

Minutes - The Blue Mountains Special Council Meeting



MEETING DATE: October 29, 2008

LOCATION: L.E. Shore Memorial Library

PREPARED BY: Stephen Keast, Clerk

A. Call to Order

- Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order with all members in attendance, save Councillor Martin, absent due to a previous commitment.
- Also in attendance was Chief Administrative Officer Paul Graham, Director of Engineering and Public Works Reg Russwurm, Manager of Water and Wastewater John Caswell, Director of Planning Peter Tollefsen, Director of Recreation Shawn Everitt, Director of Finance Rob Cummings, Deputy Treasurer Elizabeth Thompson, Director of Building and By-law Enforcement David Finbow and Library Chief Executive Officer Carol Cooley.
- Council then paused for a moment of Personal Prayer or Reflection.
- Approval of Agenda:

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Cameron Kennedy

THAT the Agenda of October 29, 2008 be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda, Carried.

- No member declared a pecuniary interest with any matter as listed on the Agenda.

B. Items for Discussion

1. Results of Service Delivery Review
2. Review 2008 Budget Priorities

CAO Paul Graham then introduced the Service Delivery Review document, noting it was intended to have an informal dialogue with Council on opportunities for agreement.

Paul then noted many ideas regarding Service Delivery may result in revisions to the draft 2009 Budget.

Regarding Administration, Paul then reviewed conduct of Public Information Centres to date, many had a poor turnout from the public. Paul then proposed the Town take a multi-faceted approach in contacting the public on matters of interest, adding Communications and Economic Development Coordinator Lisa Kidd was now developing a wide-ranging e-mail contact grouping to blitz e-mail notices and information.

Paul then noted public meetings together with e-mailing and locating public notice boards in various reception areas as well as direct contact with various groups and associations should increase awareness. Further, public information sessions would be scheduled prior to regular Council meetings.

Councillor Gamble then noted delaying the start of Council meetings for half an hour may allow working members to attend the PIC's and Council.

Councillor McKean then noted the practice may assist members of the public in only having to attend one evening.

Councillor Martin then attended the meeting.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay then proposed an annual Town meeting.

Paul then reviewed proposed revisions to the Town website, including links to Grey County and Google mapping, capacity to support the revisions created by internally shifting certain job responsibilities.

Paul noted the public would be educated as to the website tools available, David noting the Building Department was reviewing linking Building Permit and inspection status to the website.

Paul then reviewed proposed Staffing levels through 2011, noting there were significant Staffing needs, however, it was likely a number of positions will have to be delayed for a period following Budget review.

Paul then noted compensation for student hires would have to be reviewed to be competitive, Deputy Mayor McKinlay noting summer positions could be advertised earlier, Shawn noting in 2008 job interviews were held during reading week.

Shawn further noted there is an attempt to hire younger students as labourers and retain them through to operator status, Paul noting the Town presently has a co-op student through Georgian Bay Secondary School.

Councillor Gamble then noted unemployed adults with families should be considered as well.

Duncan then noted the Town could accommodate several co-op students.

Paul then reviewed Tree Preservation Efforts, noting enforcement of preservation requirements where trees have been cut is difficult.

Duncan then noted trees left on development lands were often injured and killed during construction activity and questioned if tree planting should be encouraged versus preservation.

Paul noted small clusters of trees in developments are difficult to preserve, a larger tract easier by restricting access during construction.

Peter then noted we have to plan smarter in preserving trees.

David then noted enforcement is after the fact rather than pro-active and the Town needs to be more pro-active in preservation efforts where trees are so designated.

Paul then noted it was proposed to increase trees on road allowances, Councillor Kennedy noting Site Plan Agreements would be a venue for preservation.

Duncan then noted open space blocks that were deeded to the Town would be easier to protect and preserve.

Shawn then noted the Parks Use By-law precludes any cutting of trees on public land, Paul noting remedy would be in the courts.

David noted a By-law can be passed but enforcement will be reactive with litigation in bringing a penalty expensive.

Councillor McGee then noted the Town could lead by example in tree management and incentives could be used to have people plant trees.

Councillor McKean proposed a certain per centage of lot coverage be tree canopy, David noting Engineering Standards and Site Plan requirements could prescribed tree-planting.

