

The Corporation of the Township of Brock

Councillor Conference Report

Report Prepared by: Regional Councillor Jubb

Date: 22 Aug 2024

Conference Name- Association of Ontario Municipalities (AMO)

Conference Date and Location- 18-21 Aug 2024 in Ottawa, ON

About the AMO annual conference-

I had the pleasure of attending the Association of Ontario Municipalities (AMO) 2024 Conference. The conference was an extremely valuable information and learning experience which saw over 2500 municipal elected officials and staff from all over Ontario attend. I attended many sessions throughout the four-day period. As always, I find that the networking is of utmost importance. Whether it is talking to Ministers, Mayors, other council members or senior staff, I learned so much of how business is done throughout the province, at the municipal level and are all issues that are front and center in Brock. I was also able to meet with both or MPP, Laurie Scott and MP Jamie Schmale to discuss current issues in Brock, such as additional funding for the Sunderland Arena and the Beaver River Bridge. Regarding funding, Premier Ford announced the Ontario Community Sport and Recreation Fund is now open and staff are currently discussing possible projects to apply for soon, of course, pending council approval. Again, it is very rare to have the access to so much knowledge in one room. The main priority of the AMO is advocating higher levels of government for a new funding model. Educationally, I will highlight some of the key sessions I attended and some important conversations I had throughout the four days.

Overview of some of the many sessions I attended and key learnings-



Andrew Coyne, Political Journalist

Former national editor of *Maclean's* magazine, current columnist with the *Globe and Mail* and panelist on CBC's *The National* "At Issue," Mr. Coyne will speak to current affairs, emerging and potential threats to democracy, and how municipal leaders can navigate the declining tone of discourse between elected officials and community members.

From RC Jubb- This was a great keynote that highlights the political landscape we all find ourselves in, post-pandemic. Brock is no different as we all experience heightened tempers, stress and challenges trying to constantly build trust with constituents.

Practical Tips Towards a More Age-Friendly Community (AFC)

Explore the nuts and bolts of implementing AFCs to improve the quality of life for seniors.

Participants will:

- Learn from other communities who have taken the AFC journey on lessons learned
- Explore how to use the Age Friendly Community planning guide to implement best practices
- Hear from Ontario's Minister for Seniors and Accessibility on provincial initiatives and their impact on our seniors

From RC Jubb- This session was extremely valuable. As Brock is currently undergoing review of our Recreation Master Plan, and our Waterfront and Open Space Master Plan, this session highlighted the need to incorporate more Age-Friendly Community oriented projects. The City of Cornwall has done a wonderful job on this front, and I encourage staff, council and the public to check out their website on their current initiatives.

Today's Youth Engagement Imperative

The state of our democracy is at risk if we don't increase the presence of youth in politics—but how do we achieve this? AMO Youth Fellows Henry Khamonde, Elizabeth Simpson-Hillis, and Thomas Walling will delve into how youth must be afforded realistic, practical, and ambitious

opportunities to engage in politics. Learn about the systemic barriers that youth continue to face and potential solutions we should all be considering in Ontario municipalities.

From RC Jubb- Engagement with our youth is a very important part of the political and municipal landscape in Brock and beyond. Our youth our the next elected officials, volunteers, community leaders and residents. This said, building trust is paramount and including them at an early age will pay dividends in the long run and help set them for success.

Women's Leadership Forum

AMO is pleased and proud to host the fifth annual Women's Leadership Forum. Since 2020, the Women's Leadership Forum has featured extraordinary women leaders at the national, provincial, and local levels. This year's panelists represent industries and sectors that the municipal sector works closely with: business, construction, and health. The panelists will share their insights and approaches to leadership in their lives and career pathways.

From RC Jubb- Diversification is key to representation! Brock is very fortunate to have the last two terms of council form with the majority council of women. This is amazing news. Having liaised with many municipalities at AMO, this is normally not the case and Brock should be very proud on this front.

Collaborating with Rural Municipalities to Address the Doctor Shortage

President Dr. Dominik Nowak of the Ontario Medical Association will discuss how strategic collaboration with rural municipalities can effectively address the doctor shortage and ensure that every Ontarian has access to a family doctor. Specifically, he will highlight how tailored partnerships and joint advocacy between the OMA and rural leaders can boost the recruitment and retention of doctors to enhance the overall health outcomes for residents in these areas.

