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North Perth to discuss ward boundary options

Special meeting scheduled for Monday, April 8

KELSEY BENT

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NORTH PERTH – Anticipating a lengthy discussion, North Perth council previously scheduled a special meeting to discuss the proposed changes to the North Perth municipal ward boundaries ahead of the 2026 municipal election.

If council chooses, this will change the way voters elect members of North Perth municipal council in the next election.

The Municipality of North Perth previously enlisted consulting firm Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. to suggest modifications to the way members of council are elected as part of the 2023 Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review.

Two final options were presented to council for its consideration at the Nov. 20, 2023 council meeting; both include the recommendations that:

- three members of council be elected by the entire municipality (mayor, deputy mayor, and county councillor);
- four councillors be elected from four wards within the Town of Listowel settlement area;
- one councillor elected from a rural ward to the north of Listowel (the current Wallace Ward); and
- two councillors elected from the two suggested rural wards to the south of Listowel. This would involve dividing the current Elma Ward into two separate wards.

In each option, the number of wards is increased to seven, however, the total number of council members stays the same as the current structure.

Option One

The report stated that the first option was preferred by 15 of the 51 responses (or 29 per cent).

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Nicole Beswithrick Photo

ENTOURAGE – The Atwood Lions Stagette was held on Saturday, March 23 at the Elma Memorial Community Centre, its second year running with proceeds going towards the refurbishment of the EMCC. Pictured, from left: Sara McDonnell, Jenn Fierz, Amanda McKee, Abigayle Cronin and bride-to-be Allison Ross.

2023 North Perth building department deficit totals \$830K

KELSEY BENT

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NORTH PERTH – North Perth's incoming Chief Building Official (CBO), Sally McMullen, delivered some tough numbers for council to digest at the March 18 meeting.

In the annual report on building-related fees it was stated that the building department needed to use \$832,571 from reserves to cover costs from last year. This withdrawal leaves the building permit reserve fund with a balance of \$57,008.

"North Perth maintains a Building Reserve Fund as a risk management tool," McMullen wrote in her report to council. "Funds

are available to cover costs during circumstances that are not anticipated on a regular basis... Generally, municipalities manage risk through a reserve balance that is equivalent to one to three years of expenses."

McMullen's annual report on building fees covered the last two years. The report broke down the expenses for 2022 into direct costs (\$340,085) and indirect costs (\$180,507) while showing the department's revenue totalled \$597,179.

"There was less expenditure than anticipated on wages and that was due to some turnover in staffing but otherwise this year went generally as budgeted in terms of revenue and in terms of costs," McMullen said of 2022.

"In 2023 we had a slightly different picture."

According to her report, the 2023 direct costs (\$834,042) and indirect costs (\$301,558) exceeded the department's revenue, which totalled \$303,029.

"Fees in 2023 were generally less than anticipated and we had a slightly lower number of permits," McMullen said. "Contracted services were needed... and brought up the cost to run and manage our requirements and responsibilities under the Building Code Act."

She added in her report that new software and a new internal allocation structure contributed to costs while permit revenue was lower than projected.

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Council seeking more information about allowing ATVs on NP trail

KELSEY BENT

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NORTH PERTH – Council directed staff to present further information regarding allowing ATVs to use a section of the North Perth trail between Listowel and Atwood at a future council meeting.

At the March 18 council meeting, Shawn Thompson, president of the North Perth and District ATV Club – which is in partnership with Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs (OFATV) – made a delegation asking council to consider allowing ATVs to use a portion of the trail.

The proposed section of the trail would begin in the area of Barnett Street, behind Walmart, and would follow the trail south to Atwood.

"We actually have a section there owned by Hoover's Maple Syrup and they're allowing us to use their property to put a little loop trail through

their bush," Thompson said to council.

The trail use would continue past Atwood and up to Henfryn, where Thompson said it would be beneficial to link up with the Huron Shores ATV Club's trail network, exceeding 100 km of trails.

"How far would that connection point be from the end of the trail at Henfryn at this stage?" Coun. Matt Duncan asked.

Thompson guessed between 50-60km.

"Currently if we were to allow ATV use on the North Perth trail it would only really be from Henfryn to Listowel, at this point, and then (riders) would have to road run to connect with another trail system," Duncan said.

Coun. Neil Anstett asked when the ATVs would use the trail.

"Obviously, I don't think it's a secret, there are a lot of people that use these trails, biking, running, jogging, whatever you want to call it, and I'm just

Continued on page 2

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United Way sets new fundraising record

SPECIAL TO MIDWESTERN NEWSPAPERS

STRATFORD – United Way Perth-Huron recently gathered at the Best Western Plus, Arden Park Hotel to celebrate the spirit of the Perth-Huron community. After a record-setting campaign that raised \$2,345,792, it was time to recognize the donors, volunteers and organizations who enable the organization's work across the region.

"We are incredibly grateful for the support of our community throughout the campaign," said United Way Perth-Huron Executive Director Ryan Erb. "This has been a challenging year for everyone, locally and

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Cory Bilyea Photos

(Above) Jamie Warren (centre) played some toe-tapping tunes at the Listowel Royal Canadian Legion Branch 259 on Sunday, March 24 during his afternoon matinee show. Warren's daughter, rising musician Katy Topham, made a surprise appearance at the show, graciously accepting an invitation from her dad to sing a couple of songs with him and his accompaniment, Jeremy Williams (left). (Inset) Warren's littlest fan, his granddaughter Zeta with her mom.



