



**The Corporation of the Township of Norwich
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday January 13, 2026
Regular Council Meeting**

In Attendance:

Council:

Mayor Jim Palmer
Councillor DePlancke
Councillor Gear
Councillor Couwenberg

Staff:

Matt Smith, Chief Administrative Officer
James Johnson, Treasurer/Deputy CAO
Kimberley Armstrong, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
Derek Van Pagee, Director of Fire and Protective Services
Ken Farkas, Director of Operations
Jason Simpson, Director of Building Services/Chief Building Official
Dirk Kramer, Deputy Chief Building Official/Drainage Superintendent
Sean McCoy, Deputy Clerk/Planning Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The regular session of the 2022-2026 Council of the Township of Norwich was held in the Council Chambers, Norwich, commencing at 9:00 a.m. with Mayor Palmer presiding.

2. Approval of Agenda

Resolution #1
Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That the Agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

3. Public Recognition / Presentations

None.

4. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

5. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

5.1 December 9, 2025

5.2 December 12, 2025 – Capital Budget

Resolution #2

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the following Minutes of the Township of Norwich Council be adopted as printed and circulated:

December 9, 2025

December 12, 2025 – Capital Budget

Carried

6. Public Meetings / Hearings

6.1 The Municipal Act

None.

6.2 The Drainage Act

Resolution #3

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That the following members be appointed to sit as the Court of Revision for the Vermeersch Branch (Palmer Drain) 2025: Jim Palmer, Lynne DePlancke, Adrian Couwenberg, and Shawn Gear, with the first member being the Chair of the Court of Revision, and further that the Court is now convened.

Carried

The Chair advised that this Court of Revision is being held to hear any objections to the charges being assessed to individual property owners as outlined within the Engineers Report.

The Notice for the Court of Revision was mailed in accordance with the requirements of the Drainage Act on December 17, 2025.

If anyone was in attendance with respect to this application, they were requested to please sign the attendance sheet at the door.

6.2.1 Court of Revision

Vermeersch Branch (Palmer Drain) 2025

Report DR 2026-02

Resolution #4

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Report DR 2026-02, Court of Revision of the Vermeersch Branch, be received as information.

Carried

Ms. Armstrong advised that no written appeals were received by the Clerks Department.

Resolution #5

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That the Court of Revision for the Vermeersch Branch (Palmer Drain) 2025 now allow appeal(s) to be heard in accordance with Section 52(4) of The Drainage Act.

Carried

There was no one in attendance that wished to submit an appeal against the Drainage works.

Mr. Dan Vermeersch, 793525 Slant Road, inquired about the tendering process and advised that he had already removed trees identified for removal in the Engineer's report.

Mr. Kramer explained that the tenders are posted on the Township's website and sent to a list of the Township's preferred contractors. Results are presented to Council along with the Engineer's recommendation. Typically, the lowest bid is awarded the tender. He also explained that rarely costs may increase from the tendered amount because something is discovered during construction that adds to the scope of the work involved.

Resolution #6

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the Court of Revision for the Chant Drain Improvement 2025 does now adjourn.

Carried

6.3 The Planning Act

The Mayor advised that this meeting is being constituted as being a public meeting held under the Planning Act for the purpose of hearing Zoning Amendment proposals and affording any person in attendance the opportunity to make a presentation to Council.

The Ontario Land Tribunal has the power to dismiss an appeal under subsection (25) if an appellant has not provided the Council with oral submissions at a public meeting or a written submission before a by-law is passed under this section.

The Mayor instructed anyone in attendance with respect to this application to please sign the attendance sheet at the door.

Resolution #7

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That pursuant to Section 34(12) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended, Chapter P.13, this Council conduct a public meeting in respect to an application for amendment to Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z by Chad and Melanie Hill, File Number ZN 03-25-21.

6.3.1 Owners: Chad and Melanie Hill

Applicant: Maria Anita Scholten

File No.: ZN 3-25-21

Report No.: CP 2026-20

Location: Lot 5, Concession 6, (former North Norwich) 285874 Airport Road, Township of Norwich, ON

Details of Proposed Amendment: To rezone the subject lands from 'Residential Existing Zone (RE)' to a 'Special Residential Existing Zone (RE-G)' to permit a garden suite on the subject lands. Including special provisions for a temporary garden suite approximately 92.9 m² (1,000 ft²) in size located to the west of the principal dwelling for a period of twenty (20) years.

