, frustrating some in attendance.

“Why are we only concerned about this property?” said Trevor Brand, a neighbour of the Enniskillen Pepper Company.

There are a number of people who have made investments to their properties on Lasalle Line, not only in money but also in time. There have been adverse effects from the cannabis operation and he would like to see those people protected, said Brand.

The Enniskillen Pepper Company leased out it’s greenhouse on Lasalle Line to Tilray. It began cultivating cannabis in 2017 under the name High Park Farms.

Brand’s mother lived across from High Park Farms and tried to get local politicians to do something about the

odour, noise and light pollution. The Brands had taken the issue to the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board in 2021 but the hearings abruptly ended when High Park’s operation moved to Leamington.

Monday, township council held a public meeting on its zoning bylaw aimed at protecting neighbours should another cannabis greenhouse set up shop in the municipality.

The bylaw says indoor operations would have to be on Agricultural or a Mixed Commercial Industrial zoned land. It would also keep the operation 300 meters from playgrounds, sporting venues, community centres, churches or any other place people gather and sleep.

Any cannabis operators would also need to submit plans to reduce light leakage from the greenhouse. They’ll also have to do studies on traffic impact, noise and air quality if the bylaw passes.

Councillor Mary Lynne McCallum is one of the councillors who pushed to set limits

McCallum says the changes are “purely preventative” since “there was just so many issues before with High Park.

The bylaw, McCallum says, is modelled after one created by Pelham when it faced odour issues at cannabis operations.

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Six week search of Watford landfill failed to find victim

Heather Wright
The Independent

York Regional Police say they did not find the body of a woman murdered in Vaughan in the landfill in Watford.

That was one of the revelations as the police held a news conference to announce an international campaign and a \$50,000 reward to find the man charged with first degree murder in the deaths of Quoc Tran and Kristy Nguyen.

Police say Tran and Nguyen were killed in a targeted attack near a warehouse in Vaughn. The couple

knew the man now wanted by police – Mike Nguyen – although police say he’s not related to the victims.

The search for clues led York Police to the Twin Creeks Landfill in Watford just after the murders. They found the body of Tran there. Police say he had been shot.

But what exactly happened to Nguyen isn’t clear. After six weeks of searching in Watford, York Police turned its attention to a US landfill, but her body was never found. “We believe a firearm was involved but we can’t confirm it since Kristy has not been found,”

said Superintendent Rhonda Coristine.

One person, Recaldo Liburd, has been charged with two counts of accessory after the fact of murder. He’s in custody until a hearing slated in July.

Police Chief Jim MacSween says the department is working with BOLO – a group which publicizes some of the most wanted people in Canada and the US on social media – and has offered a \$50,000 reward for any information which would lead to the arrest of Mike Nguyen who is facing two first degree murder charges.

He was last detected leaving Canada for Mexico Sept. 20, 2021.

McSween is hopeful the campaign and the reward will stir up new clues. “The brutal tragic murders...have devastated family and friends and the entire community,” he says.

McSween read a statement from Kristy Nguyen’s family, who said every day since Kristy’s murder “has been filled with anguish.

“At least one person out there has the answers we so desperately need...to help ease some of our pain,” McSween read, adding the police are asking Mike Nguyen to



Mike NGUYEN
get a lawyer and turn himself in.

Work on Brooke roof underway

Heather Wright
The Independent

Construction is expected to begin in days to repair the roof at Brooke Central School.

In late November, engineers preparing for a summer roof project found the roof might collapse under the weight of more than 12 inches of snow.

The Lambton-Kent District School Board sent the students home and later worked out a plan which would see kindergarten to Grade 5 students attend Lambton Centennial. Students in French Immersion from K-6 headed to East Lambton Elementary and Grade 6,

7&8 students stayed at Brooke Central in a newer part of the school where the roof was deemed secure.

Teachers packed up their rooms and Lambton Centennial and East Lambton got ready for the new students.

Brian McKay, superintendent of business for the board, says that while the students settled in and then went for Christmas break, the board was working with its engineering firm to prepare a plan of attack.

