

November 18th, 2020

Mayor and Council,
Municipality of Lambton Shores

Dear Mayor Weber and Members of Council,

My name is Shawn (and Allyson) MacCormack and I live in Deer Run, a Grand Bend community directly across Highway 21 from the Pinery (8777 Timberwood Trail).

I'm writing to bring attention to the dire situation created by the Gypsy Moth in our community. For the past two years, my property has been ravaged by this invasive species. I have attached several pictures showing the damage to trees in the summer of 2020 (which you have probably seen), and have included pictures of trees from late this summer that show hundreds of nests that will hatch next spring.



1. Highway 21 north of Jenna, June timeframe
2. Corner North East corner, Jenna & Hwy 21



3. Nests on one tree, 8777 Timberwood Trail, Current
4. Closeup of same

We implore the municipality to manage this threat. Our properties in the oak savanna Carolinian forest are a rare asset that we need to protect for human and wildlife health, as well as to protect property values and maintain flourishing businesses that rely on our environment for tourism.

The biodiversity of this area is widely recognized by environmentalists as unique and in need of preservation. Real estate agents know the value of a well treed property. Significant tree loss will result in diminished property values, and therefore assessed values for tax purposes. Trees have monetary and sentimental value. As responsible property owners, it is our duty to act as stewards for this incredibly special land and the people and wildlife that depend on it.

But let's turn to our local businesses, many of which depend heavily on tourism dollars. Many offer activities in outdoor spaces (rentals, dining patios) that have experienced and will experience serious negative impact from the invasion of this species.

As a homeowner, we spent 30-40 hours after the nests were laid in June solely cleaning our properties, including the necessity to power wash our entire house top to bottom – we have board and batten siding - to remove pupa's from every nook & cranny (under eavestroughs, window sills, foundation, etc). In addition, sidewalks and furniture has a permanent dark brown stain from the decomposing bodies of millions of caterpillars.

I have read the contents of staff report CAO-06-2020, and I respectfully suggest that this report is not a call for municipal leadership in this matter, but rather an excuse to avoid it. As property owners, we pay considerable taxes to this municipality for protection and prevention services. If left to its own devices, The Gypsy Moth will ravage this area once again in 2021. Efforts such as removing nests you can reach (see how high up a tree they will nest in Pic 3) with soap and water by individual property owners will have "no" impact in managing the destruction. We attempted this in the spring of 2020 as well as taping our trees, and it had negligible impact.

The Gypsy Moth is a threat to all of us and our proud municipality should act now by agreeing to support an aggressive spray program this spring (I'll defer to experts on the actual timing) when they hatch and are small enough to digest the BTK as to have an impact. Aerial spraying of BTK will greatly reduce the overall impact of the damage created by the Gypsy Moth larvae. By taking a leadership role to coordinate that spraying effort, the municipality will achieve an economy of scale that will make the spraying affordable. Additionally, it can be done in a fair and equitable manner to the satisfaction of all parties affected.

Please act in everyone's best interest to manage this public, economic and environmental health challenge.

Respectfully,



Shawn MacCormack
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