

History of Essex County

Governor General Lord Dorchester, in a proclamation issued from the Castle of St. Louis, in the City of Quebec, the 24th of July, 1788, divided the Province of Quebec into five districts, namely: Gaspe, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nassau and Hesse.

The District of Hesse was comprised of all the residue of the Province in the western or inland parts thereof from the southerly to the northerly boundary of the same and included Detroit and Mackinaw and the country south of them to the Ohio and Westward to the Mississippi. On the 16th day of July, 1792, Governor Simcoe, in his proclamation from Kingston, divided Upper Canada into nineteen counties. The Provincial Legislature at its first session at Newark, on the 15th day of October, 1792 (32 Geo. III, C.8) re-named the above four last named districts in their order, the Eastern, Midland, Home and Western.

By that same proclamation Essex was made the eighteenth county and was to be bounded in the east by the County of Suffolk, in the south by Lake Erie, in the west by the Detroit River to Maisonville's Mill, from thence by a line running parallel to the River Detroit and Lake St. Clair at the distance of four miles until it meets the River Tranche, or Thames, thence up the said river to the northwest boundary of the County of Suffolk.

An Act for the Better Division of the Province, 38 Geo. III, C.5, proclaimed on 1st January, 1800, said "The Townships of Rochester, Mersea, Gosfield, Maidstone, Sandwich, Malden, and the tracts of land occupied by the Huron and other Indians upon the Strait, together with such islands as are in Lake Erie, St. Clair and the Straits, do constitute and form the County of Essex and Kent, together with so much of this Province as is not included within any other district thereof, do constitute the Western District."

Act 4 and 5, Vic. Chap. 10 "An Act to provide for the Better Internal Government of that part of the Province which formerly constituted the Province of Upper Canada, by the Establishment of Local Municipalities therein," went into effect January 1, 1842. The first meeting of the Western District Council, attended by representatives from the counties of Essex, Kent and Lambton was held in the Court House, Town of Sandwich, on the 14th day of February 1842.

The said District Council met from time to time in the Court House, Sandwich, until the close of the October Session in 1849. This was the last year of the District Council.

The Municipal Council of the United Counties of Essex, Kent and Lambton met in the Court House, Sandwich, on the 28th day of January, 1850. Representatives were present from all municipalities in the County of Essex with the exception of Tilbury West, which had been attached to Kent until the close of 1851. This council was only in existence for one year. The last session closed on the 11th day of October, 1850. Kent then separated from the Union.

History of Essex County (Continued...)

The Municipal Council of the United Counties of Essex and Lambton met in the Court House, Sandwich, on the 27th day of January, 1851. This union continued for about two years and a half, the last session closing on the 23rd day of June, 1853.

The first session of the County Council of the County of Essex, under “The County Councils Act, 1896,” was held in the Council Chamber, Court House, Sandwich, on Tuesday, January 26th, 1897.

County Council Districts

- No. 1 Townships of Anderdon and Malden and Town of Amherstburg.
- No. 2 Townships of Colchester North and Colchester South and Town of Essex.
- No. 3 Townships of Gosfield North and Gosfield South and Town of Kingsville.
- No. 4 Township of Mersea and Town of Leamington.
- No. 5 Townships of Tilbury West and Tilbury North and Rochester.
- No. 6 Townships of Maidstone and Sandwich South and Village of Belle River.
- No. 7 Townships of Sandwich East and Sandwich West and Town of Sandwich.

“County Councils Act, 1906”

The first session of the County Council of the County of Essex, under “The County Councils Act, 1906”, was held in the Council Chambers, Court House, Sandwich, on Tuesday, January 22, 1907.

Essex County Council - The Municipalities as of 1906 and Later Amended Again

Amherstburg	Leamington
Anderdon	Maidstone
Belle River	Malden
Colchester North	Mersea
Colchester South	Rochester
Essex Town	Sandwich East
Gosfield North	Sandwich South
Gosfield South	Sandwich Town
Kingsville	Tilbury North
LaSalle	Tilbury West

Restructuring of the County of Essex

The County of Essex underwent a major restructuring that reduced the County from twenty-one local municipalities to seven. This restructuring was the result of a long period of review and discussion commencing in 1992, and extending through to the end

History of Essex County (Continued...)

of 1997. On November 19, 1997, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Al Leach, issued a Minister's Order putting in place the new municipal structure for the County of Essex. On January 1, 1999, the Minister's Order was implemented and the County fully restructured. The number of local councillors was reduced from 117 to 51. County Council was reduced from 42 to 25 and finally to its current 14 members.

In the years following the restructuring of Essex County, it became apparent that the serviced industrial land in the Windsor/Essex region had become scarce. There were no large parcels of serviced industrial land within the region available for large industrial developments needed to create jobs and growth within the region.

In May of 2002, the County of Essex, Town of Tecumseh and a City of Windsor recognized the need for a cooperative solution and commenced negotiations. An agreed upon boundary adjustment agreement which proposed the transfer of approximately 6,300 acres of land from the Town of Tecumseh to the City of Windsor was submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs in October of 2002. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable Chris Hodgson, issued a Minister's Order on December 5, 2002, which implemented boundary adjustment, effective January 1, 2003.

The following are the seven municipalities that were created as a result of the restructuring of Essex County:

Town of LaSalle

No change.

Town of Tecumseh

Tecumseh, St. Clair Beach and Sandwich South amalgamated as the Town of Tecumseh January 1, 1999. A boundary adjustment, effective January 1, 2003 resulted in approximately 6,300 acres of land being transformed to the City of Windsor.

Municipality of Lakeshore

Maidstone and Belle River amalgamated as the Township of Lakeshore, January 1, 1998. Lakeshore, Rochester, Tilbury North and Tilbury West amalgamated as the Town of Lakeshore, January 1, 1999.

The Town of Lakeshore was renamed the Municipality of Lakeshore in 2020.

History of Essex County (Continued...)

Municipality of Leamington

Leamington and Mersea amalgamated as the Town of Leamington, January 1, 1999. Town of Leamington changed name to the Municipality of Leamington, dated March 31, 1999.

Town of Kingsville

Kingsville, Gosfield North and Gosfield South amalgamated as the Town of Kingsville, January 1, 1999.

Town of Essex

Essex, Colchester North, Colchester South and Harrow amalgamated as the Town of Essex, January 1st, 1999.

Town of Amherstburg

Amherstburg, Anderson and Malden amalgamated as the Town of Amherstburg on January 1, 1998.

Governance of Essex County

Essex County is governed by a Council made up of representatives of the constituent municipalities. The individual municipalities look after local matters and the County confines its interest to areas of wider concerns, such as County roads, emergency medical services, emergency management coordination and, Sun Parlor Home. Windsor and Pelee Island are separate municipalities without membership on County Council.