



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of The Whole (COTW) Meeting
Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020

1. Meeting, Date & Time:

The COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council was called to order on Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 at 7:05pm in the Council Chambers Sherbrooke, N.S.

2. Attending:

Warden Mosher (via teleconference)	Councillor Kaiser-Kirk (via teleconference)
Councillor Baker (via teleconference)	Councillor Smith (via teleconference)
Councillor Findlay (via teleconference)	Councillor Malloy (via teleconference)

Also Attending:

Marvin MacDonald, CAO (via teleconference)
Marissa Jordan, Municipal Clerk (via teleconference)
Marian Fraser, Director of Finance (via teleconference)
Hannah MacDonald, Development Projects Coordinator (via teleconference)

Absent with Regrets:

Deputy Warden Dort (via teleconference)

3. Approval of Agenda:

On motion of Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes:

On motion of Councillor Kaiser-Kirk and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held Wednesday, May 20th, 2020.

Motion carried.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- Councillor Smith asked if staff had heard back from the Beautification Funding. The CAO stated that staff had not heard anything yet.

6. Presentation:

a. Land Use By-Law & Municipal Planning Strategy- Introduction of Consultants, Fathom Studios

- Rob Leblanc introduced himself as a project manager with Fathom Studios who will be update St. Mary's Municipal Planning Strategy(MPS) and Land Use By-Law(MPS). He went through a presentation explaining their company and the plan for updating these documents.
- He outlined the process and phases Fathom Studios plans to use including the Analysis Phase (month 1), Engagement Phase(month 2), MPS/LUB Phase(month 3-4). During the initial phases data will be gathered through interviews, aerial photography, base mapping and a history review.
- Mr. Leblanc spoke about the public engagement process and how the social distancing may create a challenge. A portion of the public engagement does include an online platform. Councillor Smith conveyed that due to lack of connectivity for our population, some of the public may not have the opportunity for input and asked if there were other forms of communication other than online. She also suggested using community bulletin boards for a form of public communication. Mr. Leblanc said he will

discuss with the CAO and the Project Development Coordinator other options such as telephone and mail outs.

- Mr. Leblanc explained for the end phase they will be drafting the new form of the documents and showed examples of Wolfville's documents that Fathom worked on. Their documents are very graphically visual with plain language, so it is simple to understand and easy to follow.
- Mr. Leblanc asked for any considerations or feedback from Council while Fathom moves forward in the process. Warden Mosher stated that Council will further discuss these topics and convey these at the next meeting with Fathom Studios. The CAO agreed that staff will set up a planning session in the future to further discuss these items.
- Councillor Smith asked if Mr. Leblanc could elaborate on the history review that will be conducted in the analysis phase. Mr. Leblanc stated that during this review consultants will be trying to paint a picture of how the community has evolved over time and the importance of history and culture will be imbedded into the plan.
- Councillor Kaiser-Kirk asked if a new logo would be created for the Municipality in the branding phase. Mr. Leblanc said no, the existing logo would remain but the process for updating the plans and engaging the public will have its own branding strategy.

Rob Leblanc, Project Development Coordinator for Fathom Studios, left the meeting at 7:38pm

Hannah MacDonald, Development Projects Coordinator left the meeting at 7:38pm

7. Correspondence:

a. Queen's Lodge #34

- A thank you card was received from Queen's Lodge #34 for the Municipality's support over the years and recent contribution.

b. IHL Pentecostal Church

- A thank you card was received from the children of the Indian Harbour Lake Pentecostal Church for the Municipality's support during the pandemic.

8. Other Matters of Business:

a. Municipal Elections

- The Municipal Returning Officer updated Council on work being done for the Municipal Elections. On May 27th, 2020, staff attended an Electronic Voting Webinar with presentations from other municipalities that have had experience implementing alternative methods of voting from previous elections.
- Alternative Methods may include Telephone Voting (landline or cellphone), Electronic/Online Ballet Voting, Central Location for an Electronic Kiosk. In addition to existing methods of voting, implementing alternative methods can provide better accessibility to voters and may increase the number of citizens that participate in an election.
- To date, Halifax Regional Municipality has entered a contract with Intelivote Systems Inc., a company that provides services for telephone and electronic ballot voting. St. Mary's Municipality has contacted Intelivote to further gather information and costs related to their services.
- Due to the possibility of the continued social distancing requirements and the potential for a second wave of the COVID-19 virus during the 2020 Municipal Elections, new challenges for the elections could arise including:
 - less options for polling station locations due to inadequate spacing for social distancing requirements
 - a decreased interest to fill election worker positions due to potential safety issues and increased risk
 - less citizens voting at polling stations due to the fear of an increased risk of exposure to the virus

