



NEWSLETTER **COVID-19 edition #14**

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

Telephone 905-722-8021

(www.slsnc.ca)

Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (www.zephyrsociety.ca)

The Pandemic is Not Over

We hope everyone has had a great summer. The weather has been perfect for travel, hiking, canoeing, bird watching and related outdoor naturalist activities. The club traditionally (like most all naturalist clubs) slows down for vacation and family time for members, at the same time bird movements slow down in our communities.

A few of us have however been busy planning future outings/meetings, keeping on top of annual administrative organization tasks. We've been monitoring and gathering information on a broad range of new research emerging, developing initiatives and issues at various government levels and geographic scales affecting natural heritage and conservation. The newsletter below has much information on these inquiries for your review and follow-up and potential involvement, ranging from local municipal planning actions to global climate change science.

As SLSN members are I am sure aware, COVID-19 is still with us. The warm summer weather has been great for our health in this pandemic but as autumn arrives, concern grows. Fortunately, as naturalists, outside activities are our strength and interest first and foremost, and as you know, our events and activities are focused outside in fresh air.

Below are some important references to relevant media sources of continuing pandemic information.

P. Harpley

Recent COVID-19 reference articles for interest, with links for details.

Toronto Star, 2022-09-02. 'The last two years cannot be repeated': Ontario's easing of pandemic measures will fuel an eighth wave, critics warn

https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2022/09/01/heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-ontarios-new-covid-isolation-rules.html?source=newsletter&utm_source=ts_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&utm_campaign=frst_142636

National Geographic 2022-07-31. Reinfections are on the rise as BA.5 dominates

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/graphics/graphic-tracking-coronavirus-infections-us?rid=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&cmpid=org=ngp::mc=crm-email::src=ngp::cmp=editorial::add=Health_20220731

Outings: Paid-up members in good standing may participate (for insurance compliance). Any Provincial and municipal COVID-19 restrictions and safety protocols in effect. Information on the latest conditions and public health guidance can be found on the Government of Ontario [website](#). Phone 905-722-8021 for more details.

Only paid-up members receive notice and full information regarding upcoming Outings, Meetings and Events.

SLSN Membership Information

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Outings Reports

Presqu'île Provincial Park Day: Thursday May 19

This planned spring nature study was a Lake Ontario beach and trail walking trip, eagerly anticipated and enjoyed by five keen naturalist members of SLSN. The weather had been threatening storms in the morning. But although cloudy, serious rain never materialized. A lunch break on the shore bluff overlooking Lake Ontario was seasonally cool as winds increased at midday.

Participants had a full day of naturalist adventure at this Ontario Provincial Park. Presqu'ile Provincial Park is located in southeastern Northumberland County on the north shore of Lake Ontario near the town of Brighton in Ontario. The park occupies an area of 9.37 km². The park was well explored with the time we had available, focusing on the active lake front beaches, forests, and wetlands of the park with a focus on birds, especially spring migrants for which the park is famous. On trails and boardwalks in this flat landscape park we will see interesting dune landscape, various forest habitats.

In the morning birding proceeded from 10:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. participants walked the trails among the sand dunes with wet and dry grassy meadows and wet marshy areas. Beach viewing areas designed to see birds but not disturb them were important for viewing waterfowl and shorebirds, listed in the species list below. Low boardwalks and wood fencing contain visitors in a wild coastal lake landscape, while protecting the surrounding sensitive plants and habitat. We proceeded south along the many beach viewings to an open lake view of Gull Island and walking to High Bluff and back down the beaches. Members' casual observations of birds, mammals, interesting and notable wildflowers, trees of note, and invasive terrestrial plants are documented later in this article.



Mute swan in coastal wetland marsh, Jeff Boylin

The afternoon from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. was trail walking in upland and lowland forest habitat from beach shore out to the east end of the park at the historic lighthouse and interpretive area educating visitors on the human history of the park. Many forest and open field birds were documented and are listed in the species list. The highlight of the day was at 5:00 p.m. when the sun came out and

we were birding the big willow sand dune forest area at the light house and warblers arrived singing and flashing their colours! Five confirmed warbler species were observed and heard within fifteen minutes! Jeff lingered in the park and added a few other additional observations, and Hugh and Sheila explored the Jobs Trail and met a specialist Owl photographer with good stories.

