

FIRE STAFF REPORT

FSR-005/2015

TO: Mayor Jeffs & Members of Council

FROM: H. Flagg, Fire Chief
R. Nan, Manager of Operations
M. Sullivan, Manager of Planning

DATE OF MEETING: November 17, 2015

SUBJECT: Options for the Location of a New Fire Hall

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT this report be received;

THAT Council uphold the Fire Master Plan recommendations to build a new fire hall at Chambers Corners and close Fire Hall #1 (Winger) and Fire Hall #2 (Wainfleet Village);

AND THAT staff be directed to obtain architectural drawings in accordance with the Township's Procurement Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Fire Master Plan recommends closing Fire Hall #1 (Winger) and Fire Hall #2 (Wainfleet Village) and replacing both with a new fire hall in Chambers Corners. The Fire Master Plan Implementation Committee was established in 2015 to oversee the implementation of the Fire Master Plan. The Committee felt that due consideration of alternative options had not occurred and sought permission from Council to identify other options for the location of the new fire hall. This report identifies these options, provides staff input on each and recommends a preferred option for the Council to pursue.

Staff from Fire & Emergency Services, Operations and Planning have collaborated on this report to ensure that it provides Council with a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the new fire hall, its location options and financial needs.

BACKGROUND:

In 2003, the Township acquired a lot in the Hamlet of Chambers Corners, fronting onto Highway 3, presumably as the preferred location for a new fire hall.

In 2013, Council adopted the Fire Master Plan for the Township that recommended the closure of the Winger and Wainfleet Village stations replacing them with a new, larger fire station on the Township-owned lands in Chambers Corners.

As part of the Asset Management Plan in 2014, the report identified the need to replace a tanker in the fleet. The new truck will be larger than the existing tankers and too large to fit into existing stations. The new fire station will take the increasing sizes of fire vehicles into consideration.

In 2015, Council appointed the Committee to prioritize recommendations of the Fire Master Plan for implementation. Part of this process has involved considering new facilities on a 50 year timeline (ie. building new facilities to last for 50 years). In doing this, the Committee revisited the recommendations for the new fire hall location and generated three options for Council's consideration. Several locations were discussed, from operations, emergency response and community planning perspectives which are discussed below.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

The Committee received input from staff on the various factors to be considered in selecting a site for a new fire hall, in order to implement the Plan. The Committee has identified three options for the site of a new fire hall, which are:

1. New Fire Hall in Wainfleet Village
2. New Fire Hall in Chambers Corners
3. Demolish/Rebuild Fire Hall in Burnaby

OPTION 1: New Fire Hall in Wainfleet Village

The Committee identified two potential sites for a new fire hall in the Village. Both lots are relatively large in size and a severance would be required to separate a smaller parcel for Township use. This would be possible given that the identified lots are within the Hamlet boundaries and that the severed lands would remain agricultural. However, this would also require a substantial investment from the Township initially as these lands are privately owned. In addition, pursuing a severance may complicate matters as the identified lots are still within the Hamlet and would require additional explanation for the Committee of Adjustment to consider. The agricultural lands contain a protected woodlot, which may make a severance difficult, since the insertion of a new lot line is considered "development" by provincial policy. This can likely be addressed by staff, but it is a constraint that Council should be aware of.

Council could authorize staff to approach the current owners for an "option" to purchase these lands. The Township would likely be expected to cover the costs of the severance, purchase, sale, surveying, and legal.

From a land use perspective, these lots are on the outside edge of the Hamlet which limits impacts to neighbouring properties and retains Highway 3 access. The key issues are cost of acquisition and complexity of the severance(s).

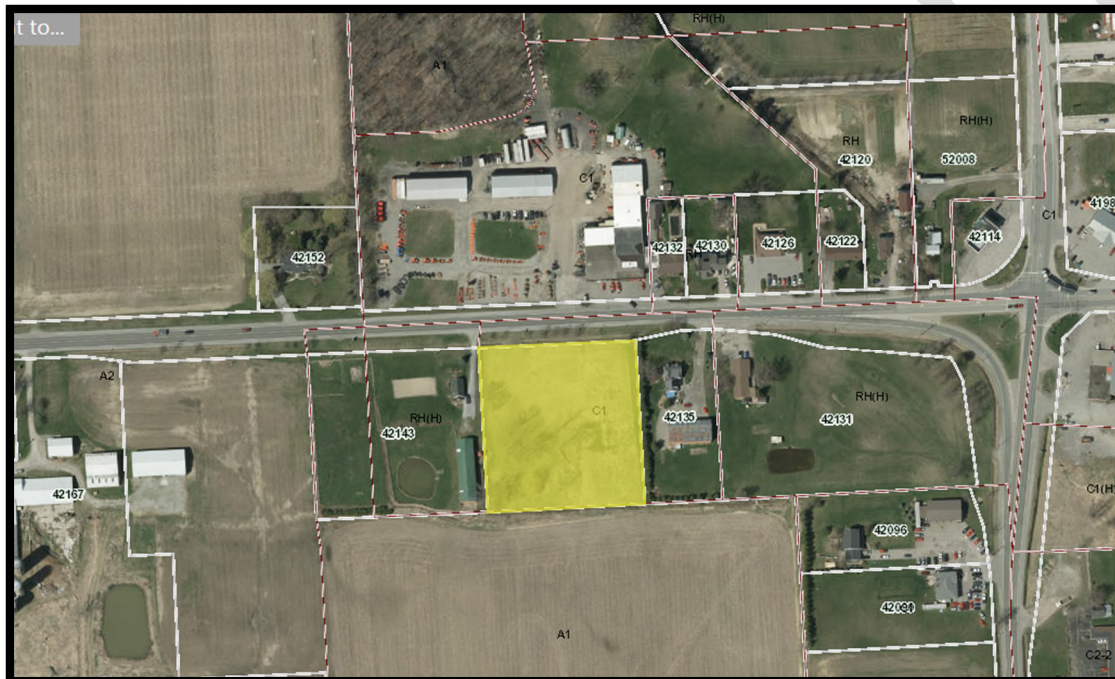
Overall, the two lots identified within Wainfleet village provide similar challenges: too large; not owned by the Township; and severances are needed. This will require a significant investment and additional challenges like negotiating the purchase, severing, and related real estate and legal fees.

