

The Village of Hastings has found itself in a situation where not only the frustration of the upcoming bridge closure will immensely impact normal day to day life, but potentially impact the business community negatively. Infrastructure, no matter who owns it, is mostly taken for granted until we don't have it, and any disruption is not only an inconvenience, but in this particular case, quite scary due to the unknowns of what those impacts might be. The Federal Government through Parks Canada owns the swing portion of the Hastings Bridge, and we are told it's in desperate need of total rehabilitation. The concrete abutments need to be rebuilt, and much of the steelworks need to be replaced. Load limits were implemented and emergency repairs were completed by Parks Canada to keep it open until it can be completely refurbished. Fully understanding what some of the potential impacts could do to the Hastings community, Trent Hills Council has been proactively focusing on two main thrusts. One is attempting to convince Parks Canada to install a temporary crossing while the bridge is under construction, and at the same time, preparing for the closure should we not be successful in obtaining a temporary bridge. So far, we have been told on many occasions there would not be a temporary bridge, but we continue to forward ideas and suggestions from the community and beyond to Parks Canada for their consideration. While that continues, we are preparing to market the Hastings community before and during the 16 week bridge construction period. This will hopefully accomplish several things. To allow businesses an opportunity to generate additional revenues before the bridge closure and construction begins, to entice shoppers to continue patronizing local businesses in Hastings during the closure, to make sure the shopping public is aware the Hastings business community is open before, during, and after the bridge construction, and finally, to permanently showcase Hastings as a premier destination for shopping and tourism such as overnight stays, boating, fishing, dining, etc. We have hired a firm with the expertise and experience for exactly this situation and they should have a draft plan laid out for everyone to review and provide input by the end of February, or shortly thereafter. Meanwhile, I have been publicly asked what I have been doing to help Hastings through the bridge closure, and that is a fair question. Although I have never been invited to attend a meeting of the Hastings Helpers group, I did offer to meet one of the leaders of the group, which went

unanswered. The offer still stands to attend any or all meetings of the now formalized group.

My role as Mayor is mostly administrative, and much of my work is not visible or seen as tangible. My role is not to bother business operators during business hours; my role is to hold public meetings after business hours so they can attend. My role is not to necessarily have an answer to a question, but know where to get it. Just as my role is not to perform staff duties, but to make sure they do them. As a politician, my role is to advocate on our communities behalf to the best of my abilities, and to negotiate the best deals I can for all of Trent Hills. Since amalgamation, approximately 14 million dollars has been injected into Hastings alone by Canada, Ontario, and Trent Hills (plus day-to-day operations). But my main objective at all times is the safety, security and economic viability of the entire municipality. I take these tasks VERY seriously, and I am very concerned with the upcoming bridge closure in Hastings. I have been from the start on Nov 17, 2010 when I and Trent Hills staff met with staff of Parks Canada at the Legion in Hastings. We were shown detailed photographs of the underside of the bridge, and blueprints of the proposed temporary emergency repairs. At the conclusion of this meeting, I encouraged Parks Canada to hold a public meeting in Hastings, advertise it well, and do a mail drop to all of Hastings addresses to inform residents of the meeting.

On the following day November 18, 2010, I held a meeting with staff, our Fire Chiefs, Northumberland EMS and the OPP to start planning for the bridge closure and emergency repairs.

On November 29, 2010, I attended the Parks Canada public meeting at the Hastings Civic Centre where they explained the emergency closure and repair, answered questions and received suggestions from the public.

On December 1, 2010, the first disruption took place with a short closure for several hours for the engineers to take measurements of the bridge. Our Fire Department, Policing, and EMS plans were engaged during the closure.

On December 11 and 12, 2010, the bridge was closed for the emergency repairs with our Fire Department, OPP, EMS, and Public Works plans in place. Coverage for daily and emergency services was shared with our neighbours in Peterborough County and Asphodel/Norwood.

During the winter and spring of 2011, I spent many days researching and talking to engineering firms and bridge contractors (at no cost to Trent Hills) attempting to find an acceptable alternative for a temporary crossing. I presented potential solutions to Parks Canada and our MP which were reviewed in great detail. It was determined it would require a crane so large to remove the swing bridge that it would need to be delivered in sections and then assembled by a smaller crane. It was also determined the existing concrete bridge on the south side, and the concrete abutments on the north side were not designed and are not strong enough to support a large crane to remove the swing bridge and there is not enough space to assemble and maneuver a large crane on the street between the buildings.