Other notable observations in the park within a few days by others were apparently Piping plover and Prothonotary warbler!

It was discussed and agreed that other, perhaps fairly regular annual trip to Presqu'île alternating spring/fall may be a future habit of SLSN. It was noted that except for Point Pelee National Park (which is much further away from South Lake Simcoe) the potential for seeing many species of bird at one location at one time is high and accessible for our members.

Presqu'île is about a 3.5 hour drive from the South Lake Simcoe region and the Georgina area.



Large numbers of shorebirds pass through in late May and early June. The diversity of birds here is surprising. Presqu'île is known as a place where missed flocks of shorebirds are often close-up, allowing birders close looks to sort out all the different species of shorebirds and waterfowl at the like Ontario coast.

May is also recognized at Presqu'île as a place to see abundant spring passerine birds, where up to 20 warbler birding days are not uncommon for good birders. My favorite areas in the park to visit with Debra are the High Bluff shoreline, peninsula and west shoreline. We have visited and birded the park for some 40 years at different times of the year when we have been able to fit it in to our other commitments.

Wildlife and plant species observed in the order when first species encountered, and numbers seen on the SLSN Presqu'île Park Trip.

Birds: Red-winged blackbird 20, Turkey vulture 3, Raven, Am. Robin 1, R.T. Hawk 1, Caspian tern 3, Least sandpiper 1, Semipalmated sandpiper 3, Short-billed dowitcher 2, Killdeer 5, Mallard 3, Mute swan 3, Common loon 3, Herring gull 6, Ring-billed gull 12, Lesser Black-backed gull 1, Common tern 15, Mourning dove 2, Great egret 1, Sandhill crane 1, Song sparrow 4, Gray catbird 2, Blue jay 2, B. kingfisher 1, Am. Redstart 4, Yellow warbler 1, Tennessee warbler 1, Magnolia warbler 1, Hairy woodpecker, B.C. chickadee, Black-throated green warbler, C. grackle 10, Baltimore oriole 6, Great-crested flycatcher 1.

35 species

Mammals: Eastern chipmunk, Red squirrel, Gray squirrel, Cottontail rabbit, Raccoon, W.-tailed deer-tracks.

Trees: E. White cedar, E. Red cedar, E. cottonwood, Aspen poplar, Black cherry, E. Can. Hemlock, E. White pine, Ironwood, Sugar maple, Black locust, E. Can. White ash.

Wildflowers (interesting and/or notable): Forget-me-not, May Apple, Large Flowered White trillium, Red trillium, Yellow violet, Blue violet, Hooked-spur Little New England Blue violet.

Invasive species: Phragmites, Buckthorn sp., Plumeless thistle, Garlic mustard.

East Shore Lake Simcoe and Beaverton area Late spring breeding bird watching: Wednesday June 15

After some days of consistent rain and seasonally cool temperatures dedicated member birders met at the Virginia area and headed northeast by car for an afternoon naturalist venture to the wildlands area of south-east Lake Simcoe in Brock township.

Birding by vehicle up the coast to Beaverton area yielded some interesting forest areas along the roadside behind long-established Lake Simcoe cottages many of them upgraded to permanent residences in recent years. Stops along the way included small Thorah and Maple Beach park areas. Birds were active on this route in stiff substantial north-west wind events. Cloudy up the shoreline by the

time we reached the hiking trail into sewage lagoon wetland areas, looking for breeding birds especially for sightings of waterfowl, the sun had begun making appearances and temperatures rising. Some young Mallards were seen on the main sewage lagoon documenting successful breeding evidence. An American Redstart warbler female was a surprise in some shrubby buckthorns. Singing and moving around a likely nest in the area but was not apparent.

Proceeding to the Beaverton Harbour, wharf and park the winds died down and the sun was out. There were some groups of people around and there were few waterfowl, only a few Canada geese that were probably residents!

