

# REPORT FROM CITY HALL

May, 2001

By Ed Corrigan Councillor for Ward 7

On April 2, 2001, City Council finally approved a location for a new Westmount Library on Wonderland in front of Wonderland Mall. The existing lease was not going to be renewed by the Church at the current temporary location. The issue was somewhat contentious as all ideal locations were gone and very few options existed. The alternatives involved using valuable parkland and building a new expanded facility in a residential area whose roads were not designed to accommodate the estimated 300-400,000 car visits the expanded library would generate. City Council chose to locate the new facility on the Wonderland arterial to avoid any adverse neighborhood impacts.

The City has now begun the process for hiring a design consultant for refurbishing Storybook Gardens. Chief Hodgins has informed me that the new Byron Fire Hall is expected to be fully staffed in mid-May with the "official" opening to take place in mid June. At the request of this Councillor, City staff is also working on a proposal to assist the Byron Optimists with their sewer water discharge taxes and to help them reduce their overhead on their Sports Complex and to help maintain this valuable community facility.

Other items of interest to Ward 7 include the following: the Oxford Street Bridge extension is expected to be completed in the summer of 2002. A date has been set for the Tim Horton's Ontario Municipal Board it is scheduled to be heard on May 30, 2001 and is scheduled for three days of hearings. The City of London has filed its appeal of the OMB Decision on Reservoir Hill but no decision has been made whether Leave to Appeal will be granted.

The "hot issue" for the Ward and the City of London over the next few months is the London Long Term Corridor Protection Study. The consultant's final Report is due May 7, 2001. A Public Participation meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2001 to receive comment from interested parties. On June 18, 2001, the Environment and Transportation Committee is to receive the final recommendations from the Commissioner of Environmental Services & City Engineer. It is expected that City Council will consider the recommendations on June 25, 2001. This is an ambitious schedule given the complexity of the future transportation needs of the City of London over the next 50 years during which the population is expected to grow to 650,000 people.

One of the most controversial aspects of the Corridor Protection Plan is the proposal to build an expressway somewhere between Westdelborne and Woodhull Roads. This expressway would have a dramatic impact on the agricultural land and rural residential character of the area, impact on the Dingman Creek Valley and potentially impact a provincially significant wetland. The long term transportation planning needs of the City have to be met but hard choices will have to be made on expanding arterial roads in the City to six lanes and to decide if an expressway is warranted. Part of this study is the proposal for a "Ring Road" around the City. An expressway is also proposed for Airport Road and the east side of London. As councillor for Ward 7, I would appreciate your input on this important matter. I can be reached at my office at 661-1558 or at home at 652-0973 for these or any other issue of concern. You can also reach my Co-Councillor Susan Eagle at City Hall at 661-4876.

Published in the Byron Legion Newsletter May/June 2001