On May 7 and 8, 2011, the swing bridge was closed for several hours each day for inspection, and final measurements were taken for materials required for the detailed design and upcoming total rehabilitation.

On May 11, 2011, I met with our MP to discuss the bridge closure and advocate for a temporary crossing during the future major rehabilitation.

On August 2, 2011, I and Councillor Crate attended Parks Canada offices in Peterborough to discuss the bridge repairs. We again impressed upon Parks Canada officials the need for a temporary crossing. We were told there would not be any compensation for businesses, and a temporary bridge could not be justified due to the magnitude of a temporary bridge costing about 4 times the total swing bridge rehabilitation.

On August 2, 2011, Trent Hills hired the engineering firm Aecom to assess the CNR rail bridge to determine if it could be used as a temporary crossing.

On September 8, 2011, I met with Parks Canada staff at the Trent Hills municipal office to hear their final options for repairing the bridge.

On September 23, 2011, I discussed the current situation and expressed my concerns with our MP, continuing the pursuit of a temporary crossing.

On October 4, 2011, Parks Canada presented their refined proposal to council and the public in Hastings.

On November 17, 2011, Trent Hills Council hosted the first of 3 planned public meetings to introduce an action plan, provide an opportunity for the public and business owners to present suggestions, ask questions, and brainstorm marketing ideas and potential special events. We were told by Parks Canada a temporary bridge would cost in excess of 4 million dollars and would take 1 to 2 years to perform an Environmental Assessment, detailed design, tendering processes, and construction.

On December 5, 2011, the Aecom preliminary feasibility report reviewing the concept of using the CNR rail bridge as a temporary crossing was presented to council. It highlighted a series of concerns with the proposed use due to its original designed purpose, approaches, and lack of safety devices and connecting road networks. Council did however forward this report to Parks Canada as they consider alternatives for a temporary crossing.

On December 21, 2011, I updated our MP and discussed the current options, potential for a temporary crossing and business compensation.

On January 10, 2012, Trent Hills Council requested Parks Canada delay the bridge closure to January 2013 to avoid disrupting the 2012 holiday season.

On January 11, 2012, Trent Hills Council directed the hiring of the firm In2Marketing Consulting to develop a marketing plan for Hastings leading up to and during the bridge closure. This will be an overall marketing campaign to encourage visitors to visit Hastings and to ensure residents continue to shop in Hastings throughout the bridge closure.

On January 12, 2012, Trent Hills agreed to cover the costs of the Hastings Helpers group for their website domain registration, logo creation, flyer printing, and advertising costs.

On January 16, 2012, I met again with our MP to update each other and we discussed the current situation, potential alternatives and the potential for a temporary crossing. He assured me he is continuing to work diligently on our behalf for a temporary crossing, and any other assistance that may be available.

On January 17, 2012, I contacted the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation and inquired about current funding programs to help with mitigation efforts during the marketing campaign. I hope to have an application into the Eastern Ontario Development Program for funding during the next intake of applications in May. Representatives from the Northumberland CFDC will be attending the next Trent Hills Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting to discuss potential funding opportunities.

On January 18, 2010, I attended the Hastings Chamber of Commerce meeting in Hastings to hear comments, concerns and suggestions from Hastings businesses.

On January 25, 2012, I sent a letter on behalf of Council to MP Rick Norlock and MP Dean Del Mastro requesting their participation in a public meeting to be held in Hastings in the near future.

During all of this time, I have answered many telephone calls, emails, and visited Hastings residents who have concerns and suggestions.

I do not have any set course or agenda on how the mitigation efforts to minimize the potential impacts on Hastings due to the bridge closure will take place. That will be decided by the Hastings community. My direction from Council is to help with the mitigation efforts. As always, I remain absolutely committed to helping the Hastings community and all of Trent Hills everywhere and every way I possibly can. Let's hope for the best, but absolutely prepare for the worst.

Always the very best,

Hec Macmillan