

**Township of East Zorra-Tavistock Presentation to the
Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care re: Bonnie Brae**

Thursday, December 15, 2011.

Thank you for opportunity to comment.

My name is Jeff Carswell and I am Chief Administrative Officer for the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock. The Township is a local municipality in the County of Oxford. Tavistock is the largest village we have in Township comprising about 1/3 of the overall population of 7,000. Tavistock is also the main retail, commercial and industrial centre for the Township. As we all know, the Long-Term Care industry has been an integral part of Tavistock for many years. It is widely known that Tavistock has a higher concentration than normal of seniors and people living in retirement and long-term care facilities. This is something the community and Township is proud of and we would like to see continue into the future.

Being a relatively small, rural municipality any change in the Village of Tavistock, whether good or bad, can have an impact on the whole Township.

Obviously, Township Council is very concerned about the impact on Tavistock should the Bonnie Brae beds be moved to London, as is proposed.

While the Township and community has known for some time that the Bonnie Brae was a "D" facility and re-development will be needed, it is always a shock and major concern when any proposal comes forward, especially, when re-development isn't taking place at the same location. We think the Township and community have always been hopeful that any eventual redevelopment of the Bonnie Brae would recognize Tavistock's long history with Long-Term Care,

unique community benefits and the redevelopment would take place in Tavistock.

Unfortunately, this is not the proposal for the Bonnie Brae. While this is not the case, the Township does understand that the Long-Term Care industry in Tavistock is in private ownership and private businesses have investors, shareholders and other reasons for making the business decisions they do. Based on discussions that have taken place over the last several weeks, we are confident that Tavistock remains a great place for Long-Term Care to remain and grow in the future. We have learned that long-term care has certain efficiencies, as with any business. We have also learned that other facilities in Tavistock, if given the opportunity, may look to redevelop in Tavistock and we would be very supportive of this. We would also encourage the Ministry to look positively on this as well.

While we understand statistically, Tavistock has more Long-Term Care beds than other locations or compared to a provincial average, we believe there is more to long-term care than the geographic distribution of the beds. Maybe this proposal makes sense so that a "D" class facility can be redeveloped, but we hope any approvals are based on quality of care that can be provided by the facility operator and the broader community, not just to satisfy a geographic statistic.

Over the last several weeks the Township has undertaken several activities to better understand the potential impact if the Bonnie Brae were to leave. This also gave the Township a much better understanding of the importance of the Long-Term Care industry in Tavistock. To conduct some of this research, the Township leveraged assistance from staff working on a joint Rural Business Retention and Expansion Project being conducted. Additional Tavistock specific information was gathered and contributed to development of an Economic Impact Report. The Township also partnered with the Tavistock Chamber of Commerce

on this project. The Chamber of Commerce represents businesses in Tavistock and is also very concerned about the impact if the Bonnie Brae were to leave.

In addition to the economic impact analysis, the Township held a Community Consultation on December 5th. Approximately 130 residents came out to share their knowledge, thoughts and suggestions on the proposed movement of the Bonnie Brae to London. Meeting notes from this consultation are included in the Township's submission. The economic development staff also attended the meeting and incorporated information into the Economic Impact Report, which also forms part of the Township's submission. Municipal Council has only had two opportunities to discuss this matter and provide direction. At its last meeting on December 7th, Council directed that I prepare a submission based on the Economic Impact Study, Community Consultation and comments from Council.

As you will see, the information compiled is quite extensive for the short time-frame in which it was developed. I'm not going to go through the complete reports, but highlight several points.

In a small community such as Tavistock all businesses are important and the loss of a business like the Bonnie Brae will have a significant impact on the community. The loss of tax base, good jobs and retail activity will have a negative impact on the community. The economic report also suggested 25% of businesses would change their future business plans if the Bonnie Brae were to leave without some other similar business coming into town.