Listowel hospital obstetrics ward to close for six months

SPECIAL TO THE BANNER

LISTOWEL – According to a March 25 release, the obstetrics department at the Listowel Memorial Hospital will be temporarily closed until mid-September 2024. “Six of eight full-time registered nurses in our Obstetrics Department will soon be off on maternity leave,” the release from the Listowel Wingham Hospitals Alliance stated. “The hospital, physicians, nurses and midwives supporting obstetrical care in Listowel are all extremely passionate

about this program, and are strongly committed to reopening as soon as we have sufficient staffing.”

The release further stated patients and families should expect to have conversations with their primary care or obstetrics providers regarding their options during the temporary service interruption.

“We are fortunate to have a young, dedicated group of staff that have chosen to live, work and raise a family in our community. We will be back,” the release stated in closing.

Uber Eats now available in Listowel

SPECIAL TO THE BANNER

LISTOWEL – As of March 13, residents and visitors to Listowel and Hanover can order delivery from their favourite restaurants as well as everyday essentials including groceries, alcohol, pet supplies and more on Uber Eats.

The popular food delivery app is now available in over 300 cities across the country, and expanding rapidly as more Canadians rely on the convenience of home delivery.

“As cities and towns across Canada grapple with challenging macro-economic trends, Uber

Eats offers local restaurants a new way to connect with hungry customers and local delivery people to make delivery fast and easy. Our expansion into Listowel and Hanover also means that we’re creating flexible earning opportunities for people from all walks of life who choose to deliver on the platform,” explained Keerthana Rang, corporate communications lead for Uber Canada in a release on March 13.

Over the last few years, the app has grown rapidly with gross bookings increasing six times over in Canada from 2019 to 2023.

To order from the app, simply download the Uber

Eats app and sign in using your existing Uber account or sign up to create a new one. Next, choose where to deliver to – be it work or home. Then, browse local restaurants or search for what you need delivered. You pay with your credit card through the app, then you can track your order to see when it gets picked up and when it will be delivered. Finally, you can rate your experience with the delivery and quality of products delivered.

To register as a local restaurant that would like to partner with the delivery app, visit <https://www.ubereats.com/restaurant/signup>.

Council discusses potential ATV usage on Listowel-Atwood leg of NP Trail

Continued from front

concerned that if there’s no time limits, it could be a potential conflict,” he said.

Thompson said it is his hope to mirror what is ongoing in other locations, which would allow ATVs on trails before 10 p.m.

“I think you might shorten that down a little bit, so it’s not further into the evening hours, just to be a little more safer,” he replied.

Thompson spoke further about trail safety and the OFATV Trail Warden Program, a course offered to volunteers.

“Wardens can stop riders and check permits or check for those not riding safely,” he explained. “Wardens can enforce those rules, but of course they can only do so much without contacting bylaw or OPP.”

Thompson said he has taken the warden program and another director in the North Perth club will be as well. He estimated there would be anywhere between two and ten wardens on the trail at any time.

“So you believe that your club has the capability and availability to provide wardens to the trail,” questioned Mayor Todd Kasenberg.

Kasenberg also asked about the efforts to protect pedestrians and cyclists.

Thompson said there will be yield to pedestrian, stop, and speed limit

signage posted during the ATV season. He added that speed limits would range between 20 km/h and 50 km/h.

“The Huron Shores Club uses a multi-use trail, as well,” he said. “We see more cyclists, hikers, people walking their dogs more than actual ATVs most of the time, and everybody perfectly kind of meshes together... We would like to mirror their operation.”

Coun. Allan Rothwell asked if this is a year-round proposed use of the trails and if there would be overlap with the snowmobile club’s operation.

“It would not be used while the snowmobiles are out,” Thompson said. “We are planning between May 1 up to the end of October or early November.”

Rothwell also asked about the number of ATVs expected to use the North Perth Trail.

“We have around 20 or 30 members of our own,” Thompson replied. “As for the number that could be coming here, that is up in the air.”

He explained that if the North Perth Trail connected to the Huron Shores trail network, it would increase the back-and-forth traffic.

In his presentation, Thompson explained that there are 286,000 ATVs and side-by-sides in Ontario. According to the Moto Canada and Canada Quad Coun-

cil 2023 Economic and Tourism Impact Study, riders took 492,500 day trips outside of their local region in Ontario in 2022, and 230,500 multi-day trips outside of their local region in Ontario in 2022. The total ATV-related tourism spending in Ontario in 2022 was \$373,000,000.

OFATV is made up of 23 clubs across the province, with 8,000 km of insured trails.

Each club has \$15,000,000 liability insurance for trails, and signage provided, and is funded through permit sales. Permits are \$150 for an annual pass, with 75 per cent of the permit price going to the local club.

“Obviously, it’s really important that we keep the trail safe for all users, especially those on foot, and so I’m wondering how that would impact a municipality from a liability standpoint,” Coun. Sarah Blazek asked.

Kasenberg suggested asking staff for a report as follow-up to Thompson’s delegation.

Coun. Matt Richardson made that motion and said he is “generally in support of the idea.”