Duncan then noted the Town could plant trees on private property by easement with maintenance assumed by the Town, David noting the Town could give away trees to interested landowners.

Councillor Martin then noted the Town should be vigorous with planting and preservation efforts on both public and private property.

David then reviewed Building and By-law Enforcement initiatives to create efficiencies and capacity, including placement of the Town Zoning By-law online to enhance self-service.

David noted electronic applications for Building Permits may be available in the next two years with Building assuming on-site septic responsibility for better service.

David then reviewed a facility maintenance program that would include capital planning for maintenance and repair, Paul noting the program is intended as an interim measure to delay hiring a Facilities Manager.

David then reviewed Building efforts to assist the GIS Coordinator in civic addressing.

Councillor Kennedy then questioned how civic addresses are established, David noting numbers are only assigned to lots with buildings and the Town, County and Province all have to update databases accordingly.

David then reviewed Building assuming the issuance of Entrance Permits.

David then reviewed the Security Alarm Registration program, noting revenues to date are below estimate, although with the program up and running Staff time is proposed to be reduced to 1.5 days per week which would aid cost recovery.

Duncan then noted the program should assist police in reducing false alarm dispatches.

David then reviewed a program to reduce builder's damage to municipal infrastructure based on initial provision of a damage security deposit.

Councillor McGee then questioned Public Works doing an initial inspection with Building doing all subsequent inspections during building inspections, David noting Public Works would perform the initial inspection following assumption of

works with Building performing subsequent inspections during the building process.

Duncan then noted it would be in a contractor's best interest to have existing deficiencies noted prior to construction.

John then noted an initial inspection performed by Building would be cost-recoverable.

David then reviewed By-law Enforcement efforts, noting response is complaint-oriented. David noted dog by-law enforcement is rarely related to licenced dogs and perhaps licence revenue should be earmarked for dog related programs such as an off-leash dog park, adding enforcement is difficult at present in terms of manpower and appeasing residents.

Paul then noted expectation is created with the passing of By-laws but there is little or no capacity for increased enforcement.

Councillor Kennedy then noted the Town requires regulatory By-laws and enforcement should follow and if additional officers are required so be it.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay then noted the changing demographics of the Town lead to an increased level of regulation and enforcement, Cam noting we should be able to enforce on a complaint basis.

David then noted Sign By-law enforcement has been reduced recently with an increase of location signs noted, Duncan noting perhaps increased wayfinding efforts are required.

Paul then noted there is no one By-law that is problematic, rather it is a cumulative effect, Duncan noting Short Term Accommodation efforts will greatly increase Staff time.

Mayor Anderson then noted additional Staff would be required for increased enforcement, Councillor Gamble noting periodic advertising campaigns on selective enforcement similar to the OPP seatbelt program may be of benefit.

Duncan then questioned if the Town should get out of dog control, David noting enforcement often involves neighbourhood issues with licencing penalizing good dog owners.

Duncan then questioned need for licencing, Paul noting fees would generate revenues for programs such as off-leash parks.

David noted that enforcement levels have been adjusted and the public perhaps should be aware of the service levels and capacity to take on additional work, Paul noting the public may not be amenable to such a situation.

David then noted fines through the court process do not represent cost recovery, nor does the administrative fee associated with long grass notices.

Mayor Anderson then noted there is frequently long grass on Town owned properties such as rights-of-way and boulevards.

David then reviewed Lot Grading enforcement issues, noting a great deal of time is spent on mediation between owners, particularly in infilling situations with development of a standard response proposed together with site inspection.

Paul noted this issue affects Engineering and Public Works as well.

Duncan then questioned the root cause of such problems, David noting for example a new home built between two existing dwellings may significantly increase the lot elevation with run-off following. Duncan then noted perhaps outreach to contractors and landscapers would assist.

Paul noted Staff and Council would have to be consistent in response to a municipal position on lot grading.

Councillor Martin then questioned if lot grading plans can be required for infilling, David replying yes but people do not accept that the Building Code allows drainage onto an adjacent property so long as it does not have an adverse impact, adverse defined by the Chief Building Official.

Councillor McKean then noted removing ourselves from the issue would be a good position for the Town as people will always be able to find a contractor to landscape to their wishes.