No one in attendance representing the application

Ms. Amy Hartley, Development Planner, provided an overview of the application as contained within Report CP 2026-20. She advised that the application is requesting site specific zoning to permit a garden suite on a temporary basis. She explained that the Planning Act allows municipalities to permit garden suites for a period up to 20 years, after such time, extensions of 3 years can be requested. The applicants are proposing that the garden suite, which is to be occupied by the owners mother, will consist of a mobile home of approximately 1,000 square feet and will be located just west of the existing dwelling.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Hartley explained that garden suites are permitted for up to 20 years per the Planning Act. She clarified that garden suites are temporary, while additional residential units (ARU) are permanent.

There was no one in attendance that wished to speak in support of or in opposition to the application.

Resolution #8

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the Public Meeting held pursuant to the Planning Act be closed.

Carried

Resolution #9

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That with respect to the application to amend Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z, by Chad and Melanie Hill, for lands described Part of Lot 5, Concession 6, (North Norwich), being Part 1, 41R-559, municipally known as 285874 Airport Road in the Township of Norwich, whereby the lands are to be rezoned from 'Residential Existing Lot Zone (RE)' to 'Special Residential Existing Lot Zone (RE-17G)' to permit a garden suite on the subject lands to be occupied for a period of twenty (20) years, the Council of the Township of Norwich, the Council of the Township of Norwich hereby approve the zone change.

Carried

Resolution # 10

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That the following members sit as the Committee of Adjustment for the Township of Norwich: Chair Adrian Couwenberg and Members: Jim Palmer, Lynne DePlancke and Shawn Gear;

And further that the Committee of Adjustment is now convened.

Carried

Committee of Adjustment

The Chair advised that this public meeting of the Committee of Adjustment is being held for the purpose of hearing Minor Variance proposals and affording any person in attendance the opportunity to make a presentation to the Committee.

If an eligible applicant appealing a decision of the Committee of Adjustment in respect of the proposed minor variance does not provide written submissions or make oral submissions at a public meeting, the Ontario Land Tribunal may dismiss all or part of the appeal.

The Chair directed that if anyone was in attendance with respect to this application, that they please sign the attendance sheet at the door and if they wished to receive a copy of the decision, to please provide their name and email address to the Deputy Clerk.

6.3.2 Applicant: Robert Cuff and Rina Van Ham

File No.: A 24-25

Report No.: CP 2026- 19

Location: Lot 27, Concession 10 (South Norwich) 164725 New Road, Township of Norwich

Details of Proposed Variance: Request relief from: Table 5.1.1.3, Lot Coverage of Accessory Structure, to increase permitted gross floor area from 1,830 ft² to 2630 ft²; and Table 5.1.1.3, Accessory use, to increase the height of an accessory structure from 18 ft to 22 ft; and Section 5.18, Municipal Drains, to reduce the required setback to an enclosed municipal drain from 5 m to 4 m, to facilitate an addition to an existing accessory structure on the subject lands.

Mr. Robert Cuff, Applicant, was in attendance representing the application.

Ms. Amy Hartley, Development Planner, provided an overview of the application as contained within Report CP 2026-19. She advised that the application is to permit a larger lot coverage for all accessory buildings on the subject lands to allow for the construction of an addition on an existing accessory building. Additionally, the applicants are requesting relief from the height provisions to accommodate a second storey as part of the proposed addition.

Ms. Hartley further advised that as part of the review of the application it was discovered that the application did not accurately reflect the total accessory structures on the property. As the additional building that needs to be accounted for represents a material change to the application, staff are recommending that the Committee defer the application for the public notice to be recirculated to reflect the correct information and relief required.

There was no one in attendance that wished to speak in support of or in opposition to the application.

Resolution #11

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That with respect to the application by Robert Cuff and Rina Van Ham, File No. A 24-25, for a Minor Variance for lands described as Part of Lot 27, Concession 10 (South Norwich), municipally known as 164725 New Road, in the Township of Norwich, the Committee of Adjustment hereby defer the application to allow the applicants to amend the application and recirculate the information to staff and adjacent landowners.

Carried

Resolution #12

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

Be it hereby resolved that the Committee of Adjustment do now adjourn and that the Regular Council meeting resumes.

