Please note, that this document is submitted, via the Clerk, for the public record to reflect all the things that I would like to have presented, live to the council and the public, but the 7-minute limit prevented. Therefore, the live presentation must be viewed on the Township's YouTube channel. The complete document includes some intentional repetition because I have found that sometimes people have to tell me the same thing more than once before "I get it." Thank you for your patience.

March 25, 2024

Good evening, Mayor, Councilors, staff, fellow citizens

On April 4, 2016, a previous Wilmot Township Council received a CLERKS Report No. CL2016-06 which had the title, "Canada's Past Prime Ministers Statue Project 2017 Sesquicentennial Initiative Township of Wilmot Administration Grounds".

The Council unanimously passed the enabling Resolution No. 2016-55 which stated, "THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to enter into an agreement between the Township of Wilmot and Createscape Waterloo Region and to sign the associated By-law."

In the absence of the essential educational component, a comprehensive project never evolved. It became an easy target, a concrete symbol, to blame for the fateful circumstances of events elsewhere. These issues, newly resurrected by the press, stimulated intense reactions across Canada and in our Township. The previous Council reacted hastily when faced with intense emotion, vandalism, and outside press interpretations/judgements of Wilmot's citizens. The Council of the day put the project on temporary hold.

It was recognized by that Council that there was a need for "transforming community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township". There needed to be "greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making". Those last two sentences are quoted from Resolution No. 2021-141 passed by Wilmot Council on July 5, 2021.

Previous Councils had been making decisions, as our democratic process permits, based on the opinions/conclusions of 6 people, which did not

necessarily reflect the wishes of the citizenry. Citizens were not informed, were not invited to contribute, and if so, citizens' input appeared to have been ignored.

Being the people's representative is not an easy undertaking. Even when a Councilor attempts, at the Council table and in public, to reflect the stated interests of their constituents there sometimes seems to be someone who makes accusations of perceived insult or injustice. Thank you, Councillors, for assuming this responsibility for us all. There are about 22,000 opinions here in Wilmot. Not all of them are informed. That's not an insult, it's a reality that individuals do not all have access to all the needed information – myself included.

It is my opinion that there is an increased blurring between who has the authority over an issue, who is responsible for implementing it, and who is accountable for the consequences of it.

As a result, the nearest politicians, usually Municipal Councillors, get the blame. Recent examples include gravel pit approvals, the proposal to build a row of 6, 6-storey monsters along Nafziger that would make a terrific snow fence to block the road in winter - when the developer himself said that people are attracted to Wilmot because of its "grounded" (3-storeys or less) lifestyle. Cultural events like Canada Day.

Another example is the silence imposed on local Councilors about the expropriation of farms to create a large parcel for development by no one knows who, for no known purpose with no known implications, impacting who knows whom. There appears to be a gathering of power and authority into the hands of an obscure few which is used to impose arbitrary will onto the plebians below. There seems to be an attitude of "I know best, and the rest of you do as you're told!" I suggest that this is wrong.

If we can create a process that facilitates communication among all of us in Wilmot and the province, then we will know who has the authority, who is responsible, and who is accountable, and thus we know who to blame. Then we can plan for what we can do about it – possibly including getting those responsible out of power and changing the power and decision-making structure.

It is my opinion that, in the past few years, there has been a dramatic shift in power from individual citizens in Municipalities to political appointees in the Provincial government and its departments. Even the appointment and review processes are being diluted with the placement of only those judges that agree with the agenda of the Provincial ruling party of the day. To quote a federal politician, "You dance with the ones that brought you." I think it was spelled with an 'r' – brought, not bought.

Thomas Jefferson famously wrote to Richard Price, from Paris on January 8, 1789, as follows, "...it is to me a new and consolatory proof that whenever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights."

That's why we are here tonight. To set them to rights. 1) To discuss a process that will eventually reform the consultation and decision-making processes in Wilmot Township, and by the way, 2) address the Prime Ministers' Path concerns. That's two birds in one nest.

