

Delegation to Wilmot Township Council Meeting  
Monday, May 27, 2024

Agenda Item 14 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Item 14.4 “Mayor N. Salonen Regarding the Strategic Plan”

“Good evening to the Senior Corporate Leadership Team: CEO Salonen, and Board of Directors / Councillors.”

“Good evening to the Senior Administration Team members present.”

**I’m here to speak in support of this Notice of Motion.**

A Strategic Plan is a roadmap which describes **where** you want to go, the **route** you take how to get there, and who is going to **watch the map to give directions** while the **driver** is doing their thing.

Individuals, and corporations like Wilmot Township, need to know where they’re headed. They need a roadmap. Thus, a Strategic Plan is a useful thing for an organization to have.

The good news is - the Corporation of the Township of Wilmot already has one. The problem is that when one does a Google search for – “Wilmot Township Strategic Plan” you get a lot of potential links. Which version is which is the challenge for citizens to discover. The bad news is, it’s really confusing determining which web version is the most current. The good news is after searching through a bunch you get a good history of how the plans have evolved. The other good news is, they haven’t changed much over the past decade or so.

This Notice of Motion addresses the Strategic Plan and how much emphasis and community time is placed on the present review/update process. An “update” process from the current Strategic Plan to some unknown “new” one has been planned to include extensive community consultations with several mass meetings, focus groups, surveys, etc.

This motion is justifiably presented by Mayor Salonen, because that is her role and duty “... to act as chief executive officer of the municipality...”, and “...to provide leadership to the council...”.

It is the role and duty of council "... to develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality...", and "... to determine which services the municipality provides...", and "...to ensure that administrative policies, practices and procedures and controllership policies, practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of council...", and "...to ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality, including the activities of senior management of the municipality...".

Those phrases are taken directly from the Ontario Municipal Act, sections 224 and 225. Section 227 of the Act specifies the limited, defined role of the Administration.

It is the role of the officers and employees of the municipality, "...to implement council's decisions and establish administrative practices and procedures to carry out council's decisions...", and "...to undertake research and provide advice to council on the policies and programs of the municipality...".

The Act is simple and clear. The council leads, the administration does what it is directed to do by council.

As this Notice of Motion reviews, the council followed the administration's advice to issue an RFP to hire a consultant to conduct an update to the still existing Strategic Plan. These reviews are traditionally completed within the first year or two of a new council's term. That "best-before-date" has passed.

The mayor, as the corporation's leader, appears to recognize that such a review process is untimely right now and would be a significant distraction from priorities, including Community Services master plans and the Prime Ministers Path consultations.

I support this Notice of Motion, as it recognizes the will of the electorate.

The last province-wide municipal elections were held in October 2022. 15 candidates put their names forward for scrutiny by the voters. At least 5 of those names were those who had previously run for office in Wilmot, including 3 incumbents who wished to continue this term. As we know, none of those 5 were chosen. The Wilmot voters chose a slate of new faces to represent their wishes as they told you before, during and since the election period. We chose you to be our Corporate Board of Directors – our leaders.

I invite you to reflect back on what you heard from the voters during the time you were campaigning for office. What was the biggest issue that you heard most often with the greatest intensity? Which one caused the most concern about the decisions made by previous Councils?

Was it concern over the Strategic Plan? That it somehow contained a misguided vision, mission statement, values, goals, strategies, actions and work programs? No.

Was it the consultation process, or lack thereof, used by the previous council when making “going forward” decisions about the Prime Ministers Path project? Ah.

I said that finding a current version of the Strategic Plan is hard, but also that previous versions give a good historical perspective of thinking during the process.

In previous incarnations and DRAFTs to the present FINAL version I found significant things about a concern expressed in this Notice of Motion, “**Consultations on the Prime Ministers path project**”. Earlier versions are different from what I call the “sanitized” FINAL/REBRANDED version. That’s what the web URL calls it “Township-of-Wilmot---Strategic-Plan-2020---FINAL --- REBRANDED-v3.pdf”.

The two versions appear similar, but are different in critical areas.

DRAFT: the Executive Summary, first paragraph, states, “*This document is critical in providing the necessary guidance to elected representatives and staff, as we collectively prepare for the next 5 to 10 years.*”

REBRANDED: the Executive Summary contains no “best-before-date” and only says it is a continuation of the efforts in creating the 2013 Plan.

