

PLANNERS OF DUFFERIN (PoD) MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 26th, 2026

Time: 11:00 am

Location: Virtual

Host/Facilitator: Rajbir Sian (County of Dufferin)

Attendees: Liam Morgan (County of Dufferin/Township of Melancthon); Aneil Sihota (County of Dufferin); Peter Avgoustis (Township of East Garafraxa); Debbie Vandenakker (Township of East Garafraxa); Tracey Atkinson (Township of Mulmur); Steve Wever (Town of Shelburne); Simmi (Town of Mono); Valerie Schmidt (Township of Amaranth); Tammy Burrell (Township of Amaranth); Brandon Ward (Town of Orangeville); Mark Kluge (Town of Grand Valley); Steven Krepps (Town of Grand Valley); Michelle Schaeffe (NVCA).

Agenda Items:

I. Welcome and Introductions

a. Town and Township Updates

c.i. Grand Valley – Mark Kluge / Steven Krepps

1. OPA No. 8 approved - March 8 with no appeals, confirming alignment with County policy.
2. New Official Plan now in effect; zoning by-law update targeted for summer of 2026.
3. Planning framework established to guide growth and development through 2051. Great win!

c.ii. Shelburne – Steve Wever

1. Official Plan review not formally launched as infrastructure capacity remains a limiting factor.
2. Grant funding secured for upgrades to the wastewater management system.
3. Recent development activity includes a commercial transition (Shoppers Drug Mart), childcare centre, and new apartment proposal.

4. No major developments are anticipated until servicing constraints are addressed.

c.iii. **Amaranth – Valerie Schmidt / Tammy Burrell**

1. OP update initiated; public engagement scheduled to begin in April.
2. Draft OP submitted to Council and revisions to follow prior to consultation.
3. Zoning By-law Amendment for second units in progress.
4. The 'Turk' file advancing to County (April 9), with internal review planned.
5. Significant staff work underway on a proposed new settlement area.

c.iv. **East Garafraxa – Debbie Vandenakker**

1. OP update is progressing on schedule - anticipated Council consideration is on April 22.
2. Agricultural policy review is ongoing, with focus on minimum parcel sizes and long-term use/viability.

c.v. **Mulmur – Tracey Atkinson**

1. Draft plan approval requested for a subdivision where servicing is already at its capacity limits.
2. Employment lands subdivision delayed due to servicing limitations and nitrate concerns.
3. There is notable increase in building permit activity while broader development remains limited.
4. OP update advancing, pending clarification on Bill 17 requirements.

c.vi. **Orangeville – Brandon Ward**

1. Growth Management Study underway, building on the County's identified 2022 land supply.
2. Watson & Associates to present land needs assessment/analysis to Council on April 16.

3. Study completion anticipated in July, including land options, constraints, and the fiscal implications.
4. Heritage Conservation District initiative in progress. public feedback has been mixed, particularly regarding property inclusion.

c.vii. **Melancthon – Liam Morgan**

1. “Chipwoods Park” application under review at the County level.
2. Key issue remains
 - a. servicing responsibility (municipal vs. alternative delivery models).
3. Aggregate applications continue to be a significant and ongoing planning consideration.

II. **New Business**

a. **NVCA – Application Fees (Michelle Schaeffle)**

- c.i. Noticing that there is a recurring issue of applications submitted without required NVCA fees - municipalities encouraged to ensure completeness of these fees prior to circulation.
- c.ii. Updated mapping and technical guidelines- NVCA is currently in development and will be circulated once finalized.
- c.iii. Staffing shortages are impacting review timelines, and new recruitment efforts are underway to fill these gap.
- c.iv. Broad and new Provincial direction may consolidate conservation authorities (36 to 9), though changes are not expected until 2027.

b. **County-wide Tree By-law Thoughts and Discussions**

- c.i. Tracey Atkinson (Mulmur):
 1. Enforcement responsibility is a primary concern; unclear whether County or lower-tier would administer enforcing tree by-law.
 2. Preference to avoid duplicating concerns and instead align with a single approach.
- c.ii. Peter Avgoustis (East Garafraxa):
 1. Municipality does not currently have a by-law and would likely not support a County-wide model.

