



INAUGURAL REMARKS

BY

WARDEN RICK PHILLIPS

June 28, 2012

Good Morning Members of Council, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me start first with a thank you to His Honour Judge Scott for helping us once again with this swearing in ceremony. We know how busy you are and appreciate that you have found time to be with us today. Your presence is an indication, I believe, of the importance of local government in the lives of our citizens across Hastings County. Again, thank you for doing this today.

Before I go on with my remarks, and they will be short, I want to ask you to rise with me and show our sincere appreciation to past Warden Clemens for his incredible efforts on behalf of our County.

We all know how difficult it was for you to decide to step down from the Warden's position, but every one of us in this room holds you in the highest regard knowing that your commitment to your wife has to be your first priority

and we admire you for that special bond. Please share our best wishes for a speedy recovery with Darlene.

With the consent of Council I would like to introduce to you a number of people who are here today to witness this ceremony. With me today is my wife Cheryl, my grandchildren, special friends and members of my Township Council. Without the support of all of these people, I know I would not be able to take on this very important role.

I would like to take just a minute to pay special tribute to my friend and colleague Margaret Walsh. As you know, Margaret was the first woman elected Warden in the County. Margaret was, and continues to be, a leader in local government in Tyendinaga Township and in the County. Thank you for coming today Margaret.

Let me now turn to my formal remarks.

First let me just say how honoured I am to have the support of my fellow County Councilors as I take on the Warden's duties. I truly do appreciate your support.

Last December past Warden Clemens laid out a vision and a plan for the County that would cover his year in the chair. His objective to improve the coordination of economic development efforts by both the County and local municipal member municipalities, has already shown great promise. We now have an effective county-local advisory committee working together and we will shortly get a taste of those efforts when we hear from Andrew Redden, our County Economic Development Manager.

Past Warden Clemens idea to bring councils and staff together in one location to hear about the work of the County, showcase how we strive to help individuals and families across Hastings, and to hear from municipal leaders like the President of AMO was a terrific success. Everyone that I have talked to since our County Day has told me how beneficial it was and hope that we will

continue to hold similar days in the future. It was a great coming together. Thank you Past Warden Clemens for that initiative.

So, what do the next five or so months look like from my vantage point?

Well, I believe that we need to stay the course that past Warden Clemens help set for us this past December. I, and we, owe that commitment to him. We want to see the affordable housing units in Coe Hill completed and residents move in. We want to continue our preparations for new units in Bancroft and we will initiate the development of a county-wide homelessness prevention strategy.

The importance of helping to ensure that our residents acquire their primary health care needs through a family doctor will continue to be a key County initiative. You will hear more on that from our CAO shortly.

In past Warden Clemens' inaugural remarks he highlighted the increasing pressures on our ambulance service. He asked the CAO and our EMS Chief Mr. Socha to carefully assess the factors that are causing these pressures and to consider options to help us ease those pressures. That assessment is underway and I know we all will look forward to their report later this year.

I know I said my remarks will be short this morning so let me end with a few comments about the work of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus. I am very much looking forward to carrying on the high standards of leadership that all of the past wardens have brought to the EOWC table. The EOWC continues to be an effective, well respected group that advocates for positive change on a regional basis.

I am very pleased to tell you that one of my municipalities pressing concerns, the cost of railway crossing maintenance, has just be accepted by the EOWC at the

request of Hastings County as an issue they will study and assess. This is an important step for us.

Let me end by again expressing my sincere thanks to all of you for your support. To past Warden Clemens, a special thank you for your incredible efforts on our behalf this year.

Thank you.