



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Niagara-on-the-Lake Champions Local Priorities at 2024 AMO Conference**

**For Immediate Release**

**August 23, 2024**

Town Council and Staff from Niagara-on-the-Lake actively participated in key delegations at the annual Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) Conference, held from August 18 to 21 in Ottawa, Ontario. A primary objective of attending AMO is to bring forward local issues and advocate for provincial support through direct collaboration with ministries.

This year, the following Town representatives participated in seven delegations, focusing on critical areas such as heritage designation, affordable housing, irrigation systems, invasive species, infrastructure, and tourism:

- Erwin Wiens, Deputy Lord Mayor/Councillor
- Bruce Zvaniga, Chief Administrative Officer
- Kirsten McCauley, Director of Community and Development Services
- Ashleigh Myers, Economic Development Officer

"The AMO Conference is an essential platform for Niagara-on-the-Lake, enabling meaningful dialogue with key government stakeholders," stated Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens. "On behalf of Council, I'd like to thank the Ministers, Parliamentary Assistants, and Ministry Staff for welcoming us and listening to our local needs and requests."

"Attending the AMO Conference is an invaluable experience, allowing us to both share and learn from innovative municipal practices," stated CAO Bruce Zvaniga. "The insights and connections we gain from these interactions are instrumental in advancing our community's priorities and ensuring we continue to deliver exceptional services to our residents."

The following is a high-level summary of topics discussed during the delegations that Town representatives attended:

### **Heritage Designation – Minister Michael Ford, Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism**

Council Members and Town Staff attended this delegation to request the Province engage in meaningful consultation with municipalities to assess local-level implications and ensure protection is in place to maintain the character of heritage buildings.

### **Affordable Housing – Minister Paul Calandra, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

Niagara-on-the-Lake representatives met to discuss funding opportunities, population growth, and the impact on small municipalities to support diverse housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents.

### **Irrigation Systems – Parliamentary Assistant John Jordan, Ministry of Farming, Agriculture and Agribusiness**

Jobs in agriculture are pivotal to our economy in the Niagara Region. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, in partnership with the Town of Lincoln, the City of St. Catharines and the Niagara Region, met with the Ministry of Farming, Agriculture and Agribusiness



to continue conversations about Regional irrigation infrastructure and a path forward to protecting our greenbelt.

**Invasive Species (Oak Wilt) – Parliamentary Assistant Dawn Gallagher-Murphy, Ministry of Natural Resources**

In another joint delegation with the Town of Grimsby and the Town of Pelham, representatives from these municipalities requested a champion at the provincial level and support to secure the necessary funds and resources to develop and distribute comprehensive educational materials.

**Infrastructure Funding – Parliamentary Assistant Amarjot Sandhu, Ministry of Infrastructure**

Town Council and Staff met with the Ministry of Infrastructure to discuss funding opportunities to address infrastructure needs, recent flooding in the Town, and upgrades to meet the new demands and maintenance of the systems.

**Tourism and Niagara-on-the-Lake – Ministry Prabmeet Sarkaria, Ministry of Transportation and Minister Stan Cho, and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming**

Tourism is the backbone of Niagara-on-the-Lake's economy, representing almost 60% of economic-based jobs. The Town welcomes close to 3 million tourists each year to experience the community's heritage character, wineries, restaurants, agri-tourism, and cultural offerings. Niagara-on-the-Lake representatives met to discuss the shared commitment to tourism in the community, transportation infrastructure, and supporting local businesses.

**Irrigation Systems – Ministry Rob Flack, Ministry of Farming, Agriculture and Agribusiness / Rural Affairs**

In the final delegation, it was discussed how investment into improvements and expansion of local irrigation systems are pivotal to boosting efficiencies, increasing capacity, working toward climate resilience, and supporting food security. It was requested that irrigation systems be recognized as municipal infrastructure and, therefore, be eligible for infrastructure funding opportunities and grants.

The Town expresses its gratitude to AMO and the City of Ottawa for providing an outstanding platform for municipal leaders to connect, learn, and collaborate on shaping the future of our communities.

Through these meaningful engagements, Niagara-on-the-Lake reaffirms its commitment to proactive leadership, ensuring the Town's continued growth and the well-being of its residents.

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