Because there is a standing Resolution from July 5, 2021, on the Table, if the Council wants to change direction it must either revoke that existing Resolution and hope the issues festering in it disappear, or as I am suggesting here, use the existing motion's direction and pass a superseding replacement Resolution.

I suggest that the standing Resolution describes a specific direction forward:

- 1. To identify a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township.
- 2. To create a Working Group (composed of those representatives defined above) that is charged with the task of discussing, developing and suggesting plans to the Council, that are centred on community cohesion and healing, and that describe the next steps toward the goals.

The Working Group's plan will describe how:

- To transform community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township, (find a new way)
- To encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making (transparency and involvement)

I suggest that the first practice example implementing this newly created decision-making process, led by the Working Group of facilitators, will address the concerns of the Prime Ministers' Path Project.

The Report CAO-2024-03 submitted to the Council on February 26, 2024, starting on page 7 of 16, outlined 3 options for the Council to consider as a strategy to proceed.

Options #1 and #2 **together**, have the descriptive detail required to fulfill the direction given in Resolution No. 2021-141. But neither option #1 nor option #2 **alone** completes the task.

Option #1 creates a working group process, "...to help to determine a path forward for the Prime Minister's Path statues."

Option #2 addresses the fundamental consultation problem underlying all Township decision-making when it states in its title, "...Explore Alternative Approaches for Citizen Engagement and Decision-Making".

BOTH TASKS MUST BE ADDRESSED. THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, AS WELL AS THE PRIME MINISTERS PATH PROJECT.

#### NOT ONE! NOT THE OTHER! BOTH!!!!

The Prime Ministers Path Project is not as straightforward as grading a road with new gravel or installing a stop sign. It has become a complex, highly charged issue. People have a strong vested interest in their community. This issue requires a decision-making process that allows for the sharing of accurate information and thus opportunities for mutual education. A process that facilitates the sharing of personal stories, anecdotes, and experiences. A process that encourages the sharing of values, beliefs, aspirations and goals for individual residents and their community – Wilmot Township. i.e., Reconciliation!

THE COUNCIL, I BELIEVE, MUST PUT BOTH TASKS TOGETHER INTO ONE RESOLUTION. I SUBMIT OPTION #4.

Councillors may refer to their agenda package. You will find that I have cut and pasted from pages 56 and 57 to take parts of the titles from options #1

and #2, and portions of the contents of each, plus some recommended actions after September 2024. This hybrid, below, is my proposed Option #4.

I am here to advocate for the following:

"THAT Report CAO-2024-04 regarding Additional Information Relating to Option 2 Outlined in CAO Report 2024-03, be received as information, and further,

THAT Council directs staff to proceed with Option #4 as attached."

Option #4: Create a Working Group Comprised of a Balanced Representation of the Individuals and Communities within Wilmot Township to Explore Alternative Approaches for Citizen Engagement and Decision-Making, and Engage Further on the Prime Ministers Path Project.

Council and staff have informally received feedback that the engagement process carried out by First People's Group was insufficient and the final report did not fully reflect the diverse views and opinions of the community.

The Council wishes to confirm community support for the First People's Group recommendation to create a Working Group that would engage further with the community and explore alternative approaches for citizen engagement and decision-making.

Further, the Council wishes to confirm community support for the First People's Group on behalf of the Township, by using the Working Group to plan a collaborative approach to determine a path forward for the Prime Ministers Path Statues project.

To move forward with this work, staff recommend engaging an experienced firm that specializes in creating inclusive engagement plans for diverse communities. This firm would take the lead in shaping the work and providing guidance on the following aspects:

- 1. **Working Group Implementation**: The firm can offer insights on how to establish an effective working group. This includes defining the group's purpose, structure, and composition, citing best practices and case studies of similar working groups.
- 2. **Terms of reference and Mandate**: The firm can assist in crafting clear and comprehensive terms of reference for the Working Group.

- These documents outline the group's objectives, scope, and responsibilities.
- 3. **Selection Process**: Drawing from their experience, the firm can propose best practices for selecting Working Group members to ensure a diverse representation.
- 4. Advice to the Working Group: The firm can provide ongoing advice and support to the working group throughout its operation. This might involve facilitating meetings, addressing challenges, prompting collaboration and assisting with research.

