

PHELPS PUBLIC MEETING **regarding LAND SEVERANCES**

Thursday May 12, 2016


Phelps Land Severance Working Committee

Scott Mannering, Chair

AGENDA

- Background
- Findings
- Options
- Criteria
- Costs and Funding Options
- Impacts Assessment
 - Growth Management Controls
 - Potential Growth Projections
 - Impacts on Unorganized Township Status
 - Impacts on Services
 - Impacts on Taxes
- Recommendations
- Next Steps
- Appendices
 - PLSWC Members
 - PLSWC Approach
 - Official Plan Options

BACKGROUND

- Public Meeting October 22, 2015:
 1. Voted to establish a Working Committee to investigate the process and implications of enabling future land severances within Phelps Township (this is not a Planning Board)
 2. Report back through an Interim Public Meeting regarding findings to date
 -  3. Culminate in a full Public Meeting with key findings and recommendations
 4. Conduct a Public Vote process to determine if we proceed or not

FINDINGS

- Need Ministry approval to establish a Planning Board, which will develop an Official Plan for Phelps Township in order to sever land (MMAH requirement)
- Development of the Official Plan is done through a consulting firm (typically associated with Planning Boards)
- Anticipate timing for processing land severances to be minimum 2 to 3 years

OPTIONS

1. Establishing our own (standalone) Planning Board and Official Plan

- Only 1 unorganized township has developed their own; the rest (70+) have partnered
- Other unorganized townships quickly abandoned this option due to time and money

2. Partnering with another Planning Board:

- Most unorganized townships have partnered and *remain unorganized*
- Reduces time and cost (leverages expertise; an existing Official Plan; funding)
- Typically the Planning Board is given full review and approval authority by MMAH

CRITERIA

- ***Remain unorganized***
- Keep it simple (status quo land use if possible)
- Minimize costs to develop Official Plan
- Leverage available funding as much as possible
- Minimize time to enable land severances
- Ensure adequate representation from Phelps on a Planning Board for decisions and approvals for Phelps applications
- Ensure Planning Board can efficiently manage Phelps applications volumes, particularly in startup

Costs and Funding Options

- Costs to develop the Official Plan are estimated anywhere between \$30-75K, depending on how simple or complex our Plan requirements would be
- It is the responsibility of the Planning Board to find and apply for funding (through available monies within federal and provincial government funding programs) to develop or amend the Official Plan
- It is the responsibility of the Planning Board to manage the application process and costs (through application fees)
- Land severances near Phelps typically cost \$650 - \$1000 for the application fee, approximately \$150 for the finalization fee, and approximately \$100 for the Conservation Authority fee (note Planning Board dependent). Any additional costs (eg survey, legal...) are the responsibility of the property owner.

IMPACTS – Growth Management Controls

1. Provincial Requirements

- Minimum lot sizes of 1 hectare (2.47 acres)
- Minimum Lot Road Frontages on township-maintained roads of 60 meters (196.85 feet)

2. Conservation Authority

- Protection of waterways and water frontage land
- Protection of heritage sites
- Interface to other Government and utilities

3. Planning Board

- Can limit the # severance applications per year

IMPACTS – Growth Management Controls

4. Official Plan

- Can include the # severances allowed per lot (based on lots as of the establishment of the Official Plan)
 - East Ferris's first Official Plan (1990) limited severances to 2 plus the original
 - East Ferris revised Official Plan 2016 to change limits to 4 plus original (25 years later)
 - ***Once Official Plan is in place, severed lots cannot be further severed unless the Plan limits are changed***
- Official Plan MUST be reviewed every 5 years; opportunity for residents to adjust restrictions if needed

5. Public Consultation

- Development of Official Plan includes public consultation (from consulting firm)
- Severance application process includes public notification for property owners within 60 meters, and opportunity for residents to provide input or note concerns they may have prior to a decision by the Planning Board

IMPACTS – Potential Growth Projections

1. Currently 531 properties in Phelps Township
 - 210 properties are minimum 5 acres (potentially enabling at least 1 severance)
 - 183 of these 210 are minimum 7.5 acres (potentially enabling 2 severances)
2. Road frontage was not included in growth projections at this time due to extreme difficulty and time in analyzing various aerial topographical maps that include lot lines
3. Viewing of lot lines aerially, however, shows a significant number of lots with limited road frontage, and much inaccessible acreage, which will further reduce growth projections than those shown below
4. Estimates (from other unorganized townships) show that between 25% - 50% of the 210 properties may wish to pursue severances, equating to between **50 – 100 potential severance applications** in the future
5. Estimates suggest **first year severance applications may average 20 – 30**, based on the experience of similar unorganized townships and Planning Boards
6. Initial severance applications would include those properties with multiple dwellings; this may increase potential tax revenues but have little effect on the number of dwellings or residents within the township

