

Pontiac Council - changing needs in the municipality

Mo Laidlaw

The regular meeting of Pontiac municipal council was held on 25 August 2020 at 7 pm, by teleconference.

Mayor Joanne Labadie opened the meeting with comments about changing needs in the municipality. With more people working from home Pontiac is no longer a bedroom community. It is clear that communication systems are not adequate (high speed internet) for virtual schooling or working from home. Bell Canada has asked the CRTC for a subsidy to put in FTH (fibre to the home) in Luskville, but more needs to be done. Local parks need to be improved, and some of the equipment from the Luskville ball park may be moved to the community centre. The municipally owned bike path in Breckenridge is a priority for repair. The boat ramp at ch Tremblay, delayed by spending on floods last year, becomes a high priority in next year's budget, for access to the river. Quyon has the only boat launch on the 47 km of Ottawa riverfront in the municipality. Seniors require support.

Public input

Renelle Briand, Josyane Lacombe and Patrick Lemieux echoed Labadie's concerns.

Briand asked about new development, as families move to the country. Labadie reminded listeners about the constraints - 80% of the municipality is Gatineau Park or farm zone which limits areas for new housing or commercial ventures such as restaurants.

Lacombe and Lemieux asked about the boat ramp, places for children to play, and all asked about a bicycle path to Aylmer on the former rail line. This is now privately owned except near Domaine Bellevue, and has disappeared where it cut diagonally across farm fields in the eastern end of the municipality, or has been amalgamated into residential lots and roads. The Nature Conservancy cannot allow a path through the Breckenridge nature preserve, fragmenting the sensitive habitat. The route verte is mostly on municipal roads or on the shoulders of route 148.

Lemieux asked about adding a rink, Labadie replied that the three existing rinks cost \$10,000 each to maintain, in addition to the cost of constructing a rink. He also was concerned about safe drinking water, as many areas have high salt content in their wells and Pontiac dépanneurs ran out of bottled water. Labadie pointed out that private wells are not in any government jurisdiction, but well drillers and water treatment companies can provide solutions to homeowners.

New bylaws

The bylaw on backyard hens (for egg production) was adopted and came into force on 31 August. See the municipal website for details. Contravening the bylaw may cost you \$300 per day.

In future public notices will be posted at the town hall (2024 route 148) and published on the municipal web site, according to a new bylaw.

Public works

Entreprise J.N.P. was awarded the contract for part of phase 2 of the repairs to ch de la Montagne, with the lowest conforming offer of \$1,998,208 to complete the work. A grant from the Ministry of Transport's AIRRL programme will be requested.

Council authorized a new loan of \$2 million to pay for work on ch de la Montagne, following the approval of Municipal Affairs (MAMH) in February.

Additional culverts are needed by public works to replace old ones, to ensure safety and good drainage. For this season 11 culverts 12 m long by 45 cm in diameter will be bought from Marcel Baril Ltée, for \$9,300 including taxes, the lowest conforming bid from 4 suppliers.

Groupe pavage CG had the winning bid of \$14,000 for paving over the 1.5 m culvert repair on Clarendon street between Stanton and Bronson Bryant streets.

Planning

Three requests to the CPTAQ (Commission for protection of farmland) were supported by council: Eric Erwin, the owner of 42 hectares of farmland at 2477 ch Cain, requests to use this property as a sand and gravel pit.

Jason Jones requests to build a residence linked to farming, affecting 9 lots on farmland at 600 ch Crégheur. This 51 hectare farm was subdivided into 23 lots before the law on protection of farmland came into effect.

Josée Dubois and Lee Keeley request to subdivide the 42 hectares of farmland at 1483 ch Proven (south of concession 5), while continuing to farm the property.

Four requests for minor exemptions were approved by council:

To regularize the existing 1968 building at 85 ch Terry-Fox which is closer to the side margin than the current bylaw allows.

The CPTAQ allowed the farmhouse at 495 rue de Clarendon to be subdivided from the farm, but it is far from the street, so the existing access lane, 5.1 m wide is effectively the frontage of the property, smaller than allowed by the present bylaw.

To allow an extension to an existing house at 123 avenue des Tourterelles, closer to the side margin than allowed by the current bylaw. The side margin is next to a right of way to the river, not a neighbour.

To allow a new residence at 2066 ch Gauvin to be built only 1.6 m from road frontage, to avoid infringing on the 10 m waterfront protection strip for Lac Gauvin.

Other business

The municipal lawyers RPGL are given the mandate to negotiate with Excavasphalte, who sued the municipality in 2017 over its contract for phase 1 repairs to ch de la Montagne. The lawyers have obtained expert engineering advice.

A maximum budget of \$10,000 is authorized for Pontiac's Country Fair (Foire champêtre de la municipalité de Pontiac), organized jointly with the National Capital Commission.

Mo's reports are archived at: www.heritagepontiac.ca/Municipality

The municipal website is www.municipalitepontiac.com