



Staff Report

Administration

Report To: Community Communications Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: July 15, 2019
Report Number: FAF.19.125
Subject: Town Newsletter Six Month Trial
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee receive Staff Report FAF.19.125, entitled "Town Newsletter 6 Month Trial";

AND THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee asks Council to consider identifying the Town Newsletter as a key communications priority and allocate funding to facilitate the project in 2019.

OR

AND THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee request that staff include the costs associated with the Town Newsletter in the 2020 Communications Budget for consideration by Council.

B. Overview

This report provides a follow-up report regarding a six-month trial Town newsletter following direction at the June 15, 2019, Community Communications Advisory Committee ("Committee") meeting.

C. Background

At the June 17th, 2019 Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

Moved by: John

Seconded by: Peter

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee directs the existing working group to bring back recommendations regarding the Top 3 Communications Priorities for the Committee's consideration and approval;

AND THAT as part of the development of the Town's Communications Strategy, staff follow-up with the Committee with a report, including funding options, for a six-month

trial newsletter, to be circulated both digitally and in print, which includes a survey to obtain the public's feedback on preferred methods of communication.

The creation of a Town newsletter has been identified as a communications priority by both the Community Communications Advisory Committee and Town staff. As a result, staff have provided this report to examine the details of the project.

D. Analysis

To improve communication with residents, and at the request of the Community Communications Advisory Committee staff have explored the details of creating a Town newsletter that can be offered in both print and digital formats.

To ensure the best possible distribution, staff recommend that the newsletter be distributed to all registered Canada Post addresses within the Town. Although this will be the most expensive option, generally when communication items are available at Town and community facilities, the engagement rate is low.

Alternatively, the printed newsletters could be distributed through other methods such as insertion into local newspapers and magazines, or through distribution at local businesses. Although these are viable methods, the committee should be cognizant that this will not ensure full coverage and distribution across the municipality.

Due to both the variance in demographics and the seasonal part-time lifestyle of many residents, the newsletter will also be published digitally through both the Town website and the online magazine program ISSUU, which allows for an online 'magazine like' reading experience.

Timeline:

As this is a new initiative, it is expected that the first edition will take slightly longer than normal to develop. Within the timeline below, the first edition will be ready for distribution by early-mid September.

Item / Task	Date
Layout Design	July 2019
Content Writing	August 2019
Sent to Printers	End of August 2019
Distribution	Early – Mid September

In the sense of the six-month trial, it is recommended that subsequent editions be released bi-monthly to accommodate staff workload capacity. As an alternative, the edition could be released quarterly if they were to contain additional pages to accommodate content needs.

Estimated Cost / Resource Considerations:

The cost of delivering a Town Newsletter widely varies depending upon the method of distribution. The example outlined below is for an eight-page newsletter distributed as Government Ad Mail through Canada Post.

Newsletter

- Two sheets of 11x17 paper folded in half and stapled (8 single pages in total)
- Full colour, gloss and normal stock

Communication Item	Estimated Cost / Resource Considerations
Printing	\$1750 - \$2300 (5500 copies)
Distribution	.1695* * 5250 = \$890
Total	\$2640 - 3190

Funding Sources

As recommended by the Community Communications Advisory Committee, staff have explored the possibility of utilizing the Development Charge funding to cover the expense. The Town Finance Department has indicated that this is not an eligible expense under the requirements of Development Charge funding.

Staff have also determined that there is not any capacity within the Communications operating budgets to accommodate the expense.

At this time, staff recommend that the Committee directs staff to submit a report to Council outlining costs and potential funding sources with a request for Council to consider approving a six-month trial newsletter as part of its communications strategy.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners

Objective #1 Improve External Communication with our Constituents

Objective #2 Use Technology to Advance Engagement

Objective #3 Strengthen Partnerships

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence

Objective #2 Improve Internal Communications Across our Organization

Objective #3 To Consistently Deliver Excellent Customer Service

Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

F. Environmental Impacts

The environmental impact is related to the printing and distribution of 5,500 newsletters across the Town of The Blue Mountains. The environmental impact will be offset through the reliance on the digital newsletter to reach part-time and seasonal residents.

G. Financial Impact

Please see the 'Estimated Cost / Resource Considerations' chart above for the estimated financial impact.

H. In consultation with

Shawn Everitt, Chief Administration Officer

Sam Dinsmore, Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Accounting and Budgets

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry at communications@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

N/A

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Hendry
Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Shawn Everitt
Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:
Tim Hendry, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator
communications@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 282