“On one hand, I know the traffic isn’t substantial, but in the winter time we currently allow the snowmobiles to utilize the trail,” he said. “I’m generally in support of the idea but I look forward to the staff report that is forthcoming.”

Consultant, training fees contribute to 2023 building department shortfall in NP

Continued from front

“It is also worth mentioning that we did spend just about double on training as the year progressed, ensuring that everyone had the qualifications needed and on some consulting which is essentially some legal opinions that we needed to deal with specific files,” McMullen said.

Coun. Allan Rothwell asked if the decline in additional outside services from RSM Building Consultants is connected with the increase of training for staff and, “When is it anticipated that we’ll be fully self-sufficient in that respect?”

RSM Building Consultants President Gerald Moore was named the CBO in September 2022 for a two-year period. According to an agreement between RSM and North Perth, Moore will act in the capacity as CBO, until someone can be hired to work under the municipality.

McMullen said the outside services will be needed until the end of the year, if not longer.

“We will be in a position to want external services for complex buildings for some time,” she replied. “Those are more rare types of applications and do require a pretty specialized set of expertise. But for the

day-to-day stuff, we’re in a position now where the plan examinations and inspections are happening largely in-house.”

She anticipates this month will see a significant reduction in RSM services.

“We’re just finishing a couple of complex buildings around town right now,” McMullen said. “So we will have some consulting fees for them with respect to inspections coming for the next couple of months.”

She added that the actual issuing of permits is completed by the CBO, which will have to be outsourced until McMullen becomes fully qualified and appointed to the CBO position later this year.

Rothwell asked if the fees for the more complex buildings cover the additional expenses.

McMullen explained that in 2024 the department will be reviewing the fee structure.

“We have a fee review unfolding and we will be having a public meeting coming up fairly shortly in the springtime, and that’s very important because the revenue generated from fees is meant to be on a cost recovery basis and those fees haven’t been changed since 2008,” she said.

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Kelsey Bent photo

GROUNDBREAKING - A group made up of representatives of the MAP 59 fundraising committee, Municipality of North Perth, Shift Landscaping Architecture, and Horst Excavating Inc. broke ground on May 6 at the site of the tragic 1959 collapse of the arena which claimed the lives of eight, and injured 13

Ground broken on MAP 59 project

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LISTOWEL - At the May 6 ceremonial groundbreaking of the Memorial Arena Park '59 (MAP 59) project, all those in attendance shared the sentiment the event felt like a full-circle moment.

Jerry Rozendal, chair of the MAP 59 fundraising committee said he was very excited to see this project come to fruition, and under budget.

"The support for the project, I believe, is at the grassroots of the community," he said. "When this happened back in 1959, it was obviously a tragedy, but the importance of getting it going right now is that the survivors and the parents of the survivors are, you know, getting elderly and I feel they need to see something that is a memorial on the site of the tragedy."

On Saturday, February 28, 1959 at 9:27 a.m. the roof and walls collapsed in the rink section of

the arena while a peewee hockey game was underway. Eight were killed, 13 were injured.

According to the Map 59 page on the municipality's website, of those who were on the ice and in the players' box, only two climbed out of the debris unharmed.

"In recognition of this tragedy, we are building a park on the site of the former Listowel Memorial Arena to commemorate the families and community members affected," the website

states.

North Perth Mayor Todd Kasenberg explained that council had a tough decision to make several years ago, in terms of what to do with the former arena building after the Steve Kerr Memorial Arena was built.

"We took our time, we took care and council has engaged confidently but cautiously as well, to make sure that this is a space that all will enjoy in this community," he said.

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Brubacher drafted by Tiger-Cats

NICOLE BESWITHERICK

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LISTOWEL - The Hamilton Tiger-Cats selected eight Canadian players in the May 1 Canadian Football League (CFL) draft - including 6'5", 246-pound defensive lineman Luke Brubacher from Listowel who was drafted 16th overall in round two.

Brubacher told *Midwestern Newspapers* in a May 6 phone call that getting drafted to the Tiger-Cats "feels incredible."

"I would have been happy to get drafted anywhere, but Hamilton was kind of my number one spot that I wanted to go to," he said.

"That workout was amazing for sure, especially being close to home... so my family and friends, everyone can come out to the games [and] I think that'd be pretty special so I'm super happy about that."

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North Perth to collect public feedback through online survey regarding ATVs on trails

KELSEY BENT

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NORTH PERTH - After a delegation of locals, and the presentation of a staff report to an at-capacity galley, council decided to collect further public feedback through an online survey regarding ATV use of a portion of the North Perth Trail Network.

North Perth Manager of Facilities Jeff

Newell explained a survey will be posted to the North Perth Your Say website, once created, and public feedback will be collected for two weeks before the data is presented to council the following month.

When asked after the meeting, Newell anticipated the survey to be posted roughly one week after the May 6 council meeting.

Coun. Matt Duncan asked that the survey include a question about the public's inter-

est in a six-month trial period, where ATVs would be allowed trail use.

The conversation regarding allowing ATVs (which would include four-wheelers and the larger side-by-sides) to use the trail in North Perth was initiated at the March 18 council meeting when the North Perth and District ATV Club asked for council's consideration. Following the delegation, council directed

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Delegation of locals, council discuss potential ATV trail use

Continued from front
staff to prepare a report on considerations and logistics related to the ask.

