

Council Meeting October 1st , 2018

Presentation of Petition by Mollard Line Residents By Gary Eagleston

Your Honour Mayor Maureen Cole, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and staff of South Huron. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address you at this council meeting. We want to emphasize our displeasure to the way our road has been maintained since amalgamation.

I was personally in favour of amalgamation of the Township of Stephen with the Town of Exeter and the Township of Usbourne. I felt the borders that dated back to 1842 had no basis given the technology we have today namely telephone, cell phone, e-mails, motorized vehicles, roads etc. In retrospect I would not be in favour of this happening if I had known the focus on our westerly rural area by the new Municipality of South Huron would be weak in comparison to the former Township of Stephen as it relates to roads, bridges and maintenance of the same. In our area the appearance of the roadside area cared for by the municipality has not been acceptable let alone the road closure since March and what I hear likely ongoing into next summer.

Last Tuesday I sent to the Clerk of South Huron a petition signed by those who reside or own farms on the Mollard Line. Every person expressed their displeasure that the Mollard Line has been closed to all traffic since March 2018. This is due to the 12-ft culvert deterioration that crosses the Mollard Line between South Road and Crediton Road as part of the Carey Drain. I understand the Municipality of South Huron knew the deterioration of this culvert was happening 4 years ago. Some 6 x 6 beams were installed which seems rather inadequate. This should have started a process of replacement during the last 4 years that would have given time for financial budgeting for the proper replacement of this culvert resulting in days not months of closure for the residents, friends or people of the area who use this road.

Council may feel budgeting for this replacement is necessary but not years of setting a course of action to call an engineer, call for tenders and replace the culvert. Surely the wind turbine vibrancy grant could have been used for this cause. The wind turbines are in our area thus we should benefit from this fund once in a while when needed. The industrial municipal taxes derived from each turbine should be used in the area they stand in my opinion not solely in the Exeter area for pool upgrades or Huron East reconstruction.

Council may not realize that a safe and properly maintained road is essential and expected by ratepayers. For two years we have put up with the ongoing septic pipe repair that occurred with the Grand Bend sewer pipeline that was installed underground the middle of the road. Not just potholes but large holes and erupting sewage coming out of the broken pipe was common. Imagine if this occurred on an ongoing basis in Exeter. Health and safety is at jeopardy.

Since March ratepayers have had to call ambulances due to emergencies and twice the ambulances were unsure how to arrive at the call because our road was closed to all traffic. Dan Gill can expand on his son's emergency whereby the ambulance ended up going down Kirkton Road then over Shipka Line and then back on Crediton Road to the Mollard Line. The time lost is life threatening. Another resident

on Mollard Line had a life threatening 911 call. These do happen but nobody can plan ahead whether there is one or many that are going to happen. I can certainly say they do and will happen.

Last Friday I had an equipment fire. The Grand Bend fire department was instructed the fire was east of the Mollard Line at South Road. They had to stop on highway 81 and South Road, call the dispatcher for instruction because Shipika Line is east of the Mollard Line. They could not get through to the dispatcher but took a chance and did arrive after 18 minutes. Then their back-up from Northville had to stop on the Mollard Line one km north of the Greenway Road because a big dead white ash tree had fallen across the road. They had to use chainsaws to cut the large tree before they could proceed to my farm. Further delay and yes it may have been a possible life saving fire call.

I have provided to your clerk the petition but also pictures of dead white ash trees right along the road that have been dead for at least two years. Yes, the township hired a large tree shredder to tear living and dead trees apart but yet leave many dead white ash trees. These trees may very well harm or kill somebody. I could not believe last week the tree that fell was clean up yet a clump of five dead white ash was right along the road near where the tree fell. Three of the trees were cut and cleaned up yet two were not touched and still stand there dead and ready to fall.

The Township of Stephen used to have a Road Superintendent position. In the 65 years I have lived on the Mollard Line I do not remember being upset with the care and maintenance of our road. Now we have Public Works and we have Infrastructure but really who focuses on the important care and maintenance of the roads?

An interesting side point is in Mississippi there are presently 547 bridges that have been closed to traffic due to poor maintenance and no money to repair them. In one district there are over 30 bridges closed with the resulting 30 mile detour preventing fire fighters and paramedics from getting to residents quickly. We are not in that bad a shape. However the future does not paint a rosy picture. I wrote the Integrated Sustainable Community Plan for North Middlesex. In that report there are 35 bridges that will need to be replaced by 2050 at a cost then of \$74 million. What does the Municipality of South Huron's future hold?

It is nice to have refurbished pools and lovely hockey arenas but our road structures must be maintained so our health and safety is not jeopardized. I would have expected an emergency reserve fund would have been used for the culvert replacement on the Mollard Line. If there is one why was this not used? You had 4 years to plan for its use.

Comments by residents have been very negative about the state of affairs in our area since amalgamation. I heard these while gathering names for this petition. The pictures I gave you show some of these concerns. Overall it is less than stellar performance.

We ask you do a better job in meeting and exceeding our expectations with a focus on replacing this culvert before winter and cutting the dead white ash trees.

Thank you for your time.