



REVISED

Agenda of Special Council Meeting

Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Community Center and Zoom Video Conferencing

Zoom Meeting (**Video**)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82854077369>

(**Phone Call Only**)

Dial [+1 647 558 0588](tel:+16475580588) then Enter Meeting ID: 828 5407 7369#

*Every effort is made to record with the exception of the Closed Session matters. Both the audio and video are posted on the Municipal Website
The written minutes are the official record of the meeting*

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call** **7:00 p.m.**

National Anthem

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement

The Municipality of Whitestone recognizes all of Canada resides on traditional, unceded and/or treaty lands of the Indigenous People of Turtle Island.

We recognize our Municipality on The Robinson Huron Treaty territory is home to many past, present and future Indigenous families.

This acknowledgment of the land is a declaration of our commitment and collective responsibility to reconcile the past, and to honour and value the culture, history and relationships we have with one another.

- 2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

- 3. Approval of Agenda ®**

Move into Committee of the Whole ®

4. Committee of the Whole

4.1 Power Point Presentation “The Future of West Parry Sound, A Whitestone Perspective” presented by Mayor George Comrie ®

4.2 Discussion of Regional Amalgamation / Council Transparency ®

Reconvene into Regular Meeting ®

Matters Arising from Committee of the Whole ®

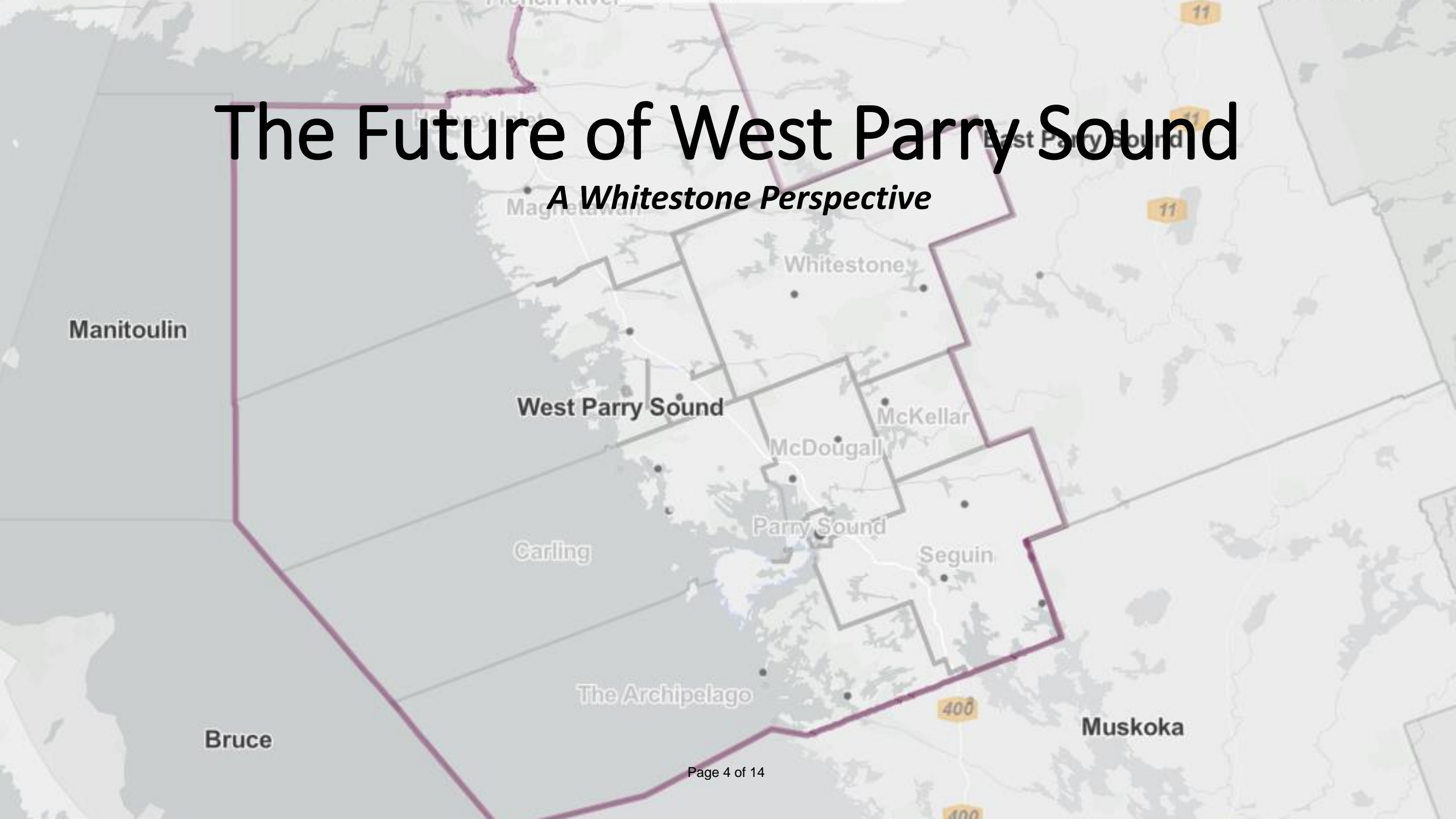
5. Confirming By-law ®

6. Adjournment ®

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Future of West Parry Sound

A Whitestone Perspective



Message from the Government of Ontario

- in response to publicly reported comments calling for amalgamation by Parry Sound Mayor McGarvey at the time of the recent FONOM conference

