

## Mayor's Inaugural Speech, Nov 16, 2022, Sue D'Eon

Thank you to our staff and guests for coming tonight. My sincere congratulations to all elected who sit at this Council table and to all those who put their names forward to run for office. It takes courage to put yourself forward, but having people to vote for is a true corner-stone of democracy.

I also want to thank our staff, particularly Clerk, Jackie Mellon, who worked tirelessly to ensure a fair and efficient election, ....and to Simply Voting, who made our electronic voting run smoothly and reported our results first in Renfrew County....by a lot.

Thank You to the voters. While turn-out was less than 2018, it was still one of the highest in Renfrew County despite not having a mayor's race. Democracy requires participation so thank you for voting.

Most of us have had four years together (and a couple have had a lot more than that!)-always working with a goal to make Deep River a really great place to live, work and play and I want to thank you all for your willingness to serve. I also want to thank Councillor McLaren for his dedication to the Town. He originally worked for the Deep River public works, then was elected to council for several terms, always a passionate advocate for Deep River, choosing not to run this year. Together, many previous councils, working with our staff and community, have made some truly remarkable gains and this council now has four more years of rewarding but challenging work ahead of us.

As we get down to business, I thought it important to remind myself and all around the council table, that It's not just about **what** we get done, but also **how** we get it done. That we endeavor to come prepared to meetings and offer thoughtful input. That we are considerate of each other's views and respectful to our staff. As I said 4 years ago, Council is seven unique individuals with different backgrounds and different points of view on what is best. It is important to remind ourselves to listen to dissenting points of view since perhaps other's suggestions will improve a solution, but if we don't listen we won't know. Everyone has a right to be heard and we all have an obligation to listen. If we can

come to consensus that's wonderful, but it won't always happen. Our rules-of-order are to decide by majority so while it is important to respect dissenting points of view, it is equally important for those dissenting, to respect the will of the majority. While I know we will not always make "perfect" decisions, I hope we all strive to make well-informed and thoughtfully considered decisions in a respectful manner.

With Landmark Structures work nearing completion on our water tower, I would like to think of this fully refurbished icon, as symbolic of the town "***Turning a Corner***" in our quest to re-energize and revitalize our community. Most of us will remember testing our limited artistic skills 4 years ago as part of our Strategic Planning – by *drawing* our vision of the future including our depiction of a stick-legged, refurbished water tower as a central part of that vision!

The water tower is a major component of our \$55 million potable water system....and will now be ready to serve the community for another 20-30 years.

We are also *Turning the Corner* on other infrastructure renewal as well. The reconstruction of Lasalle Drive to free up a bottleneck in the sewer pipes and recent major repairs to one of our 3 Water Treatment modules to name two. However, one must never "***turn a corner blind***". We commissioned Watson Associates to complete a Sewer and Water Rate study for us as we recognized the systems were under-funded; JP2G undertook engineering for Thomas, Lasalle and Brockhouse Way and specialists from CIMA + designed our water tower refurb. and analyzed the issues related to capacity of our Sewage Treatment Plant. We will continue to rely on experts in their fields.

With Mother Nature showing her displeasure, *over and over* again, foisting upon us more frequent and severe floods, fires and storms, due to continuing excessive carbon emissions to the atmosphere, the Town of Deep River MUST do *everything* **we** can to minimize our emissions and to adapt our operations, making us both more sustainable and more resilient to climate change. As a community founded on nuclear science, we can all be proud of the role that clean, non-emitting, nuclear energy plays in Ontario's economy – one of the greenest in the world - and we can also continue to use our position as a proud nuclear host community,

to encourage other municipalities and levels of government that (Hashtag)#NetZeroNeedsNuclear – along with all other forms of sustainable, non-emitting technology, to turn the planet around from the destructive path we are on. With solar panels on several municipal buildings, a used EV now part of our fleet and an electric Zamboni on order, we **are** *Turning the Corner* to more sustainable operations, but we can and we must do more. I really want to see the Town of Deep River become a leader in this area.

