

**TO THE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF THE CLERK AND COUNCIL**

March 26, 2013

**AMO Report to Members****Highlights of the March 2013 Board Meeting**

To keep members informed, AMO provides updates on important issues considered at regular AMO Board of Directors' meetings. Highlights of the March 22, 2013 Board meeting follow:

**Ontario Distribution Sector Panel Report: AMO Response**

AMO's Energy Task Force met to work through the recommendations of the Panel to provide advice to the Board as its response to Putting the Consumer First. Days before the Board meeting, Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli announced that the government will not be mandating the Panel's amalgamation recommendations. AMO will acknowledge the government's direction in the correspondence. AMO will provide further advice to the Ministry that any voluntary consolidations should be driven by business principles, that regulatory and governance changes would yield greater savings than consolidation and that efficiency gains are best achieved through focus on revising costing models to incent conservation.

Contact: Cathie Brown, Senior Advisor, email: [cathiebrown@amo.on.ca](mailto:cathiebrown@amo.on.ca), Ext. 342.

***Provincial Offences Act (POA) Status Update***

The Board received an update on the current status of AMO advocacy on the collection of fines under the *Provincial Offences Act*. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, the government introduced Bill 34, *The Highway Traffic Statute Law Amendment Act, 2013* which, if passed, would deny license plates to drivers who have unpaid fines for offences such as speeding, improper lane changes, illegal turns, driving without insurance and careless driving. This enabling legislation is a positive step forward on a longstanding municipal concern and will improve the administration of justice in Ontario. Currently, the government is working to provide final estimates on the total outstanding fines that would be payable to municipalities. The necessary information technology changes may take up to two years to complete. AMO continues to urge the government to make the changes as quickly as possible so that municipalities can be in a position to collect unpaid fines.

Contact: Matthew Wilson, Senior Advisor, email: [mwilson@amo.on.ca](mailto:mwilson@amo.on.ca), Ext. 323.

**AMO Response to the Report on Improving Fire Safety for Vulnerable Ontarians**

The Board approved a response with amended comments to the Office of the Fire Marshal's Report on Improving Fire Safety for Vulnerable Ontarians. The Report, released in January of 2013, provides recommendations to examine long-term safety improvements for residences

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housing vulnerable Ontarians. Among those provisions include amending the Ontario Fire Code to include retrofitting sprinklers in areas where vulnerable persons reside. The Board identified numerous questions and significant concerns related to risks, enforcement and liability as well as cost impacts for public and private facilities that would be captured.

Contact: Sumeeta Kapur, Policy Advisor, email: [skapur@amo.on.ca](mailto:skapur@amo.on.ca), Ext. 353.

### **AMO Response to the Building Code Consultation Paper on Accessible Built Environment**

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Building and Development Branch recently undertook public consultations on potential amendments to barrier-free design requirements in Ontario's Building Code. The proposed amendments are seen as reasonable changes in light of the Province's goal to help improve accessibility to persons with disabilities. The changes will apply to new build and extensive renovation projects. The AMO Board approved a response.

Contact: Sumeeta Kapur, Policy Advisor, email: [skapur@amo.on.ca](mailto:skapur@amo.on.ca), Ext. 353.

### **Permanency of Canada's Gas Tax Fund**

The Board received an update on the current status of Canada's Gas Tax Fund. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, the federal government's budget committed to indexing Canada's Gas Tax Fund at two per cent per year, and by greatly expanding the eligible categories to include culture, tourism, local sport and recreations facilities. This will assist municipalities as they plan for, and implement, their asset management plans. Ontario's portion of the nationally indexed allocation has yet to be confirmed and how a two per cent index in \$100-million increments will be defined. AMO looks forward to working with the federal government on a renewed permanent Gas Tax Fund Agreement to be in place by March 31, 2014 that will implement its commitment.

To improve the profile of Canada's Gas Tax Fund in Ontario, AMO is again asking municipalities to share the benefits of Canada's Gas Tax Fund at the local level. Please promote your Gas Tax projects through means such as social media, website postings, meetings or events that federal officials attend and other means where possible. A letter is good too. AMO can help by doing the heavy lifting – municipalities should contact [gastax@amo.on.ca](mailto:gastax@amo.on.ca) to access our free resources and to ensure that their local stories are being told in a way that meets our collective goals.

Contact: Judy Dezell, Project Manager, email: [jdezell@amo.on.ca](mailto:jdezell@amo.on.ca), Ext. 306.

### **Changes to the *Endangered Species Act***

The Board received an update of proposed changes to the provincial *Endangered Species Act*. The Ministry of Natural Resources has been modernizing its approval processes to streamline the species at risk program under its jurisdiction. The new approval processes would exempt certain municipal projects from the traditional permit-by-review process while protecting endangered species. Types of municipal projects that would qualify include: capital works for health and safety reasons, drainage works under the *Drainage Act*, forestry activities (for five years), existing pits and quarries, hydro operations and projects underway where newly listed or "transition" species are identified.

Contact: Cathie Brown, Senior Advisor, email: [cathiebrown@amo.on.ca](mailto:cathiebrown@amo.on.ca), Ext. 342.

### **Local Authority Services New Program**

Streetlights are responsible for 14 to 30 percent of a municipality's electricity consumption and with the use of LEDs, that consumption can be reduced by 40 to 50 percent and as high as 80 percent with the proper lighting design. LAS will be providing a turnkey municipal streetlight retrofit service featuring options for design, procurement, installation and finance. This service will be offered through Real Term Energy using Cree Canada Corp LED luminaires. Small municipalities should make great use of this new service. You asked – we delivered!

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AND A REMINDER: **Big City. Small City.** AMO's Urban Symposium occurs April 18 & 19 at the Novotel Hotel in the City of Mississauga. Designed for municipal decision-makers and advisors, this program brings together international and local talent, to share their ideas and projects for urban communities of any size.

Program Highlights (subject to change) include:

- *The Citizen Dashboard: Open Government & Civic Engagement* – a panel that includes: Dave Meslin, Community Catalyst; Peter MacLeod, Principal of MASS LBP; and Ellie Marshall, Communications Coordinator at Open North.
- *Local Motion: Improving Transit in Ontario* – Mitzie Hunter, Chief Executive Officer of the Toronto CivicAction Alliance.
- *Policing Costs: The Thin Red Line* – Dr. Christian Leuprecht, Associate Professor at the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University.
- *The City with Enviro-Ambitions: Stockholm, Sweden* – Erik Freudenthal, Manager at GlashusEtt, Hammarby, Stockholm, Sweden.
- *Grow Ups: Agriculture in the Big Apple* – Gwen Schantz, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer of the Brooklyn Grange.
- Plus a walking tour of the exciting transformations that are happening in downtown Mississauga and so much more!

Register today! Don't miss out on the 2013 AMO Urban Symposium. Registration is available [online](#).

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