Carried

6.4 Other
None.

7. Delegations

None.

8. Correspondence

8.1 Long Point Region Conservation Authority

Re: Notice of 2026 Draft Budget

Re: 2026 Draft Budget

Re: Minutes – November 5, 2025

Re: Budget Minutes – November 13, 2025

8.2 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Re: Ministers Order – Woodstock Norwich Restructuring Proposal

8.3 Ontario Provincial Police

Re: 2026 Annual Billing Statement Letter

Re: Solicitor General, Implementation of Cap on OPP Policing Costs for 2026

Re: 2026 Annual Billing Statement

8.4 City of Welland

Re: Bail and Sentencing Reforms

8.5 Township of Magnetewan

Re: Site Ready Funding

8.6 City of Guelph

Re: Request for Consideration of Alternate Proposal to Conservation Authority Consolidation

8.7 Municipality of Huron Shores

Re: Improvements to Highways 11 and 17

8.8 Oxford Community Foundation

Re: OCFootprints – Winter 2025

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Smith explained that the Township is not holding any funds that would need to be transferred to the City of Woodstock, in relation to properties involved in the boundary adjustment.

Resolution #13

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the Correspondence as listed in Agenda Item 8.1 to 8.8 be received as information;

And further that 8.3, 8.4, 8.5 and 8.7 be supported.

Carried

9. Committee Minutes
9.1 Municipal Heritage Committee
Re: Meeting Minutes – November 6, 2025

9.2 Santa Claus Parade Committee
Re: Meeting Minutes – December 15, 2025
Resolution #14

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That the following Committee Minutes, be received as information:

Municipal Heritage Committee
Re: Meeting Minutes - November 6, 2025

Santa Claus Parade Committee
Re: Meeting Minutes - December 15, 2025

Carried

10. Reports
10.1 Fire and Protective Services
10.1.1 Monthly Activities – December 2025
Report FP 2026-01

There was Council discussion and questions regarding appreciation for firefighters' food donation efforts at the area Santa Claus Parades; and fire services providing support to paramedic calls to ensure timely response for medical emergencies.

Resolution #15
Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Report FP 2026-01, Monthly Activity Report - December 2025, be received as information.

Carried

10.2 Building Services
10.2.1 Monthly Activities - December 2025
Report BB 2026-01
Resolution #16
Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Report BB 2026-01, December 2025 Building Services Activity, be received as information.

Carried

10.2.2 Swimming Pool Fence Permits

Report BB 2026-02

There was Council discussion and questions regarding requirements for pool fencing and for ladder locking systems for above ground pools that do not require fences.

Resolution #17

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by: Lynne DePlancke:

That Report BB 2026-02, Swimming Pool Fence Permits, be received as information;

And that Council approve the discontinuation of the Swimming Pool Fence Permit program for privately owned swimming pools not regulated by the Building Code Act.

Carried

10.2.3 Monthly Activities – December 2025

Report DR 2026-01

Resolution #18

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Report DR 2026-01, December 2025 Drainage Services Activity, be received as information.

Carried

10.2.4 FRAIN Drain 2025 Report

Report DR 2026-03

Resolution #19

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That Report DR 2026-03, FRAIN Drain 2025 Report, be received as information;

And that the Council of the Township of Norwich acknowledge receipt of the engineer's FRAIN Drain 2025 report, dated November 20, 2025;

And that Council direct staff to schedule a Public Meeting to be held on February 10, 2026, to consider the report;

And that Staff be directed to mail a Notice of Public Meeting along with the report to all persons assessed to this drainage works in accordance with the Drainage Act.

Carried

10.3 Operations

10.3.1 Monthly Activities – Public Works – December 2025

Report OP 2026-01

In response to Council questions, Mr. Farkas advised that three quotes were received for the road grader engine replacement and the work is being completed by Premier with a one-year warranty. Council extended their appreciation to roads staff for their hard work during the recent winter weather events.

Resolution #20

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Report OP 2026-01, Public Works Monthly Report - December 2025, be received as information.

Carried

10.4 Financial Services

10.4.1 2026 Interim Tax Levy By-Law

Report FS 2026-01

Resolution #21

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That Report FS 2026-01, 2026 Interim Tax Levy By-Law, be received as information;

And further that a By-Law be adopted to provide for the billing of an interim tax levy for the year 2026.