We are also *Turning the Corner* along with our people - the new fire model is now implemented and was recently truly tested - 22 firefighters on the scene. I believe I speak for all of council when I offer our sincere thanks to the entire fire team for your efforts to lead, learn and be well-prepared for such a challenging local event. Compared to 4 years ago, we also have a new CAO, Treasurer, Police Chief and senior leadership team. I believe all have the best interests of our community at heart and are truly pulling together. We appreciate and rely upon their knowledge and skill immensely. Councillor Myers has noted on numerous occasions recently, the **high** quality of reports we have been receiving. I was also recently told by a Provincial official, that a recent grant proposal Deep River submitted was one of the best they received. Not bad for a small town with a small team, and I look forward to us continuing to impress above our weight class, and also to advocating for our town again with provincial officials at ROMA in January.

Other Governments are *turning the corner* with us and also investing in our community. The Province is investing in the Deep River Health Campus, announcing \$10 million for a new family health team building and \$30M for a 96 bed LTC. A recent successful federal/provincial ICIP grant application for 2.8M will help us resolve the THM issue in our water system. Our ongoing downtown revitalization arch design work with Fotten has been primarily funded by a grant from the Province, which we became eligible for after completing our *Community Improvement Plan* with JP2G. Atomic Energy of Canada's Chalk River Laboratories site is also being revitalized with new buildings and major new science facilities which not only benefit Deep River and our taxpayers, but also Renfrew County and ALL Canadians who gain from clean electricity, new

technology and those who might someday require specialized nuclear medicine treatments. The historic legacy waste at Chalk River and NPD is also being dealt with safely and responsibly, consistent with international best practices, and utilizing many experts who live in or near our community.

The Private sector is also investing in our community – our locally-based ISP, WCCT has purchased more fibre from the back-bone and greatly expanded their tower network and we expect to see Cogeco internet as an option for Deep Riverites during 2023. Morison Apartments are now being readied for occupancy. The TSH apartments downtown sold-out quickly and TSH are now planning a second building. We look forward to attracting more commercial investment with downtown revitalization.

We are *Turning the Corner* on Smart and Sustainable growth, looking- forward to working with both the Shaw and Halo families in the sensitive development of their properties and including some attainable housing. We will soon also complete the Secondary Plan for the West End Lands.

We are *Turning the Corner* with our finances too – our 2021 audit identified \$600,000 going to reserves and noted that we are paying down debt and increasing AECL PILT.

But anytime you turn a corner there can be new challenges, or old challenges you thought you had solved, re-emerge. We are no different.

Infiltration in our sewer pipes, particularly along Beach Avenue, is unnecessarily using up sewer plant capacity - capacity we need for the future. We will find the most cost-effective way forward to address this in the short term and will also plan for the long term. Our water is safe and meets strict provincial requirements but iron in our aging pipes can contribute colour and many pipes are in need of lining or replacement - something that cannot be ignored but that is both expensive and challenging to complete – however we must move forward. Then there are our roads....while we have paved many...there is still need to pave more and this too is expensive. And a shout out to our public works crew for being always supportive and doing some of the best snow-plowing in Ontario!

Balancing the multitude of infrastructure needs is one reason council and staff refocused on our Asset Management Plan - first created in 2016 – updating and enhancing it to become a true *working system* to help staff and council prioritize our investments based on age, condition and need. I know our staff are up to the challenge of applying for grants, presenting us with the information and risk analysis scenarios we need to help us make important investment decisions and managing projects.

We are a small community that carries a full recreational facility load with an arena, a pool, a marina, beautiful parks, playgrounds and an extensive natural trail network. We offer many programs and special events to make life enjoyable for our citizens. The not-for-profit sector also contributes, with a beautiful golf club, a curling club, a lawn bowling club, a ski hill, extensive x-country ski trails, links to hundreds of kilometres of snowmobile trails, a bowling alley, woodworking and a pottery club to name just a few - the list is long and likely one of the reasons Deep River appeared on several “*best place to live*” lists over the past couple of years! However, we must never take these assets for granted. Maintaining recreational facilities is both important and expensive and often relies on both staff and volunteers, therefore support and cooperation with our community and our neighbours is key. I know our staff and my council colleagues are keenly in touch with the community to listen, learn and help maintain the facilities and deliver the programs valued by our community and the broader area.

So, as we *turn the corner* to the next 4 years, let’s together learn from the past, tackle challenges head-on with facts, logic and cooperation, and look toward a Vision of an even better future for Deep River to ensure it continues to be a place people want to call home.

Thank you.