Fostering inclusivity is crucial for successful community engagement. By involving experts experienced in this field, the Township can enhance the effectiveness of the Working Group and achieve better outcomes.

In terms of project timing, it is recommended that the work be staged in conjunction with the Township's strategic planning process, as follows;

- March to June 2024 Engage a firm specializing in inclusive engagement to make recommendations regarding the creation of the Working Group, Terms of Reference and Mandate. Establish the Working Group.
- March to August 2024 Undertake strategic planning process to develop a vision and goals for the community, based on robust community engagement. [A consulting firm, with the working group and staff, would conduct this process.]
- June to September 2024 Engage the firm to provide support to the Working Group as it develops a plan on how to transform community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township and encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making. The Working Group will make the best effort to submit its recommendations to the Council and staff by approximately September 31, 2024.
- October 2024 the Council in consultation with staff makes recommendations on how to implement any recommendations from the Working Group regarding a) transforming community engagement and consultation processes b) encouraging greater openness, accountability and citizen participation and c) conducting public information and consultation meetings.

- October 2024 the firm will provide "train-the-trainer" support to the working group on how to conduct participatory consultation meetings with the public.
- November 2024 to June 2025 the Working Group will conduct information and consultation meetings at Township Community Centres regarding the Prime Ministers Path project.
- June 2025 to July 2025 the Working Group with the support of the "firm" will collate its data collected during public consultations and summarize its recommendations for the Council and staff.
- September 2025 the Council will determine how to implement any appropriate recommendations from the Working Group regarding the Prime Ministers Path Project.

This man can't explain his plan in 7 minutes. Therefore, I am going to skip a lot of the details below. I have included it in the electronic copy I have submitted to the Clerk/Secretary, and that should be attached to the minutes of this meeting. Interested viewers can read the whole thing on the Township website later.

I am here to advocate for the following:

"THAT Report CAO-2024-04 regarding Additional Information Relating to Option 2 Outlined in CAO Report 2024-03, be received as information, and further.

THAT Council directs staff to proceed with Option #4 as attached."

Thank you. I am prepared to respond to questions or comments from Councillors.

The fundamental 'cause' of discontent with previous Councils is the process often (not always) used in its decision-making. There is a distinction between process and product. The final decision is the product. How the Council gets there is the process.

Often the Council 'gets there' very efficiently and effectively. For example: road grading, and installation of stop signs. A resident complains about their road condition. The roads department goes out and looks at it. It applies specific criteria used by road engineers to assess the quality of the road area of concern. Various options are considered of whether to or how to proceed.

A work plan is developed, it is reviewed by the roads department, the residents in the area are consulted, a budget is prepared, the plan and budget is submitted to the Council, if the money exists, an approval Resolution is passed, and the job gets done. The Council does this all the time.

In a recent example of a stop sign at an intersection, all the above processes were implemented, plus maps and diagrams were placed in local newspapers, and contact numbers were available for public opinion comment and suggestion. There was an opportunity for all residents in Wilmot to be informed about and be educated about the issue, and to then participate in the process by contributing suggestions. The process recognizes that, "The responsible department may not always know what is best and an optimum solution to the concern itself. If the process involves sharing of information, increased education of the public, and participatory input from the public, then the product (the final decision) is optimized. It's the best we can do at this time. (Over time things may change and we have to go through the process again.)

Not all issues or the processes used to make recommendations and thus a decision are as 'straightforward' as road gravel and road signs. Some come along that are of strong public interest and may have high emotional commitment from various perspectives. They may appear straightforward but may be more complex and need a more complex process.

A process for providing contextual information which can become mutually agreed upon, providing opportunities for the exchange of information from various sources, and sharing experiences (personal stories and anecdotes) that facilitate the education of each other about various points of view. This sharing and mutual education can produce mutual understanding and increased acceptance of others' views.

This process would only be needed in complex, highly charged issues. The Prime Ministers Path Project is such an example, I suggest.