David then noted technological investment has aided in meeting workplace demands and achieving what is expected, noting the GIS Coordinator position has been of great assistance, the position also having inherited a number of issues.

Rob then reviewed Financial Services issues, primarily being provision of timely, reliable and accessible financial information, assisted with new technology and training.

Rob noted Staff are essentially working at capacity and it is difficult to train Staff and lose their work time.

Paul then noted deferral of a proposed 9 month contract in 2009 to 2011 could yield a full-time PSAB position in 2011.

Duncan then questioned if other Staff could do more to assist Financial Services Staff, Rob noting other Staff could be involved in role based access of financial information based on timely encumbrance accounting to prepare more accurate Staff Reports without requesting information from Financial Services.

Councillor McGee then noted he found municipal accounting difficult and complicated and questioned if more services were being added to information that was difficult to use and out of date in the first place.

Rob then noted it was identified the information is to be delivered in a much more timely fashion, with PSAB a first step toward full accrual accounting versus the current municipal practice of fund accounting.

John then noted any practice that frees Staff to provide more timely information is beneficial, Councillor Gamble noting municipal software applications may always lag behind private sector applications.

Duncan then questioned time spent on Provincial performance measure requirements and if they had a useful purpose for the information, Rob noting a Financial Information Return is mandatory with some Municipal Performance Measures Program indicators useful, adding Town developed performance measures would be a better tool.

Director of Planning Peter Tollefsen then reviewed Planning issues, including streamlined NEC comments and revisions to the draft plan approval process, including payment of cost contributions from developers for the installation of cul-de-sacs in new development due to increased operations and maintenance costs to the Town for winter maintenance and flushing of dead-end mains.

Director of Engineering and Public Works Reg Russwurm then reviewed EPW issues, including a proposal to establish single locates for water and wastewater and conversion to radio read water meters.

Councillor Gamble then questioned conversion to radio read water meters, Reg noting the same meter reader will be doing the readings and location of new meters will be mapped.

Reg then reviewed a proposal where all wood cleared from development would be chipped rather than burnt, with chips to be utilized in landscaping and temporary landfill cover, Deputy Mayor McKinlay noting chipping would utilize diesel fuel.

Reg then reviewed Landfill cover operations, CAO Paul Graham noting Staff operation of a five day a week cover and compaction operation would yield cost savings versus contracting out, Councillor McKean questioning if sufficient landfill capacity existed to warrant the equipment purchase, Paul noting mining and other options are being investigated to extend landfill capacity.

John then questioned hours of compaction per week, Reg to check.

John then noted compaction machines have a high maintenance requirement, Reg noting a business plan would be made for the program.

Director of Recreation Shawn Everitt then reviewed Recreation issues, noting public washroom facilities generally should be considered only as part of larger projects, porta-potties installed the past summer in downtown Thornbury and appear to have been well-used.

Shawn then noted a co-op student from Georgian Bay Secondary School is currently completing a survey of students from Grade 3 through high school to determine how recreation opportunities are perceived.

Shawn then noted the value placed on volunteers in the community and a goal to develop cost-effective ways to deliver municipal programs utilizing volunteers in such programs as Depot operations and adopt-a-trail sections.

Paul then noted the meeting discussions would be included in the Service Delivery Review document and would form part of the overall 2009 Budget document.

Councillor Gamble then requested a Report on the Youth Initiative Coordinator position prior to consideration of any full-time position, Shawn noting the position has been vacant for 2.5 months.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay then questioned how certain initiatives and by-law issues would be addressed, Paul noting comments will be considered and further discussions would occur, David noting the concern seemed to be with service levels rather than individual by-laws, Duncan replying alternatives to enforcement such as education might be considered.

Councillor Kennedy then noted he would like to revisit the 2008 Budget priorities document revisited, Council and Staff concurring to meet again on October 30, 2008 to review Budget priorities.

C. Adjournment

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Cameron Kennedy

THAT this Special Council Meeting does now adjourn at 11:02 p.m. to meet again October 30, 2008, 6:30 pm, L.E. Shore Library, Carried.

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Ellen Anderson, Mayor

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Stephen Keast, Clerk