McKay expected the builders would begin removing the ceilings to get at the roofing system and begin shoring up the beams.

It’s not clear how long that

work will take nor when students will return to their school.

“The timeline for completion of the structural and sprinkler upgrades and return of the students currently attending East Lambton Elementary School and Lambton Centennial Public School is unknown.

“Only required structural and sprinkler upgrades for occupancy will be completed at this time, with any additional work to be completed in the summer,” wrote Director of Education, John Howitt, in a letter to the families.

He added the rest of the work on the roof will be completed in the summer.

COMMUNITY CASH



FILE PHOTO

Four Petrolia groups are getting a helping hand from the Petrolia Community Foundation. The executive director, Mike Barron, was at Petrolia Council Monday to give out \$9,000 to four groups. Petrolia Community Refrigerator will receive \$ 3,000 to purchase equipment. Sarnia Lambton Rebound will use \$2,000 to present a family movie night in Petrolia. Organization for Literacy Lambton will use its \$2,500 to present a Train Your Brain program for Grade 3 & 4 students. YMCA Petrolia will buy a mesh wheelchair to help people get in and out of the pool with its \$1,500 grant. The four projects were chosen from 11 applications.

Two assaulted at Port Lambton intersection

The Independent

Two Wallaceburg residents are facing charges after two people were assaulted at an intersection.

Lambton OPP say the incident took place Dec. 18 on Ward Line in St. Clair Township - near Port Lambton - where

the victims were at an intersection when they were assaulted.

Lisa Richardson, 39, and Devin Stefanic, 32 have been charged with assault, mischief and theft under \$5,000.

They’re out on bail as they deal with the charges.

Cell problems as PW upgrades Highland Glen

Heather Wright
The Independent

Plympton-Wyoming wants to put a park and pay system at Highland Glen - but it’s proving to be a little more work than expected.

The town recently took over the management of the Lake Huron park after years of waiting to see the boat launch at the site repaired.

It was closed in 2019 after high water and winds damaged the steel groins around the ramp. The conservation authority hired an engineer to look at the damage to the ramp and also the banks of the park which were collapsing. After getting a \$3 million estimate to repair the launch and the banks, the authority board stepped back and opted to continue studying the problem t

Plympton-Wyoming stepped up, offering to take over the park and eventually take ownership of it.

This fall, the town’s contractor completed about \$105,000 in repairs on the boat ramp. Now the town is trying to find ways to make sure people

using the launch help pay for its upkeep.

Town staff want to put in a park and pay system. It’s not clear yet what they might charge for parking and a launch but officials do say people simply using the park won’t be required to pay a fee.

But Mayor Gary Atkinson says an attempt to put internet based system on the lakeshore isn’t working because of the poor cellular service in the area.

Atkinson says there are other options including a type of toll, but staff is still working out the kinks.

“We’re hoping to have that an answer by the end of the month when our next council meeting is so we can have that in place this spring.

The wireless system could cost about \$25,000.

Meantime, staff is working on a plan to provide more parking at the park, expanding the lot near the boat pad to the west and clearing out a little more room at the west parking lot which leads to the park.

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‘A bomb within a bomb’; residents say St. Clair should not support battery project

Heather Wright
The Independent

There are calls for St. Clair Township to take another look at three energy generation projects coming to the community.

But it appears to be too late since letter of support is already in the mail.

Enbridge Gas plans to build three battery energy storage systems in St. Clair, one on Tecumseh Road, one on Ladysmith Line and one on Petrolia Line. They’re all to the east and south of Nova Chemical’s plant at the corner of Petrolia Line and Highway 40.

Denise Heckbert of Enbridge outlined the project to St. Clair council just before Christmas. Each site will have individual units with lithium ion batteries. When the power demand is low, they’ll charge on the system. When it’s high, they return power to the grid, she says.

Each of the three sites could produce up to 200 MW of power.

Heckbert was looking for St. Clair Township to back the plan as Enbridge competes for the rights to generate energy with about 20 other companies at the Independent Energy System Operator. The bids have to be complete by Feb. 16 with the projects being awarded in May.