# This issue requires:

- Hiring a consultation firm to guide the process.
- Creation of a representative working group.
- Development of a plan by the working group.
- The Council's approval of the plan with a budget.

- Training of the working group using a "train-the-trainer" model.
- The working group "training" facilitators for public information and consultation meetings.
- Compiling a record of submitted public input including documentation of 'personal stories', positive suggestions, summaries of suggested actions to 'dispose' or 'display' the statues, and recommendations to the Council, staff and the public.
- Sharing of the working group's Report with the public.
- The Council's decision of how to implement its choice of action to address the issue.

I suggest that the process to address the Prime Ministers Path project can be a practice example of 'decision-making' using an improved decisionmaking process. This is not whether to add gravel to and grade a road. This issue is of very high, emotional interest to Wilmot residents. A more detailed information, education, consultation process is required.

Thus, the direction given in the standing Resolution of July 5, 2021, needs to be implemented. A working group of representative individuals and communities needs creation. The working group needs professional support in its task. The working group develops a plan with action recommendations for improving the decision-making process.

The Working Group's plan will describe how:

- To transform community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township, (find a new way)
- To encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making (transparency and involvement)

As a teacher, I discovered that often repetition is required to get a point across. Here goes again.

In review; the working group's plan involves the following.

To achieve the tasks of 1) reforming its consultation and decision-making processes, AND 2) addressing the Prime Ministers' Path issue, (among other high profile issues) the Township is going to need outside, professional help. It has too many projects, and too few staff, to manage everything without help.

- 2. This aspirational process of decision-making, it appears to me, is new to the Township and its staff, or we would have been doing it already. The Council, its staff, and citizens need help to learn how to do it appropriately, together.
- 3. The following steps build on the standing Resolution of July 5, 2021, and outline who, what and how to transform community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township, and how to encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making. This Council, I believe, needs to pass the enabling Resolution (Option #1) to implement the processes I outline below. As Councilors may have come to know me, I have a suggested Resolution at the end.
- 4. The first step is to facilitate openness by creating a structure that enables community engagement and consultation. The July 5<sup>th</sup> motion directs the Council on how to do so. Create a "balanced, representative working group' to address any critical issue. How to define and then create "a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township" is a statistically challenging endeavour! The CAO's existing recommendation that an outside "firm" be contracted, for the initial stages at least, is **politically and managerially sound**. I agree with her about this process. A consulting "firm" does not have to have a famous (expensive) name attached. It may even be a group already existent in a university, such as local universities and/or Nipissing University which have faculties in various disciplines.
- 5. The "First Peoples Group" must not be consulted or engaged any further by the Township. That "firm" had its chance and whatever reputation it created for itself must be left behind.
- 6. How to run a participatory consultation and decision-making process is a skill that can be taught, learned and applied in any situation. Once learned, and twice practiced, it can be implemented for any issue.
- 7. The consulting firm will coordinate and provide counsel to the 'working group' as it considers strategies to achieve its goals; a) transform community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township, and to encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making.
- 8. The 'working group's' plan, created after consultation with the "firm", will be submitted to Council for process and budget approvals.
- 9. After the Council has provided approvals and directions in a formal motion, the 'working group' implements the planned process of consultations.

