

Municipality of East Ferris

Report to Council

Report No.: PLAN-2020-08

Date: December 8, 2020

Originator: Greg Kirton, Manager of Planning and Economic Development

Subject: Municipally Owned Lands on Eglinton Road North – Proposal from Bur Oak Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Manager of Planning and Economic Development initiate the required planning processes to establish the desired commercial and industrial uses on our municipally owned lands. Further that municipal staff work with Lance and Alexandra Johnson to determine the land needs of Bur Oak Resources leading to an application to purchase municipal lands made by the Johnson's.

BACKGROUND

At the regular meeting of Council on November 24, 2020, Council heard a presentation from Lance and Alexandra Johnson, the owners of Bur Oak Resources. Bur Oak Resources specializes in renewable energy solutions including solar energy for residential, commercial, and industrial applications, as well as a wide variety of other technologies. They are currently located at 160 Pinewood Park Drive in North Bay. The Johnson's inquired to Council regarding the possibility of purchasing a portion of the municipally owned lands on Eglinton Road North in order to relocate their business operations. (See Appendix A)

The subject lands on Eglinton Road North are currently the focus of two separate grant applications that the municipality has made to NOHFC and FedNor. These applications are seeking financial support to commission the technical studies and background work that is required to move these lands towards being shovel ready for future industrial development. This is being done as a step towards the final goal of setting up an East Ferris Industrial Park, in line with the goals in the East Ferris Strategic Plan. As of the writing of this report we are still awaiting a final decision on each of these applications, although we understand that a decision should be reached in the very near future.

Prior to the November 24, 2020 Council meeting, staff contacted both NOHFC and FedNor to inquire about any negative impacts that could arise if we went ahead with a land severance and subsequent sale of part of the lands that were the subject of our grant applications. We were advised that doing so would not negatively impact our applications and that appropriate

adjustments to our applications could be made, if required. In order to facilitate commercial and industrial development on this parcel of land, the municipality will need to complete an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment process. The intention was to complete this process upon receiving a decision from NOHFC and FedNor, if successful; however, this process could be initiated while we wait for the final decision in order to expedite the process. It is likely that we will know the outcome of these grant applications prior to final completion of these planning exercises. In addition to these two planning processes, a consent to sever application would also be required in order to create a new parcel of land, if it is Council's intention to sell land to the Johnson's to facilitate Bur Oak Resources location change.

A potential concern with proceeding with the sale of land to the Johnson's would be that it would reduce the overall land holdings available to the municipality for the purpose of future industrial development on this land. The Johnson's are seeking approximately 4-5 acres of land, which represents 20% of the overall 22 acre parcel of land. It is possible that a future development plan could be hindered by a reduced lot area or impact on road access or configuration. However, staff are of the opinion that this concern is minimal given that a removal of 4-5 acres of land would still leave ample developable land available as well as access opportunities to both Eglinton Road North and Callander Bay Drive. Further, staff is of the opinion that supporting the move of an existing established business that is interested in investing in the community is preferable to speculating over future unconfirmed plans, in this instance.

With Council's support, staff could work with the Johnson's to begin the required planning approval processes to facilitate this project, while at the same time preparing a report to Council related to the land sale request and accompanying information related to By-law 2218, being a by-law that regulates the sale of property within the Municipality of East Ferris. This future report to Council would include specifics related to the financial considerations required to achieve this development, such as land sale price.

OPTIONS

1. Option 1

That the Manager of Planning and Economic Development initiate the required planning processes to establish the desired commercial and industrial uses on our municipally owned lands. Further that municipal staff work with Lance and Alexandra Johnson to determine the land needs of Bur Oak Resources leading to an application to purchase municipal lands made by the Johnson's.

2. Option 2

That the request from the Johnson's be deferred for future consideration until the municipality completes the work outlined in the NOHFC and FedNor grant applications.

3. Option 3

That Council chooses to not continue any further conversations with the Johnson's related to their request to purchase a portion of these lands.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

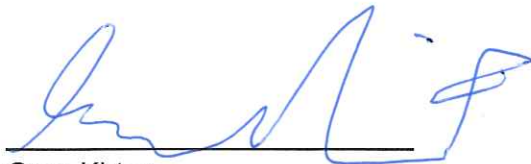
The financial implications of proceeding with the recommendation would be as follows:

- Revenue would be generated through the sale of the municipally owned lands. This amount would be determined through a future staff report related to By-law 2218, being a by-law that regulates the sale of property within the Municipality of East Ferris.
- Future tax revenue would be generated through the ongoing business operations of Bur Oak Resources. This amount would be dependent on the scale of their development.
- Staff resources required to complete the necessary planning approvals.

RECOMMENDATION

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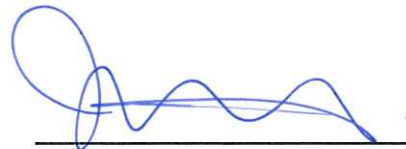
Respectfully Submitted,



Greg Kirton

Manager of Planning and
Economic Development

I concur with this report,
and recommendation



Jason H. Trottier, BBA, CPA, CMA

CAO/Treasurer

Appendix A (Location Map)