The group briefly visited a new subdivision construction site in south Beaverton where previous early successional wet meadow habitat had been, an important natural area for reptile and amphibian and some sensitive bird species. The site was being totally excavated and had much standing water that could not drain through limestone bedrock below. A perched water table on this high site behind a glacial lake Algonquin shoreline presents many challenges which appear on the site for development including servicing, basements on the bedrock and future flooding of future houses. The limestone here is undoubtedly fossiliferous and should be studied for paleontological value. Recently, this rock strata in similar regional locations has yielded significant fossils of academic interest.

Bird Species observed and numbers in the order when first species encountered, and numbers seen on the SLSN East Shore lake Simcoe and Beaverton outing

Osprey 5, Great Blue heron 2, American robin 28, Wild turkey 3, Flicker 2, Com. Grackle 12, Eastern starling 11, Tree swallow, B.C. chickadee 5, Yellow warbler 1, A. crow 9, Song sparrow 2, Am. Redstart 1, Mallard 6, Turkey vulture 5
Canada geese 2. 16 Species

Mammals: E. chipmunk 1, Woodchuck 1, Raccoon 1, Gray squirrel 2.

Species observed expected the interesting American redstart in the sewage lagoons area and the two Canada geese at the Beaverton Beach.

Paul Harpley

It's Back – Purple Loosestrife has returned with a vengeance!

Recently it has become apparent at least in our area of South Lake Simcoe the invasive species *Purple loosestrife* is making a major comeback. On almost every rural concession or sideline new site locations of this plant can be seen establishing themselves somewhere along the way after almost a decade of them being really hard to find. Purple loosestrife is a wetland plant native to Europe and Asia that was brought to North America the early 19th century. It loosestrife has become a serious invader of wetlands, roadsides, and disturbed areas. The plant forms dense stands with thick mats of roots that can extend over vast areas.

Members may remember that back in 1992, the Canadian and American governments approved the release of two European leaf-eating beetles, *Galerucella californiensis* and *G. pusilla*. The beetles are natural enemies of purple loosestrife and feed primarily on the plant, although they occasionally eat other species of loosestrife. It has been reported that this biological control of purple loosestrife can reduce populations by up to 90 per cent and allow native plants to re-establish. And it seemed as if this was the case for a number of years, but from observation that is changing. We will have to see what happens this autumn, over the winter and see if they continue their recent surge next spring back into our ecosystems!



P. Harpley

York Region Forest News

2022-08-30

This email is to advise you that the Region will be starting to grade some of the parking lots and driveways in the *York Regional Forest*. The operation is expected to take a couple of weeks. For the safety of the public and workers, please keep clear of the operation. Please feel free to forward this email to other forest users. If you have any questions regarding this operation please contact me at Colin.Macdonald@york.ca or 905-830-4444 x75258.

York Region is looking for feedback on Management Plan for the **new Queensville property**. The Plan is being developed to identify how to protect and restore the property's natural features and habitats. Plans include tree planting, adding trails and incorporating a parking lot. A virtual **Information Session** took place on Tuesday October 4, 2022. Visit: York.ca/queensvilleforest.

Submitted Spring & Summer Wildlife Photos – SLSN members

Eastern Phoebe



2022-06-21 photo taken by Jeff Boylin

As Jeff Boylin mentioned to me the Eastern phoebes at his place were still around singing although well hidden after the 2nd clutch fledged. Ten days or so later the 3rd. Very nice to see.

Juvenile American Robin



Photo taken by Sheila Maxwell

“One never knows what nature surprises us with,” Sheila wrote. “This is a smart juvenile bird resting in a hanging basket, while bouts of learning to fly.” It most certainly was a juvenile American Robin. We had many here crashing into trees, house etc. learning to fly, and annually some disappear fast probably from predators.

Killdeer on nest



Photo taken by Paul Harpley 2022-06-22

We didn't have to look too hard to find this nest on the side of the road despite the Killdeer's antics to lead us away. This photo was taken with a cell phone using the zoom function so the bird's comfort was not disturbed.

Bald Eagle



Photo taken by Heather MacKay – Bald eagle, Jackson's Point 2022-07-20

Heather e-mailed, " I just thought I would mention that the Bald Eagle, who likes that pine tree beside us, has been hanging around, off and on, over the last few days. Interesting that often when he lands on the tree he makes a very distinctive sound so I know when he has arrived."