- 10. The "consulting firm" will train the 'working group' to run a participatory consultation process. This process is known as "train the trainers". The consulting firm trains the 'working group'. The working group will be the core group of facilitators in any future community focus groups or consultation processes.
- 11. The newly trained 'working group' will then train other facilitators, as needed, to conduct public consultation sessions in various sites throughout the Township.
- 12. The working group, in consultation with its "firm" of professional trainers, will create a structured program for consultations at each site. Nipissing University, for example, should be able to provide training on "how to run a participatory consultation and decision-making process" that produces a statistically valid record of Wilmot public input. This process must allow every Wilmot citizen to choose to participate or not. If they participate, their voice will be heard and they will recognize their voice in the report somewhere. If they do not participate, they give up their credible right to complain.
- 13. Public consultations would be held multiple times in multiple locations over a carefully scheduled timeline that need not be many months long. For example, Wilmot Township has reasonably affordable access to multiple community facilities throughout the Township in Haysville, Mannheim, New Dundee, Saint Agatha, New Hamburg, and Wilmot Community Centre that may be reserved for multiple dates each over one or two months. Many nearby places and optional dates encourage residents to participate.
- 14. Public consultations, on this decision-making topic, the Prime Ministers' Path Project, must be open only for participation by proven residents of Wilmot Township. You must be a resident to participate. WRPS security should be provided at all sites. This is a Wilmot process, making a Wilmot decision, for Wilmot residents, by Wilmot residents.
- 15. A final report from the 'working group', after all consultations have been completed and statistics tabulated will be provided to the staff and the Council. This report will include detailed recommendations of what actions should be taken in addressing the concerns about the "Prime Ministers Path Project". 1) For example, if the public consultation indicates that the statues must be disposed of, the report will recommend how. 2) If the public consultation indicates that the statues must be retained and displayed in some fashion with an educational component, then the report will summarize public

suggestions of how that can be done. 3) The report may also take the form of a list of pluses and minuses for each option ('disposal or display') for the statues and leave it to the Council to decide what to do next.

- 16. After the Council has "received and approved" the 'working group's' report by formal motion, the report will be released to the public. The Council will also report to the public on how it will implement the recommendations, regarding the statutes, in the report. A budget proposal will accompany the report's release.
- 17. You will have noticed that I made no mention yet of a potential referendum. The Council may choose to release a report that summarizes the pluses and negatives for 'disposal or display'. The Council may choose to release the wording of a referendum question and place it on a ballot during the 2026 election cycle if not before, allowing adequate time for the residents of the voting age to digest the report's summaries before voting.
- 18. This Council has an opportunity to be a model for political decision-making resulting from transformative community engagement and consultation processes, greater openness, accountability and citizen participation centred on community cohesion and healing. The Council can be a leader in fine-tuning the decision-making process. When we all get off this PMP decision-making excursion, we'll all know we had an opportunity to participate, and we'll all know why we made the decision we did 'disposal or display'.

# SUMMARY: (I repeat for emphasis)

- 1. Pass an enabling motion suggested wording below.
- 2. Hire a consulting firm to advise Council and staff through the process.
- 3. Define "a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township".
- 4. Create a core 'working group' that is representative of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township.
- 5. The consulting firm will coordinate and provide counsel to the 'working group' as it considers strategies to achieve its goals; a) transform community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township, and to encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making. The working group's plan will describe how to run a participatory consultation and decision-making process for the Prime Ministers Path concerns. This will be a test-run practice example of "democracy in action" in Wilmot.

- 6. The 'working group's' plan, created after consultation with the "firm", will be submitted to Council and its staff for process and budget approvals.
- 7. The consulting firm will train the trainers to run a participatory consultation and decision-making process.
- 8. Public information and consultation meetings will be held in each community centre in the Township.
- 9. Suggestions and recommendations will be recorded and statistically compiled into a Report to the staff and Council.
- 10. The Council will choose how to act on the Report: release results to the public, conduct a referendum or not, and its plan for executing the Council's decision on how to dispose of or display the statues.

As Councillors will have come to expect from me, I have, of course, a proposed motion for the Council to consider tonight.

"THAT Report CAO-2024-04 regarding Additional information Relating to Option 2 Outlined in CAO Report 2024-03, be received as information, and further,

THAT Council directs staff to proceed with Option #4 as attached."

Option #4: Create a Working Group Comprised of a Balanced Representation of the Individuals and Communities within Wilmot Township to Explore Alternative Approaches for Citizen Engagement and Decision-Making, and Engage Further on the Prime Ministers Path Project.

Council and staff have informally received feedback that the engagement process carried out by First People's Group was insufficient and the final report did not fully reflect the diverse views and opinions of the community.

The Council wishes to confirm community support for the First People's Group recommendation to create a Working Group that would engage further with the community and explore alternative approaches for citizen engagement and decision-making.

Further, the Council wishes to confirm community support for the First People's Group on behalf of the Township, by using the Working Group to plan a collaborative approach to determine a path forward for the Prime Ministers Path Statues project.