From RC Jubb- This was one of the most interesting sessions attended at AMO 2024 as it hits very close to home. Canada is in a doctor shortage crisis and Brock is no stranger to this. Ontario has a doctor shortage that leaves over 1.5 million residents without a family practitioner, including hundreds in Brock. Unfortunately, being a rural municipality makes it much more difficult, however, there are some great initiatives that rural municipalities can research and implement. More to follow in the very near future on this front!

Diversifying Ontario's Municipal Leadership

Why is Ontario's municipal leadership not more diversified? Join in conversation with a panel of elected officials who have lived experience running for and being in elected local office. Learn about the difficulties experienced by elected officials from underrepresented communities and potential solutions we should all be considering in Ontario municipalities. The health of Ontario's democracy depends on local governance being an option for everyone. This session will also provide insights into AMO's Healthy Democracy Project.

From RC Jubb- As mentioned in my remarks on the Woman's Leadership Forum, Diversification is key to representation! Brock is experiencing growth, just like all areas of the GTA, and beyond. With growth comes diversification and Brock needs to embrace this moving forward. Council may look much different in the coming years and local governance is an option for everyone, and should be welcomed.

A Lifecycle Look at Recreation Infrastructure

This session will span the lifecycle of recreation facilities. Featured municipalities will share lessons learned and how all municipalities can build, maintain, and revitalize their recreation infrastructure.

From RC Jubb- This was a very interesting session and relates 100% to Brock. Being the council representative for the Sunderland Arena Expansion and Renovation Project, this session was very informative. Given the unprecedented construction costs borne from the pandemic, many municipalities are struggling to fund recreational infrastructure projects. Of course, Brock is not alone on this front. Many speakers talked about scope change and assessing needs compared to wants as ways to move forward on projects. The Municipality of Trent Hills, of which Brock has been liaising with, presented on their own struggles.

Affordable Housing Innovations

Explore innovative approaches to affordable housing in Ontario. A leading academic and representatives from successful municipalities and the non-profit sector share insights on trends, best practices, and creative solutions. Learn about leveraging funding, partnerships, and securing resources. Gain valuable knowledge to develop your own solutions and address Ontario's unique housing needs.

From RC Jubb- Affordable housing was a major buzz word throughout AMO 2024. As we are all aware, Canada is in a housing crisis. Brock should be very proud to continue to push forward with the MapleGlen expansion project with BNPHC. One key point was the lack of adequate funding

from upper levels of government regarding capital funding. Also, monthly payments for ODSP and Ontario Works are extremely inadequate, not even coming close to the rate of inflation.

The importance of fiscally sustainable Municipalities

Municipalities deliver services that people, businesses and communities rely on everyday. But the fiscal framework that underpins their ability to deliver is broken. Explore the impacts on the healthcare system, the business community, and public safety and how fixing arrangements to reflect today's realities could help to get Ontario's social and economic prosperity back on track.

From RC Jubb- I can't stress enough that municipalities need a better deal from the upper levels of government. The current model is unsustainable. Many services that should be funded by the provincial and federal governments are not being funded. Unfortunately, this forces municipalities to rise taxes, and this is 100% downloading. A key priority of AMO and FCM is advocating for a better deal for municipalities, and this can't come soon enough.

Partnering to drive local workforce and economic development

The future of Ontario's labour market is rapidly changing, with towns and cities competing to attract and retain talent in an increasingly globalized and technology enabled world. This session, presented by the Council of Ontario Universities, will look at the future job needs of Ontario and how local communities and regions can address current and future challenges, including through innovative attraction and retention strategies. Keynote speaker will be Brian Lewis from the University of Toronto.

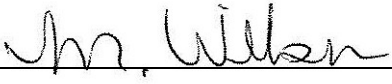
Summary-

All and all, I cannot stress how important the AMO is to serving members of council. Programming is very different, year by year, and is intended specifically for elected officials and staff. It is important to note that this does come as a cost to the taxpayer, however, I firmly believe the knowledge obtained saves the municipality in the long run. We are not reinventing the wheels in many issues and the information learned can save many hours of staff time and resources.

Recommendations- Move that this report be received for information.

Regional Councillor Jubb

Reviewed by,



Chief Administrative Officer

