



Date Wednesday, July 08, 2020

From Jenn Burnett, Planner

Subject **NEP Amendment UA 59, Wiarton Airport**

Report PL.2020.33

Recommendation

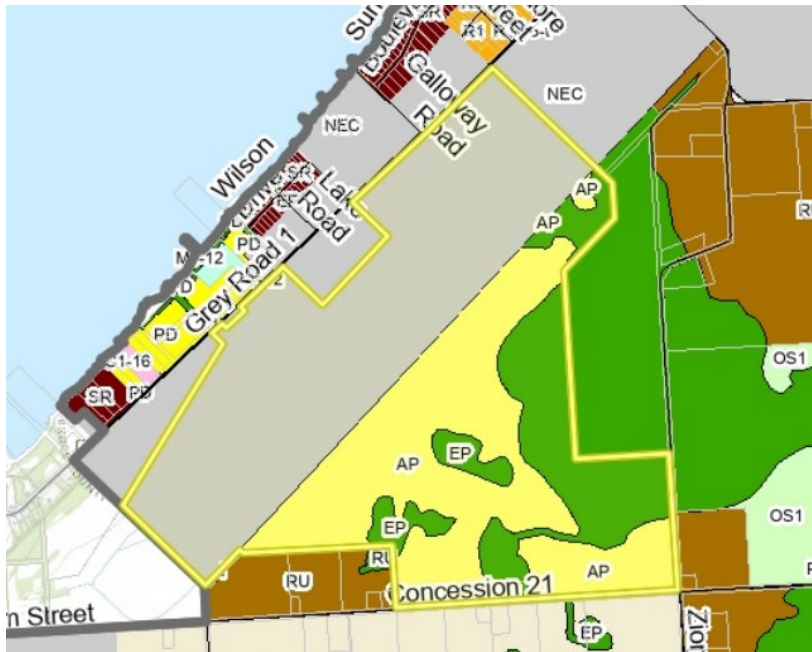
That report PL.2020.33 from the Senior Planner dated July 8, 2020 regarding the amendment application to the NEC to extend the Wiarton urban boundary be received, and that the Committee provide direction to staff to continue to pursue or to withdraw the application.

Background

As directed by Council Motion 130-2015, an application to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) to extend the Wiarton urban boundary to include the Wiarton-Keppel Airport was submitted to the Niagara Escarpment Commission on May 28, 2015. On October 31, 2016 the Township amended its application to request that the area within the Wiarton-Keppel International Airport designated as “Escarpment Protection Area” be changed to “Escarpment Urban Area”. The total size of the amended area is approximately 31.58 hectares (78 acres) and represents the area where the terminal building and hangars are. The intent of the application to extend the urban boundary to include the airport was to give the Township the ability to increase the permitted uses for that area of the airport lands.

Figure 1 below shows that the airport is zoned AP – Airport, EP – Environmental Protection and NEC – Niagara Escarpment (in grey) under the Georgian Bluffs Zoning By-law 2020-020. The land is also federally regulated by the Wiarton Airport Zoning Regulations.

Figure 1. Airport Zoning



Discussion

The Township is in receipt of a letter dated March 5, 2020 from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry requesting that we advise them in writing whether or not we wish to continue to pursue the amendment application or to withdraw it. This application was put on hold pending the creation of a Strategic Plan for the airport and confirmation of sewer services being extended from Wiarton. The County Official Plan does not support the expansion of a settlement area without the provision of full municipal services. At this time, there are no plans or agreements in place to extend the municipal sewer from Wiarton to the airport.

In 2017, Council approved the Airport Strategic Plan under Resolution RES2017-053. It does not appear to have been adopted by By-law and no corresponding business plan was created. Having plans in place are important components in demonstrating that there are land use and operational policies in place to support removing the existing NEP policies that apply to the airport lands.

Staff are looking for direction from Council on how they wish to proceed with this application. In reviewing the options at this time, Council may consider the following:

1. Withdraw the application. If Council wishes to withdraw this application, staff will require a direction to do so and a letter will be sent to the NEC to close the file.

2. Request a decision. Staff can provide an update letter to the NEC along with the Airport Strategic Plan and note Council's request that a decision be made based on the application to date.
3. Request additional time. If Council wishes to continue with the application, staff will require direction to complete a business plan in accordance with the Airport Strategic Plan. Staff will also provide a status update to the NEC that additional detailed plans are forthcoming.

Strategic Plan 2020-2024

2. Foster Economic Growth

The Township of Georgian Bluffs strives to retain, expand, and attract new businesses that support employment opportunities, promote a diversified economy, support value-added agriculture and capitalize on the Township's strengths, defining natural resources, while protecting the natural environment.

2.4 Promote and support development opportunities at the airport to utilize the facility to its potential to become a transportation hub for the Grey Bruce Region, as well as attract aviation businesses that will offer employment opportunities.

Conclusion

That report PL.2020.33 from the Senior Planner dated July 8, 2020 regarding the amendment application to the NEC to extend the Wiarton urban boundary be received, and that the Committee provide direction to staff to continue to pursue or to withdraw the application

Respectfully Submitted:

Jenn Burnett

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