To move forward with this work, staff recommend engaging an experienced firm that specializes in creating inclusive engagement plans for diverse communities. This firm would take the lead in shaping the work and providing guidance on the following aspects:

- 5. **Working Group Implementation**: The firm can offer insights on how to establish an effective working group. This includes defining the group's purpose, structure, and composition, citing best practices and case studies of similar working groups.
- 6. **Terms of reference and Mandate**: The firm can assist in crafting clear and comprehensive terms of reference for the Working Group. These documents outline the group's objectives, scope, and responsibilities.
- 7. **Selection Process**: Drawing from their experience, the firm can propose best practices for selecting Working Group members to ensure a diverse representation.
- 8. Advice to the Working Group: The firm can provide ongoing advice and support to the working group throughout its operation. This might involve facilitating meetings, addressing challenges, prompting collaboration and assisting with research.

Fostering inclusivity is crucial for successful community engagement. By involving experts experienced in this field, the Township can enhance the effectiveness of the Working Group and achieve better outcomes.

In terms of project timing, it is recommended that the work be staged in conjunction with the Township's strategic planning process, as follows;

- March to August 2024 Undertake strategic planning process to develop a vision and goals for the community, based on robust community engagement.
- April to June 2024 Engage a firm specializing in inclusive engagement to make recommendations regarding the creation of the Working Group, Terms of Reference and Mandate.
- June to September 2024 Establish the Working Group, and engage the firm to provide support to the Working Group as it develops a plan on how to transform community engagement and

consultation processes in Wilmot Township and encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making. The Working Group will make the best effort to submit its recommendations to the Council and staff by approximately September 31, 2024.

- October 2024 the Council in consultation with staff makes recommendations on how to implement any recommendations from the Working Group regarding a) transforming community engagement and consultation processes b) encouraging greater openness, accountability and citizen participation and c) conducting public information and consultation meetings.
- October 2024 the firm will provide "train-the-trainer" support to the working group on how to conduct participatory consultation meetings with the public.
- November 2024 to June 2025 the Working Group will conduct information and consultation meetings at Township Community Centres regarding the Prime Ministers Path project.
- June 2025 to July 2025 the Working Group with the support of the "firm" will collate its data collected during public consultations and summarize its recommendations for the Council and staff.
- September 2025 the Council will determine how to implement any appropriate recommendations from the Working Group regarding the Prime Ministers Path Project.

Sincerely,

Barry Wolfe, Baden

#### Footnote

To define "a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township" is a statistically challenging endeavour.

https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=N3A%203N5&DGUIDlist=2

# <u>021A000011124,2021A00053530020&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=</u> 1,4&HEADERlist=0

Wilmot Township data is in the 6 columns on the far right side.

## Canada had, per the 2021 Census:

- 36,620,955 faces
- 20,107,200 (54.9%) spoke English as their mother tongue
- 7,189,245 (19.6%) spoke French as their mother tongue
- 7,848,245 (21.4%) spoke a non-official language as their mother tongue
- 148,895 (0.4%) spoke an Indigenous language as their mother tongue

### Wilmot Township had, per the 2021 Census:

- 21,280 faces (it's about 22,000 now)
- 20,520 (96.4%) spoke English most often at home
- 35 (0.2%) spoke French most often at home
- 495 (2.3%) spoke a non-official language most often at home
- 0 (0.0%) spoke an Indigenous language most often at home
- 0 14 years = 18.8%
- 15 64 years = 60.2 %
- 65 years and over = 21.0%
- 85 years and over = 2.1%
- 42.0 years = average age
- 42.8 years = median age
- 6,245 (79.2%) were single-detached houses
- 680 (8.6%) were semi-detached houses
- 260 (3.3%) were row houses
- 130 (1.6%) were apartment or flat in a duplex
- 555 (7.0%) were apts. fewer than 5-storeys
- 5 (0.1%) were apts. in bldgs. 5 or more storeys
- 10 (0.1%) other single-attached house
- 10 (0.1%) moveable dwelling