While residents in the Bonnie Brae are not highly mobile, their family, friends and visitors will often frequent businesses in town. Employees and volunteers also create retail activity. Our information shows the restaurants and service retail businesses will be most affected. There is also the trickle down effect that will flow through to other businesses in the community. These details are in the report.

There is also widespread concern about the impact on the Tavistock Community Health Care Clinic. Tavistock is fortunate to have a community based health care clinic and part of the success is related to the efficiencies created by the Long-Term Care facilities in Tavistock. This has provided benefits to both the Health Care Clinic and the long-term care facilities. Based on our findings, this benefit extends beyond Tavistock, as the Tavistock Medical Group is a teaching unit for the University of Western Ontario. For many years, medical students have been getting training in geriatrics and do rotations in the nursing homes. This is a unique benefit for everyone, including the Ministry of Health.

In addition to the economic impact, the report examines the social and health care impacts. One element that should be highlighted from the report and Community Meeting is the high quality health care and social benefits that are provided to the long-term care residents. This is not to suggest other locations do not provide high quality care, it is more about the "extras" that facilities in Tavistock can provide. Things like an active volunteer community and efforts made by local service clubs to include long-term care residents. For example, the parade routes in Tavistock are specifically planned to go by the Bonnie Brae so residents have an opportunity to participate. We doubt this would happen in a larger centre. The Village of Tavistock is also conducive to getting residents out and about in the community. Flat terrain and a small downtown allow residents and family to do more than just visit within the confines of the long-term care centre. Getting out and being part of community is important for residents, their family and the community. Even before the Province started declaring June as Seniors Month, the Township has been hosting the annual Senior's Picnic in June each year to recognize Seniors contributions. In recent years the local public school students have been volunteering to help with the picnic.

In addition to the high quality health care and social benefits for the residents, Tavistock also provides opportunities for family to be close by. For example,

there is a wide range of housing options should a spouse wish to live in town. There are also social supports such as active service clubs and other social opportunities for people to participate in. There is a downtown with a wide range of services and stores so trips to larger centres are rarely required. Tavistock has banks, a drug store, grocery store, hardware store, variety stores, library, restaurants and even a Tim Hortons. Many people say the only thing you can't get in Tavistock is clothes. This type of downtown is unique for a community of about 2,300 people and we believe having the concentration of long-term care facilities is part of the reason it can be supported.

These are benefits that we believe are unique to Tavistock and contribute to high quality health care for seniors. And, these extras come at no additional cost to the Ministry of Health or the private operators. More of these unique social and health benefits are listed in the reports the Township is submitting. I am confident many more will be shared by local residents and others speaking today.

In summary, based on our research and investigation, the loss of the Bonnie Brae will have a negative impact on the community. The Township's preference would be that the redevelopment of the Bonnie Brae take place in Tavistock and that the redevelopment be such that it can take place with additional beds to create the efficiencies required by a private operator to run a successful business. We would also stress, that the Bonnie Brae should be redeveloped and not stuck in limbo any longer or just shut down and boarded up in 2014. For the benefit of the residents, something needs to be done.

If redevelopment doesn't take place in Tavistock, the Township believes there should be additional beds added to the existing facilities in Tavistock. This would help to alleviate the negative impacts that have been identified by our research and take advantage of the many strengths that Tavistock brings to the long-term care industry. Tavistock has demonstrated its ability to provide high quality care,

even in the most obsolete facility. One can only imagine what the community of Tavistock, in conjunction with the high quality private operators and Tavistock Community Health Care Clinic could do in a new facility, with an optimum number of beds that we know will be around for the long-term.

A copy of these remarks, the Tavistock Economic Analysis and Future Impact Study and the December 5th meeting notes will be submitted by electronically. I have also prepared hard copies for submission today. And, if there are any questions about this submission Township staff are always available.

Thank you.

Prepared and submitted on behalf the
Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

Jeff Carswell
Chief Administrative Officer