The North Perth and District ATV Club proposed using a section of the trail beginning east of Henfryn, through Atwood, north to Listowel, and ending at the commercial location at the south end of Listowel on Barnett Street.

Mary Cardinal and Kimberly and Peter Hammermueller took to the podium at the May 6 meeting to voice their concerns associated with allowing ATVs to use the trail, especially the portion of the trail near the village of Henfryn.

One delegate spoke of the negative environmental impacts ATVs have on trails and surrounding green spaces.

"The three major impacts are air and water pollution, soil erosion and vegetation damage as well as disturbance of wildlife habitat," Kimberly Hammemueler shared from a study on the ATV Loans Canada website.

"This is our trail and part of our community that is so beneficial and necessary for our well-being, it is an amazing green space and we believe it needs to stay this way."

Staff report

The staff report presented to council last Monday sought to answer questions regarding safety, trail

maintenance, the Trail Warden program, funding, multi-trail use relationships and insurance, with information shared by the Ontario Federation of ATVs (OFATV) and the North Perth and District ATV Club.

According to the report, the trails would be maintained as it is needed and to municipal standards. Funding for trail maintenance is available through a portion of permit fees from club memberships. The club is financially supported by members with an annual fee of \$150, of which \$65 goes directly to the local club. Funds outside of memberships include fundraisers and sponsorships.

The report stated that should trail maintenance exceed available funds, grant opportunities would be pursued through OFATV.

"If the trail repair quote exceeds available funds, then the repair cannot be done at that time," Newell wrote in his report.

Coun. Neil Anstett asked for more information.

"Are you saying the trail would just not be repaired or would the municipality take on those costs?" he asked.

Newell explained that the municipality would have to repair the trail because it is a municipal asset.

"We do have trail maintenance expenses currently ... but the idea is that the

club would try to maintain the trails, but if we needed to get them up to our standards then we would have to do that," he said.

Newell further explained that it would be regular trail maintenance, but more of it.

In his report, Newell wrote maintenance of the trail would be completed by volunteers and include trail surface repairs and grooming as well as tree trimming.

"As the municipality is the landowner; if the club disregards the satisfaction of repairs laid out by the municipality, then the club could potentially lose the privilege of trail use on municipality lands," he wrote. "The club can negotiate with the municipality, but ultimately the municipality has the last say. This same can also be said for other landowners."

Trail Wardens, complaints

According to the staff report, a team of visually identifiable Trail Wardens would monitor trail use and educate users of Ontario regulations, the Highways Act, Ontario Off-Road Vehicles Act, local bylaws, OFATV policies, local club policies, as well as encouraging non-compliant riders to purchase a trail pass.

"The current method of enforcing trail use is done through trail users and landowners contacting the



OFATV Photo
A discussion including council and concerned citizens took place at the May 6 meeting, regarding the use of ATVs on a portion of the North Perth Trail.

OPP," Newell wrote. "It is felt that trail wardens would be an added benefit to increase safety and proper trail use. It is noted that trail wardens do not have the ability to issue fines."

With regard to responding to complaints, the report states that the president of the North Perth ATV Club is normally the first point of contact for any landowner that would like to lodge a complaint. However, if it is a law-breaking infraction, police or municipal bylaw officers may be contacted first.

"Staff have received a great deal of feedback regarding the proposed ATV use on trails," Newell told council. "It should be noted that ATV users, who are not members of the local club, are currently using the trail system without permission at this time."

Coun. Sarah Blazek asked for clarity on liability.

"If we were to allow ATV usage on the trail and heaven forbid someone on an ATV, or using the trail for another reason is injured by an ATV, what is the potential for the corporation of North Perth to be held liable," she asked.

Newell explained that the municipality would likely be named in any legal action as the property owner, regardless of liability.

According to the report, the ATV club carries \$15 million in third-party liability insurance; however, it is not common to list municipalities on the insurance policy.

"Normally, insurance

certificates are for private landowners or leased land, unless an agreement or memorandum of understanding specifies that it is required," Newell wrote.

Blazek pressed on to ask if their insurance would only protect those who are members of the club. Newell said he could not answer that.

Current ATV policy

According to Newell's report, ATVs are currently allowed on North Perth roads, except for Main Street, Tremaine Ave., the Highway 23 roundabout, Wallace Ave. and Line 84 in Listowel; Main Street, Monument Road and Arthur Street in Atwood; and, Madison Street West, Winstenlet Street, Scade Street, and Market Street in Monkton.

Also stated in the report was that the nearby Municipality of Huron East council recently voted to not permit ATVs on their trail near Henfryn.

"This will cause a challenge as the requested ATV trail use indicates that the North Perth Trail continues through to Henfryn," Newell explained.

Coun. Allan Rothwell asked for more information about Huron East's motion to not allow ATV trail use.

"If ATVs were allowed on the (North Perth) trail, we would need to stop them and either have a turnaround at that half-kilometre mark, which would be difficult because of the width of the trail, before they get on the Huron East

property," Newell said.

During the delegation, there were concerns raised based on the information shared in the staff report, specifically on trail width.

Peter Hammermueller said trail width examples from Chatham/Kent, for a multi-use non-motorized trail is between 2.4 metres and 3m. He added that other municipalities require a minimum of 1.5m ranging to a preferred two or more metres, for one-way travel for one ATV.