2. Anticipates potential resistance at the local level if the county wide by-law.
- c.iii. Steve Wever (Shelburne):
 1. Existing policies include woodland protection and a 2:1 tree replacement ratio.
 2. Previously mentioned that the County by-law was repealed due to administrative and resource constraints.
 - c.iv. Brandon Ward (Orangeville):
 1. Draft tree preservation by-law under development, including requirements for arborist reports and associated fees. Visit link for more information: <https://puborangeville.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=4c9c0b7c-9408-459b-b625-3e40ae28179f&A...> (See section 8.2 in above link for the proposed Tree Preservation By-law in Orangeville.
 - c.v. Mark Kluge (Grand Valley):
 1. Local by-law exists - uncertain about the level of support for a broader County framework.
 - c.vi. Michelle Schaeffe (NVCA):
 1. Referenced experience from County of Brant by-law, including thresholds, exemptions, and clear-cutting restrictions.
 2. <https://www.brant.ca/en/bylaws-and-animal-services/resources/Documents/Good-Forestry-Practices-By-L...>
- c. **Bill 17 – Complete Application Requirements (Tracey Atkinson)**
- c.i. Tracey Atkinson: Written confirmation from the Ministry is needed. Current OP studies (lighting, rural character analysis) are policy refinements, not new requirements. Adoption of the OP is on hold pending confirmation.
 - c.ii. Steve Wever: Regulation proposed requiring professional engineer for reports. Sun/shadow and lighting studies are still required.
 - c.iii. Debbie Vandenakker: 5–6 applications ongoing; requirements applied lightly; has currently received no pushback.
- d. **Indigenous Consultation Guide**
- c.i. Peter Avgoustis: Need understanding of each Indigenous group’s engagement preferences- work ongoing to update key contacts.

- c.ii. Liam Morgan: Suggested alternative consultation methods where groups are less responsive. Will circulate updated Indigenous list to Michelle (done).
 - c.iii. Debbie Vandenakker: Emphasized building relationships rather than a “checkbox” approach; County coordination could improve effectiveness.
 - c.iv. Michelle Schaeffe: Engagement with Six Nations and Mississauga’s of the Credit proceeding; legal and resource considerations noted.
- e. **Setbacks and maximum size Townships for: [garbage boxes](#)**
 - c.i. Tracey Atkinson: Complaints about large bins in rural areas; residents installing structures to secure bins.
 - c.ii. Peter Avgoustis: Weight is main issue, not placement.
 - c.iii. Steve Wever: Bins often left roadside; structures likely to increase. No zoning currently.
 - c.iv. Tammy Burrell: Service agreements may require curbside placement.
 - c.v. Action: Review policy/zoning options for rural bin placement.
- f. **MMAH - Province-wide Planning & Permitting Survey (Peter Avgoustis)**
 - c.i. Deloitte retained to review current planning and permitting processes. Recommendations expected soon (March).
- g. **Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) – Farmland Forum (Tammy Burrell). [AIA Guidance Document](#).**
 - c.i. Tammy Burrell: Forum highlighted concerns that AIAs are used as checklists rather than tools to protect farmland; need funding to keep by-laws/policies updated; concerns over reviewer qualifications.
 - c.ii. Debbie Vandenakker: AIAs should involve qualified agricultural specialists the gaps exist in current peer-reviewed reports.
 - c.iii. Peter Avgoustis: Similar issues noted locally.
 - c.iv. Action: Aneil Sihota to circulate AIA guidance document.

III. Old Business

- a. **OPA #5**
 - c.i. Engagement process starting; kickoff meeting **April 23, 6 pm, Mel Lloyd Centre** (in-person only).
- b. **Planning Staff Delegated Authorities under the Planning Act**



c.i. No updates

IV. Conclusion

- a. Condolences shared for the passing of **Jeff Paznar (R.J. Burnside)**.
- b. Next meeting will be held on **April 30th, 2026**