



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

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REPORT #: FES-23-002

COMMITTEE DATE: 2023-04-11

DUE IN COUNCIL: 2023-04-25

REPORT TO: COTW-General

SUBJECT: FARM 911 – The Emily Project

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 Council accepts this report as information; and
- 1.2 That Council directs Staff not to pursue the Farm 911 – Emily Project.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Farm 911 – Emily Project was discussed and presented to the Agriculture Committee at two meetings in 2021.
- Fire Chief Ruller discussed the project and the current location identification technology with the Committee on February 4, 2021.
- A report containing recommendations was brought to the Committee on November 16, 2021, by the Director of Community and Development Services.
- It was moved that the recommendations within that report be brought forward to Council for approval.
- The minutes from that committee meeting were presented to Council in an Information Report. The recommendations were received as information only, and no approval or direction was provided to Staff.
- At this time, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services believes the current methods for determining a person's location in a rural area are effective, and the Emily Project does not need to be implemented within Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- Currently, if a person is lost or in an emergency in a rural area and does not know their location, the software program '**what3words**' can be used to locate an individual within 3 meters (10 feet) of their location.
- Staff, therefore, recommend that the Town not pursue the Farm 911 – Emily Project.

3. PURPOSE

This report aims to clarify the outstanding issue concerning the recommendations from the Agriculture Committee and seek direction from Council regarding whether to proceed with the Farm911 – Emily Project.

4. BACKGROUND

The Farm 911 - Emily Project – was born as a result of the tragic death of Emily Trudeau. Specific details concerning Emily's story and background to the project may be found through the following link (www.farm911.ca). The project aims to identify all lands currently not provided with

an address marker and the ability to have one, which, in turn, could assist local emergency services in locating a person in distress sooner.

On February 4, 2021, the Agricultural Committee received a verbal presentation from Fire Chief Ruller regarding the ability of emergency personnel to identify the location of 911 calls. Chief Ruller informed the Committee of the capabilities of the current person's location identification infrastructure and the Next Generation 911 system scheduled for introduction in 2024. Additionally, he noted the department's concern regarding the effectiveness of signing large parcels with multiple frontages. Following the presentation, the Agricultural Committee approved the following motion:

'That Council direct staff to investigate how to best address the need for parcel identification on farm parcels within the municipality and that a staff report regarding such be brought back to the Agricultural Committee for consideration.'

Council approved the Committee recommendation on February 22, 2021.

On November 16, 2021, Director Lamour provided the Agriculture Committee with Staff Report No. AC-02-21 (**Appendix I**), which spoke to the recommendations previously approved. The report outlined the steps and costs of introducing the project to Niagara-on-the-Lake. In support of the Agriculture Committee's request, a permit process was recommended to be established to document ownership, location of lands, desired location of signage and associated fees. Minutes from that meeting are attached to this report (**Appendix II**). To summarize, it was moved by the Committee that the recommendations within the report be approved as follows;

'1.1 The Agricultural Advisory Committee recommend Council approve the implementation of the FARM911 Municipal Addressing - Emily Project: and

1.2 The Agricultural Advisory Committee recommend to Council that Staff be directed to establish a permit system enabling property owners to apply for FARM911 signage.'

The meeting minutes from the Committee meeting were presented within the November 18, 2021, Information Package, item #7. The Information Package's contents are available at the following link: [Table Of Contents \(notl.com\)](#). Council received the contents of the information package on November 22, 2021, available through the following link: [Council Meeting Agenda, November 22nd, 2021 \(notl.com\)](#). The recommendations from the Agricultural Committee minutes were not brought forward to be addressed. To this day, Council direction on the recommendations remains outstanding.

5. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Staff has identified that approximately 240 parcels of land remain without an address.

While the Agricultural Committee put forward a recommendation that the Council approves the implementation of the FARM911 Municipal addressing project and that a permitting system is established for property owners to apply for FARM 911 signage, the Town's Fire & Emergency Services Department believes that the current methods in place to assist in identifying a person's

location are adequate and efficient should a person's location need to be identified in a rural setting during an emergency.

Currently, if a person is lost or suffering from an emergency in a rural area and does not know their location, through the use of the '**what3words**' software program, a fire communicator working within a dispatch centre would be able to assist in locating an individual to within 3 meters (10 feet) of their identified location. This information is then relayed to the responding emergency services (fire, police, and emergency medical service) through mobile data terminals available in emergency vehicles. This technology has been available for several years now. It has been previously used by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency services to locate a person within the Niagara Escarpment. The 'what3words' software program is available to anyone who calls 911 from their cell phone and can accept text messages with access to the internet on their phone. While downloading the 'what3words' app will assist a person lost and needing assistance, it is not required to be located as a communicator can send a link to the person who called 911 to assist in finding them. Additionally, a fire communicator can assist in identifying a person's location by utilizing cell phone tower triangulation technology.

With the introduction of New Generation 911 (NG911) - a service mandated to be in place by the province in 2025 - a person in distress can also send video and pictures to a communicator. This service will further assist in locating someone should they be lost or need help identifying their location.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN

The content of this report supports the following Strategic Plan initiatives:

Pillar(s)

3. Create a Culture of Customer Service Excellence

Objective(s)

3.3 Use technology to improve levels of service

Tactic(s)

3.3 a) Determine what services could be put online to enable easier access for customers

7. OPTIONS

- 7.1 **Option 1:** Council accepts that the current methods to identify an individual within the rural area are sufficient and directs Staff not to implement the FARM 911 - Emily project. (**Recommended**)
- 7.2 **Option 2:** Council approves the implementation of the FARM911 - Emily Project: and directs Staff to establish a permit system enabling property owners to apply for FARM911 signage. (*Not Recommended*)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in the report submitted to the Agricultural Committee on November 16, 2021, this program was anticipated to cost the Town approximately \$125.00 per sign. However, this cost could be subject to cost recovery should a parcel owner want to install a sign.

Should Council recommend implementing the FARM 911 project, a comprehensive review ensuring all costs are appropriately identified will need to be completed, as the last review was completed nearly two years ago.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no expected environmental implications as part of this project.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

Should Council recommend implementing the FARM 911 project, a communication plan will need to be established for the proper roll-out of the program.

11. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services Department believes the current methods to locate an individual in a rural area with no address or to locate someone unfamiliar with their location's address can be identified without the assistance of additional address signs.

12. PREVIOUS REPORTS

- **AC-01-2021** FARM911 Municipal Addressing - Emily Project

13. APPENDICES

- **Appendix I** – AC-01-2021 - FARM911 Municipal Addressing - Emily Project
- **Appendix II** – Agricultural Committee Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2021

Respectfully submitted:

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Submitted by:



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