"You're looking at a multi-use trail with bikers, cyclists, runners, walkers, as well as baby carriages and children and you're asking for two-way traffic with not even the minimum trail width that is required," Hammermueller said.

According to Newell's report, trail width would be identified in an agreement between the municipality and the North Perth ATV Club. The report listed examples of maximum trail width between 54 inches, 62", and 65".

"This would prohibit full-size vehicles like trucks from using the trails," Newell wrote. "The standard width of the current North Perth Trails varies from 50" to 62"."

Another current policy mentioned in the report was the Municipality of North Perth's Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan, which states that the trail is, mostly used for walking, running, and biking and is a popular route for snowmobiling in the winter months. The master plan also states "To preserve the trails' condition and limit path destruction for users, all-terrain vehicles are not permitted.

"Opening the trail to motorized vehicles is not necessary, isn't socially responsible, such a decision is not a progressive change, nor is it in the interest of the current rail users," Mary Cardinal said in closing.

Fatal off-road vehicle collision in North Perth

NORTH PERTH – One person has died following a motor vehicle collision in the Municipality of North Perth on the evening of May 1.

At approximately 11:30 p.m., the Perth County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), along with Perth County Paramedic Services and the North Perth Fire Department, responded to a serious motor vehicle collision on Line 72, east of Perth Road 158, North Perth.

A passenger vehicle and an off-road vehicle had collided.

One occupant of the off-road vehicle, a 70-year-old from Toronto, was pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver of the passenger vehicle was transported to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The investigation is ongoing, and members of the West Region OPP Traffic Incident Management and Enforcement (TIME) Team are assisting Perth County OPP with the investigation.

The area of Perth Line 72 between Perth Road 158 and Road 154 was closed temporarily for the protection of emergency responders and to facilitate the investigation.

Anyone with information regarding this or any incident is asked to call the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or online at www.opp.ca/reporting.

To remain anonymous call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or leave an anonymous online message at www.P3tips.com. Tip providers may be eligible to receive a cash reward of up to \$2,000.

Listowel's Lifestyle Show returns with over 50 vendors

LISTOWEL – The North Perth Chamber of Commerce's annual spring event is back.

The much anticipated Listowel Lifestyle Show is returning to the Steve Kerr Memorial Complex May 10 and 11.

New to the show this year is the Artisan Showcase, which will feature skilled

craft workers and their material objects made partly or entirely by hand.

The show boasts over 50 vendors, all displaying a variety of products and services. Over 1500 people are expected to attend.

Food and refreshments will be offered by the Listowel Legion ladies, and Dairy Queen will be selling

Dilly Bars at the welcome doors.

The event runs May 10, 4 to 9 p.m., and May 11, 9 to 3 p.m. Admission is free.

Donations of non-perishable items for the local Salvation Army Food Bank are gratefully accepted.

For event information and a full list of vendors, visit nppchamber.com.

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Listowel residents petition against proposed ATV trail

RACHEL HAMMERMUELLER
rhammer@midwesternnews.com

LISTOWEL - Wes and Marj Lambert do not want All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) in their backyard.

The couple live on Barnett Street in Listowel, a short walk from the North Perth multi-use trail.

For the past week, Marj and Wes have been collecting opposing signatures as part of their petition against ATV use of the trail. As of June 6, the petition had over 200 signatures.

The *Banner* reported in May that discussion on the proposed use of ATVs (including four-wheelers and larger side-by-sides) on local trails was initiated at a March 18 council meeting by the North Perth and District ATV Club. Council asked for a staff report on safety, funding and maintenance considerations and logistics, which was then followed by a two-week online and paper community survey, the results of which have not been made public but will be this summer. A delegation opposing permitting ATVs came to council on May 6.

The proposed use by the ATV Club is a section of trail beginning east of Henfryn, through Atwood, north to Listowel, ending at a commercial lot on Barnett street.

That proposal included a new addition to the trail built on municipal land beginning just before the trail meets Riverview Drive and running west behind nine single-detached houses on Barnett Street, which runs south of Walmart to Highway 23. This part of the proposal was confirmed by Jeff Newell, manager, facilities at Municipality of North Perth by phone to the *Banner*.

Shawn Thompson, president of North Perth and District ATV Club, told the *Banner* that the proposed new portion of the trail would be funded by the club and be laid with stone dust, akin to the existing municipal trail.

According to the staff report presented to council in May, trails will be maintained as needed to municipal standards. The funding for trail maintenance is available through a portion of permit fees from club memberships, the report stated, until those funds run out.

The club is financially supported by members with an annual fee of \$150, of which \$65 goes directly to the local club. Funds outside of memberships include fundraisers, sponsorships and OFATV grant opportunities. As of now according to Thompson, the club has close to 80 members.

Newell explained to council that the municipality would have to repair the trail because it is a municipal asset, presumably when ATV funds run out.

The North Perth Transportation Master Plan approved by council on May 6 includes a \$5.2 million investment in trails in the future.

The Lamberts explained that this proposed trail addition is 100 yards from their backyard, and runs through an area

that floods year round. The area is dense with long grass, woodland, and river-bank growth. Deer, fox, and other wildlife are often seen on the stretch of land, the couple continue.

"That little green space is so beautiful, it's just like our cottage," Wes expressed.