It's a great shot!

While we were out birding in July we saw a pair of Rufous-sided Towhees. We have not seen one for some years here. We did not find the nest.

Paul and Debra Harpley

Town of Georgina Planning Projects

2022-09-01

Town of Georgina Proposed new Countryside Zoning By-law and enabling Official Plan Amendment – SLSN Summary of Official Plan Zoning Amendment

As per **articles/notices in the Georgina Advocate** over the last month the Town (advised over the last year and a half) has been Revising the Town of Georgina Official Plan Zoning. Specifically, the Town is updating Zoning By-law No. 500 to bring it into conformity with the policies, permitted uses and landuse designations of the Town's Official Plan, Region and Provincial Policy under the Planning Act. I and others have been monitoring this process since this Phase 1 process began. We will be looking at the recently detailed amendment to Section

8.1.12 of the [Town Official Plan](#) to permit an additional residential unit in a detached building on the same lot as a single detached dwelling etc. (details below). For detailed info and participation contact the Town Planner responsible Tolek Makarewicz, Phone: 905-476-4301, ext. 2297 or tmakarewicz@georgina.ca. The matter was proposed to come to a public meeting of Council Wednesday September 7, 7 p.m. We are assured at a recent virtual public open house that the new Zoning By-law is only at its early stage for comment from Agencies, affected interests, the general public and others. As with all council meetings detailed Agenda items are on the Town website the Friday before a meeting (it was put on the website now according to Town staff). The meeting is for Council information and direction. As a municipal election is looming in October current Council involvement is essential now.

Over the last two decades SLSN have participated in upgrading Town Official and Secondary Plans in workshops and written and verbal comment especially on natural and cultural heritage and landuse planning matters. Over these past reviews comprehensive natural bio/physical Schedules and Maps have been developed to support and manage development in Official Plan and Secondary Plan areas. These Plans are much better now from in those past decades.

This planning process supports and updates landuse policy and particularly zoning foundation into the future and builds conformity with Regional and Provincial Policy for on-the-ground landuse. Plan Schedules (Maps and design sketch directives) are comprehensive and specific for all natural and cultural heritage features and have been informed by Region and Conservation Authority staff involvement. Scale of mapping we will watch closely but on the ground proofing at the site level will still be mediated by review process.

SLSN members and the general public can review details on the Town of Georgina Website www.georgina.ca and provide comments at clerks@georgina.ca. **RSLSN members on rural properties and home owners in particular should review any impact of the zoning review and proposals on their property or areas they have comprehensive knowledge of at [The Proposed Countryside Zoning By-law](#)** on the Georgina website. I encourage all members to become involved in details if they can and advise the Town accordingly.

Timing as always is important sooner than later for your review. Agency comment (eg. LSRCA, MNRF, MECP etc.) has not yet happened, and public and others as well has yet to be developed. It is expected according to Town staff, with all the comprehensive review to come that the process will extend well into the first quarter of 2023 before coming again to the new Council.

P. Harpley SLSN

Explanatory Notes by the Town of Georgina

<https://pdf.browsealoud.com/PDFViewer/Desktop/viewer.aspx?file=https://pdf.browsealoud.com/StreamingProxy.ashx?url=https://www.georgina.ca/sites/default/files/2022-08/PROPOSED%20ZONING%20BY->

[LAW%20TO%20REMOVE%20COUNTRYSIDE%20FROM%20ZONING%20BY-LAW%20500%20-%20SEPT%207-022-combined.pdf&opts=www.georgina.ca#langidsrc=en-us&locale=en-us&dom=www.georgina.ca](https://www.georgina.ca/#langidsrc=en-us&locale=en-us&dom=www.georgina.ca)

Introduction

The Town is updating [Zoning By-law No. 500](#) to bring it into conformity with the [Official Plan](#). This will involve a review of the existing zoning by-law regulations and mapping against the policies and land use designations in the [Official Plan](#). The project is currently in Phase I of II.

Project update

On August 11, 2022, Proposed Zoning By-law Amendments and an enabling Official Plan Amendment for the Countryside Area of the Town were released for public review and comment.