IMPACTS – Unorganized Status

- 71 Unorganized Townships in Northeastern Ontario have proceeded to:
 - Establish a Planning Board
 - Develop an Official Plan
 - Proceed with Land Severances
- Of those 71 Townships:
 - **69 remain Unorganized**
 - 2 have chosen to become Organized
- The 69 Unorganized Townships and the other members of their Planning Boards are satisfied with status quo
- A Planning Board is a standalone body, made up of Ministry appointed individuals and community representatives
 - *Does not report to any Town Council*
 - *Is not part of a municipality*
 - *Has full decision making authority to manage their Official Plan and Land Severance applications*

IMPACTS - Services

1. School

- Funded through Ministry of Education and Near North District School Board
- Funding based directly on student enrolment
- Maximum capacity 240 students
- Current student enrolment just over 100
- Capacity to service a significant increase in students
- Any additional funding required to increase school capacity, staffing or supplies is funded

IMPACTS - Services

2. Roads

- Funded through property tax contributions to Local Roads Board and Ministry of Transportation (who currently double our local contributions)
 - Increases in properties and dwellings would directly increase funding from both property tax contributions and Ministry of Transportation
 - For example, an increase of 20 new properties would mean an increase of \$18,000 to our Local Roads Board for road maintenance (for an average property tax of \$1100, \$300 goes to the Local Roads Board, and MTO would double that)
- Any additional properties and/or homes in Phelps will provide additional funding required for roads maintenance

IMPACTS - Services

3. Fire and Rescue

- Equipment is partially funded from the Fire Marshall of Ontario, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) and local property taxes.
 - A statement from the Fire Chief confirms that the current Fire and Rescue service could easily accommodate an additional 50 dwellings.
 - Our mutual aid provider, North Bay Fire Department, has expressed no issues with potential growth impacts on their ability to provide service to Phelps.
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- Current Fire and Rescue services can easily accommodate our potential growth projections
 - Any additional funding required would have to come from the various government organizations above and the Local Services Board through increased property tax revenues

IMPACTS - Services

4. Library

- The Phelps Library is managed by volunteers and funded through Ontario Libraries North and the Local Services Board in Phelps.
- Increases in new homes and residents may result in access to additional funding available through the Local Services Board from tax revenues.
- Currently the Library is underutilized, leaving capacity for new residents in the township
- An increase in new properties and homes will result in access to additional funding from increased tax revenues in Phelps

IMPACTS - Services

5. Recreation Center (PCRC)

- Staffed by volunteers, the Recreation Center is funded from Ontario Libraries North, the Local Services Board in Phelps (tax revenues), and activity fees.
 - The Planning Act of Ontario allows for an **optional** fee to be added to the Severance Application fee, to fund parks and recreation. The maximum amount chargeable is 5% of market value of the property; some municipalities have adopted a fee range of \$250-400.
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- An increase in properties and homes will result in increased tax revenues.
 - Additional optional fee must be used for parks and recreation.

IMPACTS - Services

6. Landfill

- The landfill is self-funded through annual waste disposal permits and ongoing waste disposal charges in the community
 - Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), with input from the Ministry of the Environment and the Conservation Authority, oversees its operation
 - MNR currently reviewing our landfill capacity and assessing contaminate leeching
 - Our Phelps Landfill site may be approaching capacity. Alternative waste disposal services are under review.
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- An increase in new homes may accelerate our capacity issues. However, the community is already preparing for alternative services.
 - Any additional costs will be funded through household waste disposal charges.

IMPACTS - Services

7. Church

- The Phelps United Church receives operating funding through community fundraising and donations.
- It is currently underutilized, with maximum capacity of about 60 and current attendance levels averaging 10 weekly.
- An increase in new homes may increase attendance and subsequent funding for services.

IMPACTS - Services

9. Private Business

- An increase in new homes and population may increase customer base and ensuing revenues.
- Opportunities for new business may become available.

IMPACTS - Services

10. Volunteers

- Phelps Township relies heavily on volunteers to keep services running and continue to offer or expand services to meet the needs of our unorganized community
- Historically a selected few residents provide volunteer services, often for multiple services
- An increase in homes and residents would provide a larger population base from which to draw volunteers, possibly resulting in additional volunteers with new ideas, approaches and experience

IMPACTS - Services

11. Other Unorganized Townships

- Feedback regarding enabling land severances from other Unorganized Townships has been positive.
- No negative impacts on services or taxes have been identified
- All have expressed satisfaction with increased tax revenues, managing their growth, and the severance application process overall

IMPACTS – Tax Revenues

- Assuming an average LSB levy of \$130 per property:
 - 20 new homes would provide an increase of \$2600 to the LSB annually
 - 50 new homes would increase revenues to the LSB by \$6500 annually
- An increase in new properties and homes will provide increased tax revenues for local services (Local Services Board)