- **There will be no forced amalgamation in West Parry Sound**
- **The Government of Ontario may be prepared to assist municipalities wishing to amalgamate by sponsoring an independent study of opportunities, impacts, and costs**

There appears to be little support for amalgamation within West Parry Sound municipalities. So there is no cause for consternation or panic.

This is not a new subject

- The Parry Sound District Restructuring Commission that led to the creation of Whitestone in 2000 considered various amalgamation / consolidation options
- The Town of Parry Sound has consistently called for amalgamation as a means of expanding its tax base
- Many provincial politicians and public servants I have spoken to over the years believe that Parry Sound District needs further restructuring – at least an upper-tier government
- Last year, the mayors of Sundridge and Joly called for an amalgamation study in their area

Why does this keep coming up?

There are some underlying issues.....

- 22 Municipalities in Parry Sound District, including the Town of Parry Sound
- Many of them are below “critical mass” in terms of population and tax base
- Wide disparities in infrastructure, services, and tax rates
- No upper-tier government
- Growing need for shared services
- Development charges in Parry Sound / Seguin Twp.
- Other considerations (e.g., watershed management, aboriginal land claims)

Parry Sound District at a glance (1)

MUNICIPALITY	HOUSEHOLDS	RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT (\$)	RESIDENTIAL TAX RATE
Archipelago 2021	3,340	2,025,364,909.00	0.00182191
Armour 2021	1087	349,702,718.00	0.00770773
Burk's Falls 2021	523	62,192,800.00	0.01576986
Callander 2021	1815	528,880,500.00	0.01030288
Carling 2021	700	999,178,754.00	0.00514239
Joly 2021	155	57,563,308.00	0.01223642
Kearney 2021	1195	368,164,109.00	0.00862417
Machar 2021	925	249,079,000.00	0.00797772
Magnetawan 2021	2090	690,941,309.00	0.00724042
McDougall 2021	2800	762,580,100.00	0.00571488
McKellar 2021	1648	666,707,709.00	0.00515094

Parry Sound District at a glance (2)

MUNICIPALITY	HOUSEHOLDS	RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT (\$)	RESIDENTIAL TAX RATE
Nipissing 2021	1333	376,713,800.00	0.00724915
Parry Sound 2021	3195	554,444,300.00	0.01421244
Perry 2021	1750	456,459,253.00	0.00679433
Powassan 2021	1381	279,274,410.00	0.01013123
Ryerson 2021	555	182,678,421.00	0.01140456
Seguin 2021	5080	3,487,252,627.00	0.00351196
South River 2021	510	60,296,800.00	0.01623692
Strong 2021	953	259,871,700.00	0.00847943
Sundridge 2021	458	88,818,200.00	0.01558485
Whitestone 2021	1934	606,864,510.00	0.00480533

Being below critical mass means being...

- Unable to attract and retain competent managerial and professional / technical staff
- Unable to provide needed / wanted programs and services
- Unable to plan, prepare, and invest for the future
- Unable to do a good job of energy conservation, climate mitigation, emergency planning, environmental stewardship, watershed management, and like responsibilities
- Unable to meet all the financial and legal obligations of a municipality in the 21st century

My personal position

- I am categorically opposed to forced amalgamation or full upper-tier government for west Parry Sound District

“I will continue to oppose vigorously any attempt to impose an additional layer of governance on us or to amalgamate us with other municipalities.”

- At the same time, I am committed to collaboration with our neighbouring municipalities on opportunities to share resources and services for our mutual benefit and the greater good of the District

My reasoning

- We Ontarians already have more government in total (i.e., all levels combined) than we need and can afford
- I can't see how Whitestone residents could benefit from amalgamation or upper-tier government
- Amalgamations are costly and contentious and rarely result in cost savings
- Each WPS municipality has unique characteristics and needs
- We don't want to give up our local autonomy

My prognosis

- The complexity and cost of local government will continue to grow
- Some reorganization of Parry Sound District is likely inevitable as it continues to grow
- More shared services are necessary and inevitable
- Our success depends on the success of the Town of Parry Sound

My prescription

- If there is a regional study of opportunities for shared services, we must participate.
- If there is no study, we must initiate further discussions with our neighbours (as per our Strategic Plan).
- We must keep our seat at the table. If we don't, we will be left out and left behind.
- We must continue to demonstrate that we are capable of governing ourselves and managing our affairs responsibly. (It's not a right; it's a privilege.)