A [Proposed Amendment to Zoning By-law 500](#) amends the Town’s existing comprehensive Zoning By-law 500, to remove the “Countryside Area” together with related special provisions (site specific zoning by-laws) and sketches.

A [Proposed Countryside Zoning By-law](#) establishes a new “free standing” zoning by-law for the “Countryside Areas” area of the Town. The Countryside Area is the area of lands being removed from Zoning By-law 500 by the [Proposed Amendment to Zoning By-law 500](#). [The Proposed Countryside Zoning By-law](#) also contains special provisions and related sketches.

An [Official Plan Amendment](#) is proposed that would amend Section 8.1.12 of the [Town Official Plan](#) to permit an additional residential unit in a detached building on the same lot as a single detached dwelling, irrespective of whether the single detached dwelling already contains an additional dwelling unit (i.e. up to two additional dwelling units on lots containing a single detached dwelling).

Technical working group

Technical working group information

A technical working group has been established to provide technical expertise at key milestones or as the need arises during the project. The working group includes representation from the Development Services Department, York Region Community Planning Branch and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

Draft Countryside Zoning By-law (March 2022)

The Draft Countryside Zoning By-law structured as a by-law amendment that introduces new zoning for the Countryside Area of the Town, outside of settlement areas as shown on [Schedule “A”](#) to the by-law. The Draft Countryside Zoning By-law would remove the Countryside Areas from Zoning By-law 500 and introduce new zoning for this area as a “free standing” by-law. The format and structure of the Draft Countryside Zoning By-law would largely remain the same as currently exists in Zoning By-law 500 for the purposes of consistency and understanding between the two By-laws.

Draft Zoning By-law Sections

Frequently asked questions

What is a zoning by-law?

Does the Town currently have a zoning by-law?

How can I find out the zoning of my property?

What is happening?

Who is updating the zoning by-law?

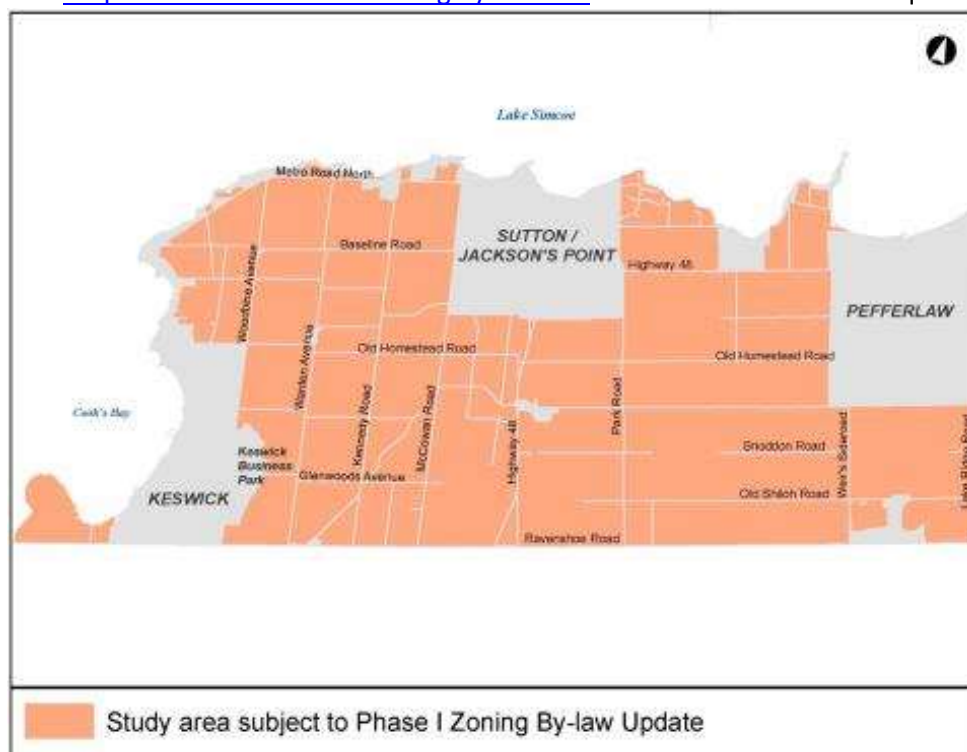
When is this project taking place?