IMPACTS – Property Taxes

- Provincial Land Taxes (PLT) are based on assessment of property values by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), multiplied by a mill rate established by the Province.
 - MPAC is currently reassessing properties in the Province, resulting in notifications to some property owners of increases or decreases in property values
 - MPAC considers 5 factors in assessing property values (location, lot dimensions, living area, age of property/renovations, and quality of construction)
 - If our Official Plan reflects status quo regarding land *use* (eg buildings, for which we have no ‘municipal’ zoning, bylaws, restrictions or permits), new homes may include those at either the high or low ends of values – the same as today
 - If Phelps residents were to decide that our Official Plan should be further restricted regarding land use (eg types of dwellings), property values in the area may be impacted (due to the ‘location’ factor) over time
- Enabling land severances with no further land use restrictions, resulting in an increase in the number of properties and homes, has **no direct effect** on property values and the Provincial Land Tax (PLT) portion of our taxes

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Partner with the Municipality of East Ferris to establish a Planning Board with representation from Phelps, and develop an Official Plan for Phelps Township to enable future land severances
- Provide East Ferris with a Briefing Note that declares our intent and our Impact Assessment findings for MMAH review and approvals.

NEXT STEPS

- **Public vote through in-person or mail (email or Canada Post) on May 30, 2016**
- If recommendations are accepted:
 - PLSWC to provide the following to East Ferris to signal our intentions:
 - Briefing Note for East Ferris Town Council declaring our intent
 - Business Case documenting our findings and impact assessments to be used by MMAH and East Ferris
 - East Ferris Town Council to send a resolution to MMAH of our intention to proceed
 - MMAH to assess the work done to date, including impacts (fall - winter 2016)
 - MMAH to advise Minister and seek approval to establish a new Planning Board for East Ferris and Phelps Townships (winter 2016 – spring 2017)
 - MMAH to establish an **independent Planning Board** with Phelps representation (spring –summer 2017)
 - Planning Board to acquire consulting firm to develop Official Plan (2017 - 2018)
 - Phelps representative(s) to work closely with East Ferris in establishing new Planning Board to provide input and ensure our needs are met
 - Phelps to develop bylaw requiring compliance to Official Plan
 - Official Plan completion may take 1+ years
 - Anticipate ability to apply for land severances 2-3 years from now (2018 – 2019)
- If recommendations are not accepted:
 - PLSWC to complete any outstanding documentation for future reference
 - PLSWC to notify East Ferris Planning Committee of Phelps public decision not to proceed

IMPORTANT DATES

- Public Vote Monday **May 30 2016**
 - Determine if proceeding with Official Plan and future land severances, or not
 - **One vote per property** (one named landowner only)
 - **In person voting at Vets Club - drop-in - from 6-9pm**
 - Bring PhotoID
 - Ballots are mandatory, and voters will be provided with a ballot at the Vets Club
 - **Mail (email or Canada Post) voting** available for out-of-town landowners or those unable to attend
 - Mail must be received by midnight May 30 2016
 - Mail-in must be accompanied by Tax Roll # and photocopy of valid Government PhotoID (eg Drivers Licence, Health Card, Citizen Card)
 - Email address: phelpsseverancevotes@gmail.com
 - Ballots are mandatory, and will be available on the Phelps website below
- For more information on how to vote, go to phelpstownship.ca
 - *All information and ballots will be available on the website by Friday May 13*

APPENDICES

YOUR PLSWC

- Members
 - Scott Mannering – Chair
 - Kim Birmingham
 - Chad Guertin
 - Larry Lecappelain
 - Sandy Mannering
 - Gary Mattinen
 - Barb Nixon - Scribe
 - Ray Ouellette

PLSWC APPROACH

- Monthly meetings
- Developed a Terms of Reference defining scope, timelines and outcomes
- Developed a PLSWC Work Plan defining work items, responsibilities, due dates to complete the research and diligence
- Developed a PLSWC Communications Plan for public, government and interested parties
- Nearing completion of research, and developing shortlisted options

OFFICIAL PLAN OPTIONS

1. **Developing our own Official Plan (Standalone)**

- Only 1 unorganized township has developed their own; the rest (70+) have partnered
 - Very costly
 - Time consuming (the 1 township took several years)
 - All applications are scrutinized for full approval by MMAH
 - No experience in developing an Official Plan
- Other unorganized townships quickly abandoned this option

OFFICIAL PLAN OPTIONS

2. Partnering with another Planning Board:

- Most unorganized townships have partnered and *remain unorganized*
- Reduces cost (leverages expertise; an existing Official Plan; funding)
- Reduces time (see above)
- Typically the Planning Board is given full review and approval authority by MMAH
- Piggyback on their experience and similarities in operating their Official Plan