Residents at the Dec. 19 meeting voiced concern, knowing that similar power generators in California had caught fire causing massive fall out.

One farmer on Ladysmith Line, where one of the units will be placed less than one kilometre from his herds, wondered if he would have to evacuate in case of a fire and if his \$4 million herd was damaged, would Enbridge pay.

Another resident wanted to know if Enbridge would be providing the equipment and training to deal with any fires.

Heckbert said they would.

And she said the battery units used now are not linked, making the prospect of a massive fire less likely.

She added the units would be in service for 22 years, beginning in 2024, should Enbridge win the contract.

Council decided to give the company a letter of support for the project, in part because township staff said the municipality could do nothing to stop it if the province approved.

When neighbours of the site heard council gave its support to the project with few details, there were calls

for council to reconsider. Meindert Wolff asked council to withdraw its support.

“While appreciative of the municipal taxes paid by Enbridge, we all pay our fair share and at the very least I expect municipal leadership to negotiate conditions to neutralize risk and liability for residents not simply offering unconditional support for Enbridge to take advantage of another high profit opportunity at our risk and expense,” he wrote in a letter to council which was on Monday’s council agenda. He’s also concerned with the amount of farm land each unit would take - about 20 acres.

Chad Anderson, a beef farmer, was also incensed. “I am familiar with operating under the shadow of Enbridge’s natural gas operation as well as the rubber stamping this municipality gives this corporation to basically operate at their own will while ignoring landowner interests, but this takes the cake.

“How dare the council endorse a concept that has so little details with respect to construction and design. You now become a willing partner in what I see as three 40 acre bomb sites established on already natural gas facilities...a bomb within a bomb so to speak, in my backyard,” he wrote.

And Santo Giorno, a local expert on green energy projects, says St. Clair Township staff made an error. The municipality does now have a large say in what green energy projects can be approved within its borders.

“Enbridge’s proposed projects cannot proceed without formal support from the township and without the township receiving rezoning or zoning exemption for an industrial project on agricultural lands. The province will not overrule the township’s decision on this matter,” he wrote.

“Council’s decision for a motion of support was made without all relevant information made available.”

Giorno also voiced concern about the possibility of fire at the sites.

“In the California fire, people evacuated for a three km radius,” he said asking how many homes would be within five kilometres of the new sites, should they be approved, and if there would be a communications plan if there is a fire.

“The health hazard of battery fires, particularly the toxicity of gases released due to fire, should not be underestimated,” he added.



ENBRIDGE GAS PHOTO

Enbridge plans to build three battery storage areas in St. Clair Township. The batteries would generate power to return to the grid but critics worry about the use of farmland for the project and the ability to put out any fire which occurs on the sites.

Despite the concerns, the township didn’t change course. Town staff had already

sent the letter of support to Enbridge. Councillor Pat Brown, who suggest the township

support the plan, admitted he didn’t like the locations and hoped Enbridge would look for others.

Monday, he said “maybe we could do some arm twisting to get them to look at other areas.”

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Sports

SILVER STICK CHAMPIONS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The East Lambton Eagles have landed an International Silver Stick Championship. The U15 C Eagles won the tier two finals at the North American Silver Stick tournament in Pelham on the weekend. The Eagles blanked the Mooretown Flags, 2-0 in the championship contest. East Lambton advanced with a 5-2 win over South Huron in the semi-finals and Mooretown blanked Colorado, 5-0 in its final four game. The Flags (4-0) and East Lambton (3-0-1) finished one-two in the preliminary round standings.

Flyers face Stars in lone game of week

The Petrolia Flyers are at home to the North Middlesex Stars Thursday in its only game this week. It is the first of four games against the Stars in the next three weeks. The Stars - 18-4-4 - is in a four-team tussle for first place in the Yeck Division. The Flyers are solidly in eighth place with a record of 7-20-3. They are 10 points ahead of ninth place Aylmer. Petrolia has seven of its last 10 games on home ice.