Wes and Marj's petition was invoked by their safety concerns of ATVs being on a trail populated by walkers, strollers, bikers, joggers, dog-walkers, and children. Marj expressed specific worry for the safety of mothers with children, and children playing along the river banks.

Additionally, noise pollution is a concern on a trail close to residences populated by seniors.

The Lamberts respect those who ride ATVs, and normally do not oppose them, but are worried about those who do not follow the rules if allowed on the trail in such proximity to residences and a trail so highly populated by people.

Local residents claim to have already seen ATVs illegally using the trail and speeding as recently as last week, and are worried about that increased occurrence if the trail becomes open to all ATVs.

According to the staff report, to combat this the ATV Club would enlist identifiable Trail Wardens, presumably members of the club, who would monitor trail use and educate users of Ontario regulations, the Highways Act, Ontario Off-Road Vehicles Act, local bylaws, OFATV policies, local club policies, as well as encouraging non-compliant riders to purchase a trail pass.

A local man who lives on Barnett Street and walks his dog every day on the trail expressed his "major concerns" for safety and noise.

"I'm not against ATVs," he explained to the *Banner*, "Just in residential areas." He worries about the effectiveness of these wardens who "have no authority" in a scenario where they educate a kid who is going to be told to slow down and they "just keep going, and I wouldn't blame them[...] You don't go through where people are walking - that would just be too unsafe." He is also concerned about ATVs passing through late at night.

Another daily trail-user explained this trail was the only safe place she could walk and heal following a hip replacement. She worries that the trail will not be a safe option for future users in similar circumstances if council approves ATV usage.

The Lamberts say they see a variety of people using the trail daily, like residents from Riverview Park Retirement Residence nearby, children walking home from school, and new immigrants to Canada, who they worry will not have a full understanding of what ATVs will mean to their walking commute due to English being their second language. This is based on those Wes and Marj have communicated with on the trail.

"That's what has us very, very concerned," Wes says. "A



Rachel Hammermueller photos

From above: The view from the trail towards woodland where new proposed trail addition would run behind residences on Barnett Street; view of the backyard of Wes and Marj on Barnett Street, facing woodland where proposed trail extension would run.

lot of seniors use it and they're awfully big machines that can go terribly fast. I'm not saying they're all bad. But it only takes one."

According to Newell's report, ATVs are currently allowed on North Perth roads, except for Main Street, Tremaine Ave., the Highway 23 roundabout, Wallace Ave. and Line 84 in Listowel; Main Street, Monument Road and Arthur Street in Atwood; and, Madison Street West, Winstenlet Street, Scade Street, and Market Street in Monkton.

The Lamberts are considering reaching out to other news outlets to spread the word. They will also be at the trail-head on Riverview drive to continue collecting signatures.

The most hopeful thing I've ever heard

MELANIE KOCH NICHOL
Minister's Desk

I know some days are rough. Even some weeks. Some seasons. Some years.

And following Jesus is by no means a promise of rainbows and unicorns. Our worlds and hearts get rocked by illness, broken relationships, accidents, emptiness, mental health waves that hit like tsunamis. Death.

So when I read that the earliest followers of "the Way" (that's what the first century Romans first called Christians) said that Jesus is at work making all things new, I have to admit it can be a bit confusing. Some people I know have the courage to ask - "Really? Sure doesn't look like the world is turning around right now!"

If what they said in their writings about Jesus being God in the flesh, and taking

His rightful place as King of the world, and starting to build His Kingdom here and now is true . . . why so much broken still?

On the one hand, the bad stuff keeps happening - to me, because of me, in my community and nation, and around the world. Kids dying of starvation. Families fleeing from war and famine. Relationships torn by jealousy, bitterness, and painful memories. People hating and hurting others who are different. Kids I know homeless or getting bullied. Forests burning. Death is knocking at the door of the people we love.

Sometimes honestly, it's a bit much. Right?

But when the first followers of Jesus saw what happened to Jesus on the cross, saw Him resurrected, and learned from Him what it all meant, they say that first Easter was the first day of the new cre-

ation. That His life after death shows what God wants to do and is doing with ALL the broken things in this world.

And that. That is the most hopeful thing I've ever heard.

That the ways we keep building warheads and weapons of mass destruction can be turned to peace.

That the divisions and partisanships and disappointments and fears we hold in ways that begin to destroy each other can be brought reconciliation and integrity.

That the hurting and vulnerable ones in our community and world who didn't stand a chance because of what they had to survive can begin to be safe and find wholeness and hope.

That out of alienation and selfishness and self-sufficiency we are called into communities where we learn to forgive, love, and serve each other amidst ALL

our differences.

That the pieces broken in us since we were little kids - the ones we built walls around to protect and defend the little ones that shouldn't have been hurt. We can be free.

That our earth, literally sick of carbon can begin to be restored.

That even the finality of death has no power over the crackling Life Force that is capable of resurrection.

They say that somehow as we turn our lives to HIM and learn our King's ways, we begin to get in on life to the full. Old things made new. Broken restored. Death turned into life.

Fact is, I don't see anyone or anything else capable of making all things new. Do you? They say the whole earth is groaning for the freedom that Jesus has begun. Tell you the truth, I believe it - we all still need Jesus.