The Update that **this Notice of Motion** addresses is planned to extend only from 2024 to 2027 – 3 years instead of the original’s 10 years.

The DRAFT Strategic Plan says that “*alteration to how that project was identified within the Plan*” was required and thus had to be put into action.

The **action item** is on page 14. It's under the heading of "*Quality of Life*", sub-heading "*Arts, Culture and Heritage*".

In the REBRANDED version, the paragraph about the PMP project was removed. In fact, the "Message" title was changed. It changed from **Message from Senior Management Team** to **Message from Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)**.

Point (1)

The present Strategic Plan defines the administration staff, not the Council, as being the "Corporate Leadership Team". The last paragraph, page 1, titled **Message from Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)** reads,

"As the Corporate Leadership Team for the Township, we are responsible for the success of all staff in achieving the various components of this Plan. We are confident in the skill, innovation, and talent of our staff. We look forward to working alongside Council and the community as we expand on the successes of our previous Strategic plan, ensuring our shared vision for Wilmot is realized."

**Words have meaning!** Note:

+ "As the Corporate Leadership Team for the Township, we are responsible for the success..."

+ "We look forward to working alongside Council and the community..."

NOTE: "...working alongside Council..." means that the newly renamed/rebranded Corporate Leadership Team, that is writing this Strategic Plan, is a separate entity from Council and the community. That's 3 entities. In other words, in this document, the council is no longer the Corporate Leadership body as defined in the Ontario Municipal Act. That title has been usurped by the administration. There has been a role reversal which has been institutionalized in this Strategic Plan.

I fully expect that Councillors will, after this Notice of Motion has been implemented as a Bylaw, ensure that their own Strategic Plan consultations ensure that that wording is reversed and the legal role of council is re-established formally, and the CAO and their staff are redefined in name and practice as "**administrators**" of **Council's Corporate Leadership** directions.

Point (2)

In the **Township of Wilmot strategic Plan Update 2019-2023**, (DRAFT) as well as in the FINAL-REBRANDED version, in the section, **Implementing our Plan**, there is a sub-heading titled, **Annual Reporting**. It reads, *“In conjunction with the annual work program, each year the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will provide a report updating Council and the community on the progress of staff in meeting this Strategic Plan. “*

As a relatively interested observer of Wilmot Council’s proceedings, I’m embarrassed to say, I’ve never seen such an annual report. (If Annual means an update report every year.) I checked the Township website and I can find neither hide nor hair of any annual Strategic Plan Report from the CAO. The closest to a report that I could find was a link titled **Annual Work Program** on a website page, titled “Strategic Plan”, over the CAO’s Contact.

<https://www.wilmot.ca/en/living-here/Strategic-Plan.aspx>

There is a clickable link to the PDF version of the **Strategic Plan**. It brings one to the FINAL---Rebranded version of 2020. I assume this is “current” as there has not been any subsequent update. That’s why we’re here with this Notice of Motion – put council back in charge to fix it.

I was expecting to find a “current”, that is 2023, status report on all the action tasks by each “department” / “Service”. This report records tasks as of 2021. Maybe there are other versions of this report for 2022, and 2023 somewhere, but I can’t find them.

This may be an opportunity for the CAO’s Office to consider when, how frequently (we don’t always read an important document the first time it’s released) and in what format this report is provided to the community of Wilmot – instead of starting the whole Update process over – 2 to 7 years prematurely?

Point (3)

I would suggest that efficient and effective policy implementation requires a clear understanding of who does what and who is accountable to whom, when. This Notice of Motion refers to the PMP project, for example. In the DRAFT-FOR-COMMITTEE-REVIEW.pdf version, in the Actions section (6), under the Goal “Quality of Life”, action sub-heading “Arts, Culture and Heritage”, I found 6 action items – 5 in red, meaning they were new, and 1 in black which meant it was ongoing and a continuation of actions in place. The ongoing action item was described as “**Consultations on the Prime Ministers Path project**”. The “lead” or department responsible for

implementing and executing the actions was “Castle Kilbride”. That makes sense to me. The PMP project was about all of arts, and culture and heritage. The department had a ‘Director’ and 3 staff members. They had connections with Createscape Waterloo and Nipissing University. Statues were being created and delivered. Educational programming was much along the way to development for implementation. Sponsors had been informally connected with regarding construction of an Indigenous Longhouse on site, expansion for parking and turn-arounds for tour buses was being suggested by sponsors. Right up Castle Kilbride’s path. (pun intended) Check with me for sources.