Last week, Noel Sanderson had what proved to be the game-winner with just over two minutes left in regulation time to lift the Flyers to a 4-3 home ice win over Port Stanley at Greenwood on Thursday. Newcomer Dylan Demeulenaere, Caleb Kennedy and Tanner Hull also scored for the Flyers. Daniel Gibson had two assists. Gibson had the lone goal Friday in a 9-1 loss to the Dolphins in Dorchester.

Squires win final home game by forfeit

The Independent

The Squires picked up an easy win. The Western Ontario Athletic Association has awarded the game to the Squires by forfeit after Minto-Mapleton has told the league it can not ice a team for the Squires' final home game. "As an organization this is not what we wanted to see happen as we lose a home game which brings us revenue to cover team costs," said Squires spokesperson Tim Martin. Petrolia, now 10-8 on the season, takes the long trek to Shallow Lake, near Owen Sound, this

Friday before closing out the regular season at Lucknow a week from Friday. Playoffs begin next month. The team says passes for the cancelled game will be honoured for the first playoff game. Kraig Wright scored five times and added an assist, including a natural hat trick in the first period but in the end the Petrolia Squires lost 8-7 in Tavistock Jan. 14. Brendon Merritt added a goal and three assists for the Squires and Jesse Ferguson had the other. Isaac McLean and Ryan Fraser each had three assists and Steve Farlow had two helpers.

EYE ON THE PUCK



BLAKE ELLIS/LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE PHOTO

East Lambton's Sean Shanahan- the goalie - keeps his eye on the puck during the Lambton Jr. Sting Silver Stick run. The U18's were among the last four teams standing. After going 3-1 in the preliminary round, the Sting lost 4-3 to Huron Perth in the semi-finals. The Sting roster includes Liam Crummy of Oil Springs, Shanahan and Corunna's Casey Shouten. And former Petrolia Jets goalie Ken Carroll of Oil City was back in town with the McKinney North Stars. The Texas-based U11 team went 2-2.

DON'T LET A
FALL GET YOU
DOWN

As we grow older, our risk of falling increases and so does the risk of serious injury from a fall. Most trips, slips and falls happen in and around the home. Here are some simple things you can do to make sure your home doesn't trip you up.

THE BATHROOM

- Use a non-slip mat inside and outside the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars by the toilet and in the tub and shower area.
- Purchase a non-slip bath and shower bench to get in and out safely.
- Install a raised toilet seat to make getting on and off easier.

THE KITCHEN

- Replace loose scatter mats with rugs that have rubber backing
- Wipe up spills immediately
- Keep everyday items on shelves within easy reach
- Make sure no extension cords cross your path
- Never climb on a chair or stool to reach for something. Always ask for assistance
- Use non-slip floor wax
- Add gliders to your chairs to make moving them easier when you sit down or get up from the table.



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Coming Events

Working on your Lambton County Genealogy? Have questions? on January 30, 2023 from 2-3:30pm Lambton County Branch, Ontario Ancestors Drop-In & Chat - Zoom Webinar. Meet with others to discuss obstacles or exciting new discoveries. For a link to the meeting email lambton@ogs.on.ca.

Obituaries / Death Notices

GARRETT
James Frederick



It is with broken hearts the family of James Frederick Garrett of Petrolia announce his sudden passing at the age of 66 years. Beloved husband and best friend of Joanne (Roberts) for 35 years. Adored father of Mandy Sandkuhler (Tim), Michelle Facchina (Jeff), Melissa Marriott, Michael Marriott (Sherida), and Meggan Brown (Jay). Proud and cherished grandfather of Connor, Ethan, Aidan, Ronan, Cayden, Rhys, Renly, Zayne, Asher, and Parker. Also survived by mother Dorine Garrett, brother Bill and son Josiah. Jim was a lifelong paramedic graduating from Humber College in the 70's. He started his career in Richmond Hill before returning to his hometown Petrolia where he finished his career. Jim's favourite pastime was watching his grandsons play hockey and putzing around in his yard. Cremation has taken place and a private Memorial Graveside Service will be held at Hillsdale Cemetery (Petrolia) at a later date.