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Council denies ATV request

KELSEY BENT

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
kbent@midwesternnewspapers.com

NORTH PERTH - After receiving what was perhaps the most community engagement it ever has – according to one of council’s longest standing councillors – North Perth Council voted unanimously to deny the request to allow ATVs use of the North Perth Community Trail at its’ Aug. 12 meeting.

“I’ve been around the council table for 20 plus years now, and I’ve never received so many phone calls, emails, visits; it got to be quite a process to try to go grocery shopping,” Coun. Dave Johnston said. “Something that used to take 20 minutes. You now plan on an hour plus, and you got to talk about lots of things, but mostly ATVs. So, thank you to the public for your care and your compassion.”

After five delegation presentations from community members, council was presented the long-awaited results of the online survey posted on Your Say North Perth between May 14 and May 31.

According to the report from Manager of Facilities Jeff Newell, the survey received a total of 768 responses from the community. The online responses (729) represented 95 per cent of the total number of submissions with 39 hard copy responses being collected. “Residents of North Perth comprised 87.5 per cent of survey responses with the non-residents representing a host of different municipalities including but not limited to Huron East, Perth East, West Perth, Howick and Mapleton,” Newell wrote. “The majority of the survey respondents lived in Listowel (57%), Rural areas (18%) Atwood (15%), and other (11%).”

Of those who responded, 22% indicated that they own property adjacent to the trail. When asked if residents own or use an ATV,
Continued on page 2



Patrick Raftis photos
Hayden Newbigging has her face painted by Destiny Sokolan of Butterfly Brushes at the Listowel BIA Block Party on Aug. 9. The event – which closed Argyle Avenue between Main Street and Inkerman Street – also included bounce castles, balloon animals and live music.

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Stratford General Hospital Foundation asked Perth County to pledge \$500,000

Pledge equates to a 2.5 per cent tax increase

KELSEY BENT

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
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PERTH COUNTY - Co-chairs of the Stratford General Hospital Foundation’s capital campaign “In Our Hands” Rick Orr and Paul Roulston asked Perth County Council to pledge \$500,000 in an Aug. 1 delegation.

The \$30 million campaign will allocate:

- \$15 million to a new cancer care and medical clinic with a co-located pharmacy;
- \$8.5 million to new and replacement medical equipment throughout the building;
- \$4 million to upgrade lab space and improve the equipment within the lab;
- \$1 million to the mental health ward;
- \$1 million to staff training and education, and;

- \$0.5 million to the redevelopment of our communication stations within the patient care units.

The In Our Hands campaign launched in 2022, and Roulston said, “We’re currently well on our way to reaching our goal, but we need to get over the final hurdle.”

According to the presentation to council, from July 22, 2019 to July 22, 2024, 1,774 Perth County residents have donated \$1,598,900.89 to the hospital foundation.

“We appreciate the support of our Perth County residents and thank-you for that, but not everyone is able to donate on a personal level,” Roulston explained. “In the past, in our 2006 campaign the County of Perth pledged \$500,000 in support of that project and today we ask Perth County to invest at least \$500,000 in support

of Stratford General Hospital Foundation’s In Our Hands Capital campaign.”

According to Roulston, the life span of medical equipment is eight to ten years.

“We rely on the generosity of community members to help keep the latest tools and technologies in the hands of the health care professionals so that they can continue to provide exceptional care,” Roulston added. “Providing these tools also helps attract the brightest and best physicians to our hospital, they learn on these new advanced systems, we want to have that in place so they want to come to Stratford.”

Coun. Hugh McDermid (Perth East) asked how much Perth County would have to raise its taxes to equal \$500,000. Staff estimated 2.5 per cent.

Council passed a motion to receive the delegation for infor-

mation.

Perth County Care

Stratford General Hospital is the region referral centre for Perth Huron counties, as well as the designated stroke centre. Orr’s presentation shared stats showing how much Perth County residents use the Stratford General Hospital:

- Perth County residents account for between 11 and 24 per cent of the care provided in the various units at Stratford General Hospital.
- Perth County accounted for 19% of in patient care. Within that 19%, North Perth accounted for 8%.
- Perth County accounted for 5,200 visits or 15% of the emergency care. Of that 15%, North Perth accounted for 2%.
- Perth County accounted for 1,700 visits which is 19% of the out patient care, of that

Perth County Plowing Match
 Saturday, August 24, 2024
 See pages 7-9

North Perth accounted for 8%.
- For Cancer care, Perth County had 45 patients in for 289 visits, which is about 15% of the cancer care provided by the hospital. Of that North Perth accounted for 3%.

- In obstetrics, Perth County had 268 babies born this past year in the Stratford hospital. Of that North Perth accounted for 16% (98).

- Perth County had 109 pediatric in patients. Of that North Perth accounted for 11% (28).

“Interestingly enough all the other cares have been in the 15 to 19% range, your obstetrics is 24%,” Orr told council.

Fifty-seven per cent of those surveyed not in favour of ATVs using trails

Continued from front page

43% indicated 'yes' and 57% indicated 'no'.

"Fifty-nine respondents stated that they were members of the North Perth and District ATV Club," Newell shared.

Additionally, most respondents to the survey indicated that they used the trail either weekly or daily.

"One of the more important findings is that 57% (438 individuals) are not in favour of ATV use of a selection of the North trail system, while those in favour of ATV use on the trails represent 43% (330 individuals)," Newell wrote. "The concept of implementing a six-month trial period of ATV use on the trails indicated that 54% are not in favour and 46% feel it is worth implementing."

