



## MEDIA RELEASE

# Niagara-on-the-Lake Representatives Advocate for Local Issues at ROMA Conference

Town Staff and Councillors attended five delegations at the virtual 2022 ROMA Conference

**For Immediate Release**

**January 28, 2022**

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Staff and Council Members participated in the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) 2022 Virtual Conference from Sunday, January 23, to Tuesday, January 25. Delegation meetings, held throughout the Conference, provided the opportunity for Niagara-on-the-Lake representatives to meet with Provincial Ministers and Parliamentary Assistants and discuss important local priorities.

The following representatives participated in delegation meetings:

- Lord Mayor Betty Disero
- Deputy Lord Mayor Clare Cameron
- Councillor Norm Arsenault
- Councillor Wendy Cheropita
- Councillor Sandra O'Connor
- Marnie Cluckie, Chief Administrative Officer
- Kyle Freeborn, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer
- Brett Ruck, Environmental Services Supervisor
- Victoria Steele, Executive Assistant and Communications Officer for the Lord Mayor and CAO

Two to three members of Council and three Staff members attended each delegation. The Town was also pleased to have Deputy Mayor Paul MacPherson from the Town of Lincoln join in a delegation with the Minister of Finance.

"I am motivated by the conversations had at the virtual ROMA Conference," stated Lord Mayor Betty Disero. "Each Minister and Parliamentary Assistant responded positively to our unique requests, and we received excellent advice and guidance on how to move forward. I am thankful for this opportunity to raise local issues at a provincial level."

"The opportunity to engage in discussion with Ministers and their Parliamentary Assistants is an excellent starting point to having Niagara-on-the-Lake's issues identified and understood by upper tiers of government," stated CAO Marnie Cluckie. "Now, we must take action on the outcomes of the delegations, and I am hopeful this will lead to positive results and future funding opportunities that will address the needs of our community."

The following is a summary of key priorities and community projects discussed:

### **Shoreline Protection – Ministry of Infrastructure**

Niagara-on-the-Lake delegates met with the Honourable Kinga Surma to request the province support and provide grant funding opportunities for proactive and preventative shoreline infrastructure. The Town asked that future funding programs reward municipalities for undertaking responsible management and proactively mitigating floodmeasures. Minister Surma is hopeful to have this type of funding included in future infrastructure programs, with the support of the Federal Government.



### **Temporary Patio Program – Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario**

Representatives met with the Honourable Doug Downey to thank the Ministry for extending liquor licenses to temporary patios in 2022 and highlight the tremendous success experienced by many local restaurants during their patio seasons. The group also inquired about the program's future and if business owners could invest capital dollars without fear of the program ending. The Attorney General is hopeful permanent legislation will be passed before the deadline of the current extension through the Supporting Peoples and Businesses Act.

### **Alcohol Modernization & Taxation – Ministry of Finance**

Niagara-on-the-Lake representatives were joined by Deputy Mayor MacPherson from the Town of Lincoln to request the province support the craft beverage sector as it undertakes a new alcohol modernization and taxation strategy. Specifically, the Town urged the province to eliminate the 6.1% tax applied to VQA wines; enable Ontario wines to offer direct delivery, with margins to grocery stores; increase shelf space for VQA wines; and eliminate import taxes on 100% Ontario VQA wines. Minister Bethlenfalvy remained committed to modernizing the legal framework and reviewing all aspects of the alcohol industry.

### **Tourism & Hospitality – Ministry of Heritage, Sports, Tourism & Culture Industries**

Delegates met with Parliamentary Assistant Vincent Ke to advocate for additional support and grant opportunities for the tourism and hospitality sectors. In 2020, the Town received \$500,000 from FedDev to administer the NOTL Tourism Recovery Grant program and assisted 42 small and medium-sized enterprises and local not-for-profit organizations. Parliamentary Assistant Ke was pleased to see the Town's tourism, hospitality, and wine industries supporting jobs and noted the Ministry's dedication to helping this sector recover.

### **Specialty Crop Areas – Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs**

On the final day, a delegation group met with Randy Pettapiece, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The delegation focused on demonstrating the preservation and protection of the valuable resource found in specialty croplands, specifically the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape area. Parliamentary Assistant Pettapiece acknowledged the importance of the specialty crop areas and provided suggested next steps for the municipality to investigate.

In addition to participating in the delegations, representatives attended various sessions including, "Navigating the New Regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act" and "How Municipalities Can and Should Work with Indigenous Peoples."

Niagara-on-the-Lake is grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in ROMA 2022 and looks forward to seeing the future outcome of the discussions.

*For immediate alerts, follow the Town on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).*

**For more information, please contact:**

**Lauren Kruitbosch, Manager of Customer Experience & Communications**  
905-468-6458 | [communications@notl.com](mailto:communications@notl.com)