STOBBS
Bill

Nov 19, 1935 - Jan 11, 2023

There are some people you think will live forever. Not because they are invincible but rather because you just can't imagine a world that they are not a part of. **Bill Stobbs** was one of those people. He lit up a room when he walked in with his booming voice and huge smile and never missed an opportunity make you feel welcome. He was a giver and the epitome of a "nice man". Bill was born in Windsor in 1935 and after moving his way around Southern Ontario for most of his life, eventually settling in the Chatham area, he ended up back where he started, in Windsor close to his children and died on Jan 11, 2023. He was **87** years old. Bill worked for Union Gas for 40 years and touched a lot of lives there. He was the consummate volunteer and involved in everything from Petrolia Town Council, Boy Scouts, United Way, Jaycees to Canadian Mental Health Association and Canadian Cancer Society to name a few but his passion was Hockey. He never played the game but was involved in almost every Executive and Management aspect of it for more than 30 years. He was a Life Member of the OHA and except for the last few years could be spotted at Arenas throughout the province enjoying the game. In 2106, in honor of his contribution, The Great Lakes Junior C Hockey Division was renamed The Bill Stobbs Division. In between community service and hockey obligations, he found time to be a pretty good husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather as well. Bill will be missed by his loving wife of 65 years, Joan. His children Brad (Laureen), Mark (Carrie) and Cheryl. His grandchildren Tyler, Marly (Luke), Melissa and Gage. His great grandchildren Lyam, Maple and Ivy. Special thanks to the staff at "Shoreview at Riverside" for taking such good care of him for the past 18 months. In lieu of flowers, donations to Canadian Alzheimer's Society, or the Canadian Mental Health Society would be appreciated. **Cremation has taken place and a private family service will take place at a later date.** Arrangements entrusted to SIMPLE CHOICE, 519-254-2585. Online condolences may be shared at www.simplechoicecremation.ca

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Coming Events

Sarnia Horticultural Society monthly meeting, **Wed., Jan. 18, 7 pm.**, Royal Canadian Navy Club, 1420 Lougar Ave. Guest speaker, David Hughes, **"Nurturing Monarch and Swallowtail Butterflies Through Their Lifespans in Your Garden."** 2023 memberships are available to purchase, \$12/individual, \$20/couple. Free admission. More info: Barb Toye, 519-332-5837 or www.gardenontario.org.

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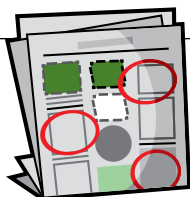
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Flags pick up four in dramatic wins

The Mooretown Flags took four points over the weekend, but it was anything but easy.

Saturday at home, Jace Dupuis scored twice in the final 68 seconds with an extra attacker to force overtime and then beat Dresden, 7-6 on a Logan Gardner game-winner in OT.

Dupuis wound up with a hat trick and an assist.

Tristen Konrad and Masen Flett had the other Mooretown goals.

Brody Genyn had five assists.

Watford's Malcolm Verstraten picked up the goaltending win and former Petrolia Flyer goalie Joseph Malinowski took the loss for the Kings.

Sunday in Blenheim, Flett scored his second of the game with less than 15 seconds left in regulation for a 3-2 Flags' victory. Ayden Letang had the other Mooretown goal to get the Flags on the board in the second period after the Blades had jumped out to a 2-0 lead. Genyn had a pair of assists.

John Chartrand made 37 saves in the Mooretown cage in the victory.

The Flags are now 15-11-1 and in fifth place in the Stobbs Division. They are four points back of Blenheim and have four games in hand.

Mooretown travels to Lakeshore Friday and will entertain Wheatley at the Moore Sports Complex on Saturday at 7:30.

The Legionnaires struggle continues

The Sarnia Legionnaires' winless streak has reached 19 games.

Saturday, Josh Glavin's late third period tally forced overtime, but the hometown Kings skated away with a 3-2 win. Plympton-Wyoming's Ryan Richardson had the other Sarnia goal and ex-Mooretown goalie Logan Phillips made 35 saves.

