

REPORT FROM CITY COUNCIL: JULY 2003

By Ward 7, Councillor Ed Corrigan

SIFTON BOG AND URBAN DEER

London is faced with a growing urban deer population with increasing conflicts between human and deer. Safety for people and the environmental security of the provincially significant Sifton Bog are my primary concerns. However, I do not support a deer cull at this time because there is no evidence that the Bog is being damaged by overgrazing, nor are deer vehicle collisions a problem. Our deer population is not going to go away. Therefore, we need to look at effective and humane long term strategies to control the deer population growth in London.

London's Planning Committee rejected the City Staff recommendation for a Fall 2003 deer hunt in the Bog. The Ministry of Natural Resources, who has sole jurisdiction over a deer hunt in an urban area, will only allow a bow hunt or a musket loading musket to be used.

On July 7, 2003, Council 16-2 rejected a deer cull at this time, voting instead to have Ministry of Natural Resources consider a fertility control program using the Sifton Bog as a potential test site while also looking at a long term management strategy for dealing with the growing urban deer population in London.

Allowing the deer herd to continue growing unchecked while watching them destroy the unique fauna in the Sifton Bog, then starve to death when they run out of food is cruel and irresponsible. Deer fertility control is the preferred choice. Uncontrolled population growth is not an option. We cannot wait until someone is killed or injured in a deer/car collision before we act. However, we do have limited time to look at humane options such as fertility controls.

City Council has decided to reject a deer hunt until reliable and accurate information is obtained on the actual number of deer in the Sifton Bog and wanted alternatives to a hunt for controlling the deer population. I spoke in favour of doing a trial study of a new product called SpayVac, which is a lifetime anti-fertility drug for female deer. Council plans to look at more humane options to control the number of deer in the Sifton Bog and London and will only agree to a cull as a last resort.

SOUTHSIDE POLLUTION CONTROL PLANT UPDATE

The Zoning and Site Official Plan Amendment have been approved by the Planning Committee and by Council. No individual raised any concerns over the proposed zoning changes. The First Nations, represented by Martin Powless, were the only group who provided comment and have submitted an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. However, the Official Plan and the new zoning are consistent with Council approvals on siting the plant at this location. They have already been approved by the Ministry of the Environment.

This approval includes covers on the primary holding tanks, no incineration for 20 years and for using the best available and cost-effective technology available. A substantial part of the City owned land will maintain its agricultural zoning. As President of the Lambeth Community Association, I helped win these guarantees to safeguard the community from any adverse impacts from the proposed plant. I am determined that these commitments made by the City, will be honoured on this pollution control plant.

The City is now discussing technical aspects of this project with the Ministry of the Environment with the goal to receive a conditional Certificate of Approval. This Certificate will stipulate performance criteria for the design. The City is continuing discussions with the local Conservation Authorities on fisheries' impacts and mitigation measures. This will also lead to agreement on design criteria and help to eliminate any adverse environmental impacts.

The current projected date to have the Pollution Control Plant built is 2010. However, the City's Master Servicing Plan is presently being updated, including new projections for residential, commercial and industrial growth. This Plan is used to forecast the use of the remaining capacity at Greenway and for planning future growth in London. This new study should be available in the Fall.

Council is committed to working to mitigate any adverse impacts, and to protect our environment. A meeting has been proposed between representatives of Council and the First Nations in the near future to discuss this issue. The First Nations will be valuable allies for Ward 7 residents in making sure that this project, which is crucial to our City's future, is done right.

OXFORD STREET EXTENSION

The opening of the Oxford Street extension is contingent upon the bridge construction completion, as the road will be completed in the early summer. McLean Taylor, the bridge contractor, has worked throughout the winter to maintain their construction schedule. However, because of a very wet Spring and high river levels, delays of 3 to 4 weeks were encountered in removing and installing the temporary bridge crossing. They are working diligently to recover lost time. The new projected bridge opening date is now mid to late October. The budget for this project is proceeding within our approved limits, even though there have been some necessary modifications.

COL. TALBOT/401 INTERCHANGE:

In partnership with the Ministry of Transportation, the City has hired Delcan Consulting to design the realignment of the westbound 401 ramp into Littlewood Drive. This project will include traffic signals at Littlewood/Col. Talbot and street lighting improvements. The schedule is to complete the design within 3 weeks, tender applications in August, and begin construction in September, finishing this Fall. The total budget is estimated at \$480,000 with the Province funding \$385,000 of the cost. This project will go a long way in addressing the safety concerns at this busy intersection.

I would like to hear your views on these and other City issues and I can be reached at (o) 661-1558, (r) 652-0973 or at ecorriga@city.london.on.ca.