

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESSA
MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2018**

**PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT (OPA 28)
8477 6th Line, Utopia**

A Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Administration Centre, Township of Essa.

In attendance: Mayor Terry Dowdall
Deputy Mayor Sandie Macdonald
Councillor Keith White
Councillor Michael Smith
Councillor Ron Henderson

Staff in attendance: G. Murphy, Chief Administrative Officer
C. Healey, Manager of Planning and Development
D. Perreault, Manager of Public Works
S. Crouse, Manager of Parks and Recreation
C. Ross Tustin, Fire Chief
L. Lehr, Clerk

The Mayor opened the meeting by stating that the purpose of this Public Meeting is to review an application for an Official Plan Amendment (OPA), relating to Part Lot 28, Concession 6, 8477 6th Line, in accordance with the Planning Act. As well, to hear comments and review written submissions from the public and other agencies. The Planner was asked to describe the proposal.

The Planner, Colleen Healey, described the application as follows:

The property is designated Agricultural in the Official Plan. Currently, Essa's Official Plan (OP) outlines that when a farm consolidation takes place, the owner has the potential to create a surplus dwelling residential lot if the farmer purchasing resides within 5 km. This OPA will consider the possibility of farm consolidation/severance when the applicant resides 13 km away. Note that a future home is prohibited from the retained farmland, once the severance takes place.

Public meeting notice was circulated in accordance with the Planning Act. The application has been considered to be complete.

Colleen Healey then introduced the Planner for the applicant, Mr. Riepma, to provide additional detail. Mr. Riepma explained that Mr. and Mrs. Delange are farmers and with the purchase of this property they wish to expand their farming operations and yet it is a nuisance to have tenants to care for. They do not wish to maintain the house that is on the property that they have purchased, they are only interested in expanding their farm operation. Therefore, they have asked for a severance and with the severance application they will be asking to keep the storage building as it will be useful to farming. Their home or base farm is 13 kms away in Essa Township and the Township should expect the severance application to be dealt with as the next step associated with the proposal at hand.

The Mayor then asked if anyone in the audience had any questions or concerns and that speakers must state their name and address so that proper records may be kept and notice of future decisions be sent to those persons involved in the review process.

Susan Antler introduced herself as a landowner of 5901 Old Mill Road and as well 8936 6th Line. Ms. Antler indicated that she appreciates that the land will stay as agricultural and acknowledges that a rezoning will occur to prohibit a future home. She is appreciative of the efforts of the Township.

Councillor Keith White then asked the Planner why the Municipality had imposed the 5 km rule in its Official Plan (OP). Planner Colleen Healey indicated that this policy had been in place since just prior to 1999 when she had started. In fact, it was just newly introduced at that time, and so, a long-standing requirement for severances. Farm consolidation severances are permitted through the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) but the PPS does not specify a restriction on distance between farms. This is an added policy of Essa since Essa tries to go beyond what is required to protect and preserve its agricultural lands and has always taken its agricultural industry and community very seriously.

Again, Essa intends to try to preserve agriculture lands for the future and has gone beyond Provincial policy. It was thought that the 5 km rule would restrict severances occurring and the Mayor concurred with that, indicating that at the time, Essa had wanted to restrict the amount of severances taking place in the agricultural area.

Councillor Keith White then asked if the Planner had any thoughts to doing away with this restriction in the new OP of the Municipality given that it's not recommended or suggested by the Province. Planner Colleen Healey indicated that there was not any recommendation being thought of at this point in time. Council could direct in either direction depending on their preference. There is certainly no need for it because the Province provides for ample protection of agricultural lands, however, Essa Council may wish to continue to go above and beyond with respect to protection.

The Mayor then stated that if there are no further questions or submissions, Council wishes to thank all those in attendance for their participation. The Planning Office will be preparing a report to be presented to Council concerning this matter. Council will then consider all matters and render a decision. Again, please inform the Clerk or Planner should you wish further notice on this matter.



Terry Dowdall, Mayor



Lisa Lehr, Clerk