Sunday in St. Thomas, the Graham brothers, Colton and Cameron, both scored in the second period to erase a 2-0 Stars lead, but St. Thomas scored three unanswered goals in the third period for a 5-2 victory. Ethan Everaert made 52 stops as St. Thomas outshot the

Legionnaires, 57-39.

Sarnia is five points up on Komoka for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference with the Kings having two games in hand.

The Legionnaires are at home to Chatham Thursday and are in Leamington Sunday.

Wyoming's Austin Harper was returned to the Legionnaires from the Sting. He has an assist in three games.

And former Legionnaire Tanner Winegard, now with the London Nationals, has been named to the U18 all-star game at St. Andrew's College in Aurora next weekend.

Killer Bees stung twice on the road

The Alvinston Killer Bees are now 4-14-1 in Western Ontario Super Hockey League action after losses in Stratford and Tilbury.

Saturday, the Irish edged the Bees, 4-3. Avery Antone, Carson Perry and Bayly Fryfogle scored for Alvinston and Kier

Cumming had the Bees' lone goal in a 6-1 loss in Tilbury Sunday.

Alvinston is at home to the Plattsville Lakers on Saturday. Puck drop is 6:30.

The Bees are two points behind the Lakers for sixth place in the nine-team league.

Hat trick for Douglas in LCCVI win

Roan Douglas had a hat trick and added two assists to lead LCCVI to an 11-1 win over St. Pat's in LKSSAA boys' high school hockey.

The Lancers take on Northern Wednesday. Meantime, the Lady Lancers skate against St. Pat's today. Face off time in Clearwater is 3 pm.

The LCCVI junior and senior girls' volleyball squads play today Wednesday at St. Pat's and CKSS respectively and the Lancer boys' basketball teams host a doubleheader versus Wallaceburg Thursday beginning at 5:30. The basketball teams lost games to CKSS and Northern last week.

Corunna's Fraser wins weekly honour at Brock

Brianna Fraser is the female athlete of the week at Brock University in St. Catharines. The Corunna wrestler, who attended St. Pat's, won the 76 kg. gold medal at the Brock Invitational over

the weekend. She had previously won golds earlier this season in Toronto and Pennsylvania. Fraser is preparing for the OUA championships at McMaster University in Hamilton on Feb. 11.

Hockey leader, Petrolia councillor, Bill Stobbs, dies

Heather Wright
The Independent

Hockey circles – including those in Petrolia – are mourning the loss of Bill Stobbs.

Stobbs was an active volunteer – including as a Petrolia Town Councillor – but spent much of his energy in rinks and hockey board rooms around Ontario.

The Provincial Junior Hockey League says Stobbs – who recently made his home in Chatham and Windsor – was the director of the Hockey Development Centre of Ontario and held positions with the Ontario Hockey Federation. He also managed what was then the Great Lakes Junior C division and rewrote its constitution.

Stobbs was award the highest honour of the Ontario Hockey Association – the gold

stick for outstanding service and was named a life member of the association.

Stobbs hockey roots also extend to Petrolia. He was part of the Allan Cup Championship winning Petrolia Squires in 1981.

In his obituary his family wrote; Stobbs “lit up a room when he walked in with his booming voice and huge smile and never missed an opportunity make you feel welcome.

“He was a giver and the epitome of a nice man.”



Bill Stobbs



FILE PHOTO

Bill Stobbs was a member of the 1981 Allan Cup Champion Petrolia Squires



Mooretown second after 3-2 loss in the Windy City to host Chicago on Monday.

Lady Flags win silver in Chicago

The Mooretown Lady Flags are home with silver medals after a 3-2 overtime loss to the Chicago Hawks in the U15 final at the Girls' Winter Classic in the Windy City on Monday.

The Flags tied the game late in the third

before falling just short in the extra period.

Mooretown continues its league schedule this Saturday at home.

They're scheduled to play in the Walter Gretzky Tournament in Brantford next month.

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