Deputy Mayor Doug Kelum also stated he had 71 people reach out to him, of those, three were in favour of allowing ATVs on the trail.

Coun. Matt Duncan explained that public feedback, like these survey results, help council do their job.

"I think our job as council is to make a good decision for everyone in the com-

munity, and I think it's quite clear what that direction is," he said. "I want to thank each and every person that submitted their comments and phone calls and emails, because when we only get small amounts of feedback it's difficult to gauge the level of interest from the community."

Additionally, the comments of all open-ended questions in the survey were shared with council in a collective and anonymous format in advance of the report, which Coun. Sarah Blazek said was an over 200-page-long document.

"I think it's really important for our community members to know that, in addition to (Newell's report), counselors also received a more than 200 page document containing every response to the open ended questions from that survey, so we were able to thoroughly review the opinions voiced by this community, which is wonderful," she said.

According to Newell's report, overall, the sentiment among the majority of users is against allowing ATVs on the trail.

"They view the trail as a valuable community resource that should pri-

oritize non-motorized recreational activities and environmental conservation," Newell wrote. "The potential risks associated with allowing ATVs outweigh perceived benefits for most users, who advocate for preserving the trail's current peaceful and natural character."

Newell further stated in his report that the facilities staff, as a collective, are concerned about safety of all users, increased cost of trail maintenance, and preserving a passive, well used, recreation amenity.

Additionally, development and protective services staff indicated that there are specific and certain challenges for municipal by-law enforcement on North Perth Trails.

"Training, equipment, and a policy/penalty system are not currently adequate to manage moving traffic violations in a pedestrian environment all of which would require additional resources and funding," Newell wrote.

In the closing of his report presentation, Newell recommended council deny the request from the North Perth and District ATV Club for permitted ATV trail use on a portion of the

Continued on page 15

Assault in Listowel results in serious injuries

LISTOWEL - Perth County OPP is investigating an assault that took place in Listowel's west-end during the early morning hours of August 10 that resulted in one person with serious injuries.

Perth County OPP officers responded to a report of an assault that reportedly took place between 03:15 a.m. and 03:30 a.m., on August 10 at the intersection of Main Street West and Mitchell Road South in Listowel, a police report reads.

One person was seriously injured and was transported to the local hospital.

Police are seeking any witnesses and dash-cam video footage of the incident. To report information that may assist investigators, contact the OPP at #1-888-310-1122, Crimestoppers at #1-800-222-TIPS, or leave a secure web tip at P3TIPS.com.

Listowel resident injured in vehicle accident
GUELPH/ERAMO-SA- On August 8, at approximately 2:00 p.m., Wellington County OPP

responded to a serious motor vehicle collision on Wellington Road 51, north of Guelph, where a resident of Listowel was seriously injured.

Initial reports indicated that a red sedan had left the roadway, and the driver was injured, a police report reads.

The lone occupant of the vehicle, a 29-year-old resident from Listowel, was transported by Orange Air Ambulance to a trauma centre with life threatening injuries.

Reconstructionists from the West Region Traffic Incident Management and Enforcement (T.I.M.E.) team were expected to have the roadway closed until late evening.

The cause of the collision is still under investigation and anyone with information related to it is asked to call 1-888-310-1122.

Holmesville youth to undergo psychiatric assessment

CENTRAL HURON - A Holmesville, Ontario youth who is accused of first degree murder will undergo psychiatric and

psychological assessment, after a joint submission by both the Crown and the defense, CTV reports.

The accused appeared in court August 8 via Zoom from where he is being held in custody.

On July 2, police and emergency crews responded to an address on Cut Line Road in Central Huron where a person was found, taken to hospital and pronounced deceased.

Huron OPP charged a Holmesville youth with first-degree murder. The youth cannot be named under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The next court appearance is scheduled for September 5.

Police are still seeking any witnesses and dash-cam footage from drivers who may have been in the area near the Holmesville Public School on Cut Line Road between 12 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. on July 2.

Anyone with information can contact Huron County OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-8477. An online tip can be made at ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

Nominations open for King Charles III Coronation Medals

PERTH COUNTY - Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington, announced the opening of nominations for King Charles III Coronation Medals.

The medals are an opportunity to recognize outstanding individuals who have made significant differences in their local communities or the country.

"There are so many great Ontarians that live in Perth-Wellington," said MPP Rae. "I encourage all residents to think about nominating a deserving individual in their communities for a King Charles III Coronation Medal."

In May 2023, the federal

government announced the striking of 30,000 commemorative medals for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, King of Canada, a press release states.

Members of the community should consider nominees for the King Charles III Coronation Medal to be individuals who have made significant contributions to Canada, Ontario or their local communities. For example, first responders, frontline workers, veterans and veteran organizations, community leaders, volunteers and more.

Eligible candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Have made significant contributions to the country, Ontario, region or community, or an achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada;

- Reside in Perth-Wellington; and,

- Be alive on May 6 2023. The Coronation Medal can be bestowed posthumously, as long as the candidate was alive on the date of the coronation.

Nominations are open until September 9 and can be submitted online at <https://bit.ly/4Eefpq> or in-person at MPP Rae's constituency office at 55 Lorne Ave. E, Unit 2, Stratford, Ontario.



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