

The Wellington Community Association (WCA) represents all residents of Wellington and the surrounding community on residential matters. We are committed to advocating for and protecting the interests and values of our village, and we promote a sustainable, healthy, affordable, and liveable community.

Our association supports responsible, reasonable, and sustainable development and we recognize the need to expand infrastructure in order to match and keep pace with such growth.

Like many County Water Ratepayers and other concerned citizens, the WCA has been closely following Shire Hall's ambitious plans to expand the County's Water Infrastructure. Many local subject matter experts have sounded the alarm about the assumptions and growth projections that have informed not only the need for these projects, but also their size / scale, the costs involved, the funding formula, and the financial backup plan should the anticipated funding not materialize. The WCA has taken an active role in this issue, working diligently on the matter for well over a year. During that time, the WCA has exhausted virtually all available avenues to pose questions and communicate these concerns to Shire Hall: we have attended Council meetings, delivered deputations to Council, made comments to Council, met with individual Councilors, sent letters, made phone calls, attended community meetings, attended Public Information Centres (PIC's) and Public Consultation Centres (PCC's), completed surveys, etc. We even took out an advertisement in The Times, publicly voicing our concerns and questions. To date, our concerns have not been addressed nor have we received satisfactory responses to our questions. In the late fall of 2023, having run out of viable alternatives, the WCA sought legal counsel and received advice from lawyers specializing in Municipal Law. At that time, the WCA felt it had no other recourse but to pursue legal action. Mr Andrew Biggart, a prominent, reputable and highly regarded Municipal Lawyer, was retained by the WCA to represent and advocate for our community and to protect the interests of County water ratepayers in a more formal, legal manner.

The WCA has recently become aware that the Municipality has submitted an application to the Ministry of Infrastructure for an \$18.3M grant to assist with

funding the \$200M Water Infrastructure Expansion Project(s). Mr Biggart has written to Minister of Infrastructure, Kinga Surma on behalf of the WCA, urging her to postpone making a decision on whether to award this grant until such time as our questions have been answered and our legitimate concerns have been properly addressed. It is not the intention of the WCA to sabotage the Municipality's attempt to access funding that might help offset the cost of the \$200+ Water Infrastructure Projects. On the contrary, the WCA recognizes the need to identify and pursue funding from all legitimate and available sources including but not limited to Provincial and Federal grants, in order to help pay for infrastructure projects. However, the principal concern remains: if the County is successful in its application for the \$18.3M grant from the Province, where will the remaining \$181.7M needed to complete the proposed Water Infrastructure Project(s) come from??

The current funding formula is fundamentally flawed. In the event that the anticipated funding upon which the plan depends does not materialize, the burden will fall on County Water Ratepayers and potentially the Municipality's Taxpayers. The risk is too great to ignore.

The Wellington Community Association remains committed to protecting and defending the financial security and best interests of Water Ratepayers in Wellington and throughout Prince Edward County, and will continue to do so by pursuing all available means, including legal action if necessary.

Joanna Green

Chair

Wellington Community Association