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## NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Dear Residents & Ratepayers,

Deputy Reeve Shane Cockwill and a few other members of council, along with the Chief Administrative Officer, will host the first “Coffee with Council” on June 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. The venue chosen for this initial offering is in Division 2 at the Brant Christian School Gymnasium.

The May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of County Council saw the finalization of the tax rate bylaws for 2023. With the overall increase in taxable assessment of 19.55% from 2022, tax rates were lowered by 40% for residential properties and 5.5% for non-residential properties. Given the fact that many ratepayers will have noticed an increase in their assessed values, some landowners will notice the tax savings more than others. That said, the growth in linear assessment from renewable energy installations is expected to contribute \$1.78 million to County revenues. Costs have increased for policing and solid waste, and those monies are collected on a cost recovery basis.

For those interested in learning more about Vulcan County, a new website is now launched and improvements to content are ongoing. Suggestions on how to improve the website are always welcome, however, some of the more interesting aspects include the financial reporting dashboards and the geographic information system. As with the old site, information on Council business remains readily available for the public.

At the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of County Council, support was given to partnering with the Town of Vulcan on a rate and occupancy study. The information provided by this study will prove crucial to attracting any new investment for hospitality and accommodation. Wyndham Hotel and Resorts has expressed interest to the Town of Vulcan after seeing initial data, suggesting a Microtel as possibly the best installation, offering

40 to 85 rooms. MM&R Valuation Services will conduct the study for \$10,000 and both municipalities will be contributing their 50% share from monies expected once Vulcan Business Development Society is dissolved.

Also in May, Council supported an initiative to develop a new seniors housing facility in Vulcan. This commitment is necessary to make the initial steps towards securing a majority of funds from non-municipal sources, those being the Alberta Affordable Housing Partnership Program and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Our region needs to commit to a \$1.5 million equity stake, being the minimum amount required and may or may not be accepted by the province. Being based on equalised assessment, this means that the County’s contribution will be approximately \$1.25 million. Municipal partners in the region are assessing whether contributing their share of the project is possible within their own capital plans. Given the age and limitations of the existing Peter Dawson Lodge, this project is likely necessary to retain residents and avoid costly upgrades.

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Annual General Meeting of the McGregor Country Estates Community Association. The association has recently acquired ownership of the infrastructure and communal properties after reaching a deal with the developer. They are looking at ways to promote long-term sustainability and other enhancements in a cost-effective manner.

Vulcan County supported firefighting efforts in Northern Alberta with trucks and personnel. Our people are very dedicated to the service, with some making the trip north to fight fire. Please join me in thanking local firefighter, Jael Vandebriunhorst, for her own dedicated service to the Champion Community over five years. She is moving away and will be missed.

Sincerely, Christopher Northcott