OPTION #2: New Facility in Chambers Corners

The Township obtained this property in approximately 2003, for the purpose of building a new fire hall in the future. This location is located on Highway 3, close to Regional Road 24 and can be expanded in the future, based on demand.

Location: Highway 3, Chambers Corners
 Lot size: 2.38 acres
 Adjacent uses: Residential, Commercial, Agricultural

Figure 1 - Chambers Corners Fire Hall (Highway 3)



This property is located along Highway 3 and close to Regional Road 24, so the nearby citizens are used to higher levels of noise, dust and lights from the travelling public. While this property is located at the edge of a Hamlet, there are fewer constraints to operation and expansion.

Only two residences are located adjacent to this property, which minimizes impacts from the use. Expansion is possible but would require the purchase of additional lands, a boundary adjustment or securing the option to purchase in the future. These options provide a way of expanding the fire hall, should Council agree to this location.

The Fire Master Plan Implementation Committee and staff recommend pursuing this option however staff believes the existing parcel is large enough to meet current and future needs and therefore expansion is not necessary.

As noted above three locations were identified for a new fire hall. They were based on the following criteria:

Facilities Large Enough

Are the existing facilities large enough to accommodate current and future Township Fire & Emergency services needs? Can the facility be renovated or expanded to meet these needs?

Lands for Future Expansion

The Master Plan uses a 50 year time horizon for new facilities. In other words, a location must be chosen, in part on its ability to function efficiently for up to 50 years. This requires consideration of growth-related expansion, training needs, office space for staff & equipment, parking, Emergency Operations Centre requirements, and storage.

Response Time

The new location needs to be in a location that at least maintains and ideally improves Fire Department response times for emergencies.

Impacts to Neighbours

Noise, dust, lighting and traffic are all potential impacts to neighbours. Site Plan approval will address this to a point, but these impacts must be resolved at the design stage.

Approvals Needed

Site Plan approval is required at a minimum. While public uses, including the Township, are permitted anywhere, it is appropriate to rezone the selected property "Institutional" in order to demonstrate transparency to the public.

Scoring

Each location was reviewed based on a set of common criteria and scored on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = poor fit and 5 = best fit), so higher scores are better options:

Criteria	New in Village (OPTION #1)	New in Chambers Corners (OPTION #2)	Demolish/Rebuild Burnaby (OPTION #3)
Facilities large enough	5	5	1
Lands for future expansion	5	5	2
Response Time	5	5	5
Impacts to neighbours	3	3	2
Approvals needed	2	5	2
Cost	1	5	4
TOTALS	21	28	16

Scoring suggests that a new fire hall at Chambers Corners is the best fit for the Township from a planning perspective.

The alternative would be Winger or Wainfleet Village. In order to build a new facility in Winger land would need to be purchased. If a new facility was built in Wainfleet Village, land would need to be purchased or if existing site used the Library and Community Hall may need to be moved.

ANALYSIS:

The Fire Master Plan recommends a new fire hall for the Township, and the Fire Master Plan Implementation Committee identified four parcels based on three options.

The properties in Wainfleet village are privately owned, would need to be purchased, are too large and would therefore require severances to go ahead. This will involve significant cost and related approvals.

Rebuilding the Burnaby site would satisfy short term requirements, but would not provide opportunity for expansion in the future. Expansion would require land purchase, likely at a higher cost than in Chambers Corners. Impacts to neighbouring properties would also be higher.

Building a new fire hall at Chambers Corners addresses many factors: maintains response time; provides space for future expansion; and limits impacts to residential properties. This site would also house our Emergency Operations Centre, which is used by the Township during natural and manmade disasters. The current EOC is at the Township Hall, with the backup being the Fire Fighters Community Hall. No off-site location for the EOC is available, which may prove challenging if a disaster occurs in Wainfleet Village.

FINANCIAL:

It is anticipated that the Chambers Corners site would be the most cost effective and operationally efficient location for a new fire hall. Since the adoption of the Fire Master Plan staff have been allocating funds to the Fire Reserve for a new fire hall. There are also grant opportunities that staff intend to apply for, however, many grant applications prefer municipalities to have a shovel ready project at the time of application. For the Township to be shovel ready an RFP for architectural design and drawings will need to be completed and brought back to Council for approval.

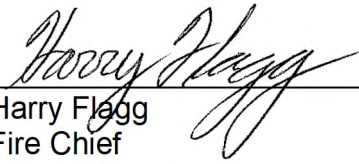
OTHERS CONSULTED:

Robyn Madere, Acting CAO/Treasurer


ATTACHMENTS:

None.

Respectfully submitted by,



Harry Flegg
Fire Chief

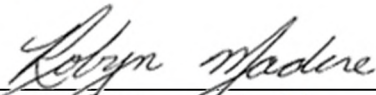


Richard Nan
Manager of Operations



Michael Sullivan
Manager of Planning

Approved by,



Robyn Madere, CPA, CA
Acting Chief Administrative Officer/Treasurer

DEFERRED