The FINAL-REBRANDED version, in the Actions section (6), under the Goal “Quality of Life”, action sub-heading “Arts, Culture and Heritage”, I found 5 action items – all in black, nothing new. There were only 5 because 2 items from the DRAFT were combined into one. The action item “**Consultations on the Prime Ministers Path project**” had a new “lead”. The “lead” or department responsible for implementing and executing the actions was no longer “Castle Kilbride”, the department that is about all of arts, and culture and heritage. The new “lead” is now “Information and Legislative Services”. On the website’s Departments page, there is such a department, but on the Contact Us page no such assigned title exists. In fact, on the Contact Us page, the Clerk does not exist.

There is a Supervisor of Information Technology but no Manager of Information Services.

There is a Manager of Communications and Strategic Initiatives under the direction of the CAO.

There is also an Executive Assistant to the CAO position, a posting for which closed on April 19, 2024, for a 35-hour week and has a pay range of \$75,349 to \$91,554. The posting’s description of “*general purpose*” duties could align with some Information or Legislative Services tasks, but not specified.

“Information and Legislative services” appears to be a label which has been created to group an array of responsibilities in the Municipal Clerk’s office. Per the Ontario Municipal Act, section 228, a clerk can be required “...to perform such other duties as assigned by the municipality...”, AND “...a clerk or deputy clerk is not required to be an employee of the municipality...”.

In other words, in an updated Strategic Plan, there is lots of potential for “alternative problem-solving strategies”. The municipality could restructure an Information and Legislative Services Department, wherever and whoever it is, so it could hire another deputy clerk, assign the task of “**Consultations on the Prime Ministers Path project**” to that new position, but make it a temporary contract position and thus not even be an employee of the municipality. How much “flexibility” would that provide? Or, it could just be apparently dumped into the Clerk’s office.

Who does what regarding the PMP project? Skuttlebutt has it that everything to do with the PMP project is under the thumb of the CAO’s office. The title Chief **Administrative** Officer has all the appearances of having been rebranded in practice to become the CLO, or Chief **Leadership** Officer, a non-existent role under the Ontario Municipal Act. What will consultants recommend next in their “rebranding” exercises?

No Castle Kilbride = no lead/leadership = no consultations = issue is ignored = problem is escalated. “Houston, we have a problem!”

The voters sent clear messages when they rejected the other 9 candidates on October 24, 2022, and chose you.

It is my conclusion that this Notice of Motion regarding the existing Strategic Plan is, if anything, overdue.

Staff lobby you regularly, privately, in support of their Reports and positions. This citizen is here to lobby you, in public, to change direction. Pass this motion. Take back your legislated powers of leadership and oversight.

Do not distract this community with a lot of meetings about a Strategic Plan red-herring that distracts focus and effort away from an expressed priority concern that leads us off the path and down a rabbit hole.

Get on with the priorities that voters directed you to execute on October 24, 2022.

**This council, presently, is not travelling forward on its roadmap. It is following a “Maintain the current direction” Report from a previous council - that got replaced by voters – for reasons. This council is**

presently still in the wrong lane, going the other way, backwards on this issue, in the same misguided direction of the last council.

- 1) Pass this motion and subsequently implement it as a Bylaw.
- 2) Pass an over-riding motion and Bylaw that “CHANGES DIRECTION” toward comprehensive community consultation on the PMP project. Let the community decide.
- 3) Write an RFP to hire an “appropriate” consultant to facilitate the community-wide consultation process.
- 4) Conduct the current Strategic Plan Update internally with consultation among Council and all Staff, only, this round.
- 5) IN THAT ORDER!
- 6) Get ‘er done!

Thank you,

Barry Wolfe,  
Baden

The Corporation of the Township of Wilmot already has a Strategfific Plan, that has had its vision and mission statements for so long that they are engraved on a plaque mounted in the common area outside the Council chamber.





The CAO is not a Corporate Leadership Team chief. The CAO is not the CLO. The CAO is an administrator. See example on plaque – F.C.B. Cannon was the CAO an administrator