Carried

10.4.2 2026 Final Capital Budget By-law

Report FS 2026-02

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Johnson confirmed that projects removed from the Capital Budget do not change the levy, since the levied amount is for reserve fund contributions and debt servicing, not the projects budgeted for a given year. There was Council discussion about the proposed crack sealing program.

Resolution #22

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

Removal of new crack sealing program from the capital budget of \$50,000.

Lost

There were council questions with respect to the Otterville dance hall, arena PA system, arena boilers and the Church street project. Staff commented that the Otterville dance hall repairs were not completed due to unforeseen circumstances with bridge weight capacity concerns, funds remain in reserves, however, the scope of the project has increased. When projects are not completed, the funds remain in the reserves however Council must give approval to that project and funding within the current Capital Budget to allow the funds to be spent in that budget year. Staff further explained that money is allocated to the reserves to facilitate future asset management replacements/repairs and that some underfunded reserves will be a deficit position by 2031.

Council recessed at 11:00 a.m.

Council resumed at 11:15 a.m.

Resolution #23

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That staff bring forward a report on the capital projects listed below prior to commencing the projects:

- Arena PA System
- Arena Doors and
- Arena Boilers

Carried

Mr. Smith clarified that the budget was to be approved with those projects included but staff will provide supplemental reports to Council prior to commencing the projects.

Resolution #24

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That Staff be directed to transfer \$100,000 from the Contingency Reserve to the Arena Reserve.

Resolution #25

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That Report FS 2026-02, 2026 Final Capital Budget By-law, be received as information and,

That Council approve and adopt the 2026 Final Capital Budget By-law.

Carried

11. Notice(s) of Motion
None.

12. Closed Session

11:18 a.m.

Resolution #26
Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That pursuant to the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, Chapter 25, Section 239(2), Council convene in a meeting closed to the public to discuss personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; and labour relations or employee negotiations.

Carried

12.1 Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations;
Re: Collective Agreement - Union Grievance(s)
Confidential Report CAO 2026-01 (distributed under separate cover)

12.2 Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual, including Municipal or Local Board Employees;
Re: HR Matter

12.3 Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual, including Municipal or Local Board Employees;
Re: HR Matter
Confidential Report CAO 2026-02) (distributed under separate cover)

12.4 Closed Meeting Minutes
Re: Confidential Minutes – November 11, 2025

2:44 p.m.

Resolution #27

That the Council do now reconvene in open session.

Carried

13. By-Laws
No. 01-2026-Z To Amend Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z (Hill, File No. ZN 3-25-21)
No 02-2025-Z To Amend Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z (DaCosta, File
No. ZN 3-25-19)
No. 54-2025 To Provide for Drainage Works – Chant Municipal Drain 2025

	(third reading)
No. 01-2026	To Provide for the Levying of an Interim Tax Levy for The Year 2025 and to Provide for Penalty and Interest
No. 02-2026	To Adopt the 2026 Capital Budget
No. 03-2026	To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council

13.1 First and Second Reading of the Following By-laws

Resolution #28

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That the following By-law as listed, be introduced and taken as read a first and second time:

No. 01-2026-Z	To Amend Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z (Hill, File No. ZN 3-25-21)
No 02-2025-Z	To Amend Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z (DaCosta, File No. ZN 3-25-19)
No. 01-2026	To Provide for the Levying of an Interim Tax Levy for The Year 2025 and to Provide for Penalty and Interest
No. 02-2026	To Adopt the 2026 Capital Budget
No. 03-2026	To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council

Carried

13.2 Third Reading of the Following By-laws

Resolution #29

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That By-laws 01-2026-Z, 02-2026-Z, 54-2025, 01-2026, 02-2026, and 03-2026 as listed, be taken as read a third and final time and passed and signed by the Mayor and Clerk and the Corporate Seal be affixed thereto.

Carried

14. Adjournment – 2:48 p.m.

Resolution #30

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That this Council do now adjourn.

Carried

These minutes adopted by way of Resolution No. 2 as approved by Council at its meeting on the 27th day of January, 2026.

Jim Palmer

Jim Palmer
Mayor

Kimberley Armstrong

Kimberley Armstrong
Director of Corporate Services / Clerk