Where does this zoning update fit into the bigger planning picture?



Where in Town is the zoning being updated?

See [Proposed Amendment to Zoning By-law 500](#) for answers to the above questions.



What could this mean for my property?

How can I stay informed and provide my comments?

Footer Menu

T: 905-476-4301 / 705-437-2210

F: 905-476-8100

Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

After hours, please follow voice prompts to reach available on-call services.

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26557 Civic Centre Rd, RR 2

Keswick, ON L4P 3G1

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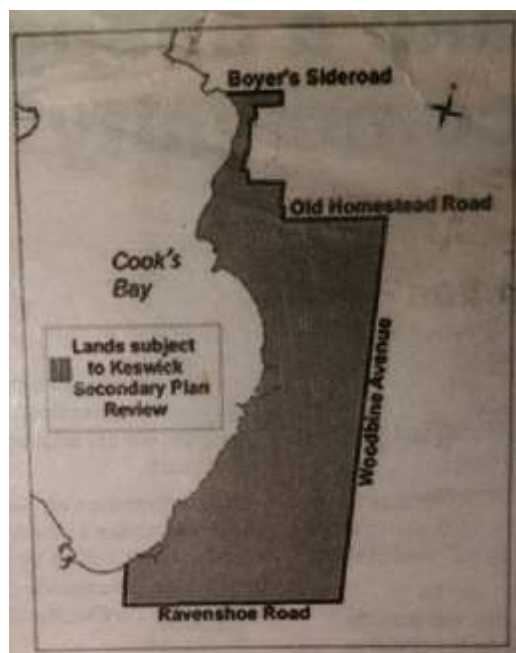
The Draft Countryside Zoning By-law structured as a by-law amendment that introduces new zoning for the Countryside Area of the Town, outside of settlement areas as shown on [Schedule "A"](#) to the by-law. The Draft Countryside Zoning By-law would remove the Countryside Areas from Zoning By-law 500 and introduce new zoning for this area as a "free standing" by-law. The format and structure of the Draft Countryside Zoning By-law would largely remain the same as currently exists in Zoning By-law 500 for the purposes of consistency and understanding between the two By-laws.

Town of Georgina Notice of Public Open House and Public Meeting for a proposed Keswick Secondary Plan

As per **articles/notices in the Georgina Advocate** during the summer, the Town advised (over the last year and a half) a planning process has been underway to develop an updated proposed Keswick Secondary Plan. A public open house took place on Wednesday September 7, 2022, from 2-4 p.m. (electronic Zoom platform). And a public meeting on occurred on Wednesday September 7 at 7 p.m., (also electronic Zoom platform).

Over the last two decades the SLSN have participated in upgrading Town Official and Secondary Plans in workshops and written and verbal comment especially on natural and cultural heritage and landuse planning matters. Over these past reviews comprehensive natural bio/physical Schedules and Maps have been developed to support and manage development in Official Pan and Secondary Plan areas. Some Keswick SLSN members attended initial and meeting/workshop design and comment sessions including myself, hosted by the Town and later Zoom platform events for the planning process and

monitoring the process over a long 2 year plus time frame (much of it through the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging). SLSN members have regularly been advised in past e-newsletters of meetings, workshops for members to connect with, over the planning time frame. The urban landuse of Lands subject to the Keswick Secondary Plan Review have not changed in this process and are detailed on the map below.



This planning process supports and updates landuse policy foundation into the future and builds conformity with Regional and Provincial Policy for on-the-ground landuse.

SLSN members and the general public can review details on the Town of Georgina Website www.georgina.ca and provide comments at clerks@georgina.ca. A copy of the Proposed Keswick Secondary Plan is posted online viewing for at georgina.ca/KSPR.

I encouraged all members to become involved in details if they could and advise the Town accordingly.

Timing as always is important sooner than later for your review. Agency comment (eg. LSRCA, MNRF, MECP etc.) has not yet happened, and public and others as well has yet to be developed, at this stage. It is expected according to Town staff, with all the comprehensive review to come that the process will extend into the term of the new Council.
