



**TOWNSHIP OF ESSA
HEALTHY, ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY AND PARKS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
THURSDAY APRIL 16, 2025
Meeting Conducted via Zoom**

In Attendance:

**Patricia Foster, Chair
Clarisse Esteban, Member
Stephanie McCann
Deputy Mayor Michael Smith
Sarah Orr-Shaw, SMDHU Representative**

Staff:

**Sarah Corbett, Deputy Clerk, Recording Secretary
Glenda Newbatt, Essa Public Library
Abbey McClinton, Parks and Recreation-Booking**

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chair, opened the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by: S. McCann Seconded by: C. Esteban

Be it resolved that the agenda for the Healthy, Accessible Community and Parks Committee be approved as presented.

----Carried-----

3. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Moved by: M. Smith Seconded by: C. Esteban

Be it resolved that the minutes of the Healthy, Accessible Community and Parks Committee dated January 15, 2026, be received.

----Carried-----

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING / OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- 5.1 Workplan Update – Recording Secretary is to provide to S. Orr-Shaw for review and reworking. Will be provided to the Committee at the July 2026 meeting.**

6. NEW BUSINESS

- 6.1 S. McCann provided an update from the Utopia Hall. She commented that the Essa Horticultural Society will be starting and is looking for volunteers. She also provided the Committee with an overview of the Happy Hands Food Initiative in partnership with Friends of the Utopia Mill & Park and with Agriculture and AgriFood Canada under the Local Food Infrastructure Fund. This is a volunteer-driven program that grows local food, brings volunteers together through the full cycle of food – from planting and growing, to cooking and sharing. The loop is further completed by returning kitchen scraps from the food preparation process back to the soil through composting.

S. McCann provided the Committee with an overview of another project taking place at the Utopia Hall: Time to Be Together and Help Our Community is a program where a group of individuals come together monthly to learn how to plan and maintain a garden, grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Participants learn how to cook healthy meals and preserve their harvests. This program and its leader, Robert is an Ontario Community Changemaker.

- 6.2 Deputy Mayor Smith provided the Committee with an overview of the Council supported Free Tax Clinic to be taking place at the Essa Public Library. Further details to be provided at a later date/time.

7. CORRESPONDENCE / INFORMATION ITEMS

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS/ ROUND TABLE

- 8.1 Essa Public Library
Glenda Newbatt, Essa Public Library provided an update regarding chair yoga, and the accessible gardens programs. She commented that the library is busy preparing for the Free Tax Clinic and Spring into Spring and the Summer Library Programs.
- 8.2 Parks and Recreation
Abby McClinton, Parks and Recreation provided an update on the removal of the ice at the Arenas and that it has been completed. She also updated on the Thornton Skatepark, Baxter pump track and the Ivy bleacher upgrade.
- 8.3 Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Sarah Orr, SMDHU provided an update on the Health Status Summary for the Township of Essa.

9. ESTABLISH DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 15, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: M. Smith Seconded by: S. McCann

Be it resolved that this meeting of the Healthy, Accessible Community and Parks Committee of the Township of Essa adjourn at 3:24 p.m.

----Carried----

Patricia Foster, Chair

Sarah Corbett, Acting Clerk