- Implementing alternative methods of voting may lessen these effects by:
 - decreasing the number of in-person polling stations that may be needed
 - with less polling stations, less staff would be needed to operate the remaining stations
 - new voting methods would allow citizens the option to vote from the comfort and safety of their own homes
- To implement any alternative methods of voting for the upcoming Elections, an Alternative Voting By-Law must be passed by Council. To pass a By-Law, certain requirements must be met as stated in section 168 of the Municipal Governments Act (MGA):
 - (1) A by-law shall be read twice. (at a regular or special council meeting)
 - (2) At least fourteen days before a by-law is read for a second time, notice of the council's intent to consider the by-law shall be published in a newspaper circulating in the municipality.
- The deadline for establishing alternative methods of voting is August 17th, 2020 as per the Municipal Elections Act. Draft #1 of the Alternative Voting By-Law is attached for Council's consideration.
- Warden Mosher clarified that by making a recommendation today to approve draft #1 of the Alternative Voting By-Law, the Municipality would only be setting the groundwork for the option to implement alternative methods of voting for the upcoming Election. Approving this By-Law would not mean that Council must implement any new methods at this time.
- Councillor Smith asked what the requirements were for the Systems Election Officer. The Returning Officer and CAO stated they were unsure but would ask and get back to Council. Councillor Smith also asked that Council consider changing wording in the By-Law under section 9 (2) to use non-binary terms. This would mean removing "brother, sister" and inserting "siblings" as well as removing "spouse" and inserting "partner" from section 9 (2) of the By-Law. The Returning Officer and CAO will look into this section and ask Municipal Affairs if this is something that is able to be changed in the By-Law without affecting the MGA requirements.

On recommendation of Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council approve Draft #1 of the Alternative Voting By-Law and continue with the first reading of the By-Law at the June 8th, 2020 Council Meeting.
Recommendation adopted.

b. Eastern Housing Authority Board Representative

- CAO MacDonald was contacted by the current representative, Ruth Legge, that her second term as representative on the Eastern Housing Authority Board will soon be coming to an end. Council will be receiving notification from Eastern Housing Authority of this change with the request to nominate a new representative.
- Councillor Baker asked if Mrs. Legge was interested in filling the position again, or if she was allowed. The CAO stated that Mrs. Legge indicated that where this was her second term, that Council may want to consider someone new if there was interest. The CAO will see if there are any other candidates that may be interested in becoming a representative.

c. Mileage/Expense Policy

- Councillor Smith submitted suggested changes to the Mileage/Expense Policy for Council's consideration. The proposed additions to the Mileage Expense Policy are highlighted below:

Reports to Council:

Report to Council is a document that a Councillor uses to report on an outside Committee or Board meetings in-which an appointment has been made by Council, conferences, seminars, out of house trainings, or meetings that have been approved. Reporting is not required for monthly Council Meeting, Committee of the Whole, or regular business of Council.

Payment Term:

Council members are responsible for filling out monthly Municipal expense claims and

submitting them with signature, and Report to Council form(s). All Municipal expense claims and Reports to Council are to be submitted to the Municipal Office for processing within five business days following month end.

Cheques will be prepared for distribution no later than five business days following the submission of the expense claim and contingent on Report to Council form submission(s). All Council and CAO expense claims will be posted on the Municipal website after they are processed.

- These suggested changes came after a meeting Councillor Smith had with a resident who was concerned about the lack of reporting and follow up of Council when they were attending meetings or seminars. It was discussed that reporting was a way to bring back the information from these meetings and presenting them to Council. This would allow Council and public to be more aware and educated on these meetings which allows Council to make informed decisions. Councillor Smith asked for Council discussion on these items.
- Councillor Malloy conveyed that she believed that Councillors already submit expense and committee reports at the end of every month.
- Councillor Findlay noted that there were times that she went to one meeting on her way to another one, using the same mileage on the expense form. Councillor Findlay suggested that it should be put on the onus of Council and Councillors not submit their mileage unless their report was submitted.

On recommendation of Councillor Smith, and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approves the suggested changes Smith to the Mileage and Expense Policy.

- Councillor Malloy asked to have clarified which of these suggestions were changes to the existing policy. The CAO explained that any text highlighted in yellow were additions to the existing policy. Councillor Malloy said that she had a concern about the "Reports to Council" section and explained that when she goes to meetings for the Community Health Board, the Municipality does not pay her mileage therefore she does not put in an expense claim for this.
- The CAO asked Councillor Smith to clarify if the reports being referenced in the changes are those of Council attending conferences and seminars as opposed to those reports for committee meetings.
- Councillor Smith said it would require, based on the suggested changes, those reports on outside committee or board appointment meetings as well. She stated that the example that Councillor Malloy gave of the Community Health Board where a Councillor does not submit an expense, would not fall under this change but this would be covered under the procedure of Councillors submitting their report to Council forms.
- Councillor Findlay stated that she believed this would create more work for the Director of Finance.

Recommendation NOT passed. (Nays-Councillor Findlay, Councillor Malloy, Councillor Kaiser-Kirk)

d. Office Re-opening Plan

- CAO MacDonald updated Council on the proposed steps to re-open the Municipal Office. From June 1st to June 12th staff has been phased back into the office with Covid-19 spacing and sanitizing protocols and consideration for childcare needs addressed. On June 15th, the Municipal Office will be open to the public under Covid-19 social/physical spacing rules and sanitizing requirements. Recreation equipment will be available for loans to public with sanitizing protocols in place as well as kayak rentals.
- Council meetings will continue online until further notice and the Community room, Council Chambers, Fitness Centre and RecPlex will remain closed to the public until further notice.
- Child/Summer Day Camps & Swim Lessons are cancelled and will be replaced by activity kits for registered participants.

- During the office closure staff had gridded plexiglass screen installed at the front desk which acts to keep customers at an appropriate distance from the counter and from leaning into the workspace of front counter staff. Decals have also been ordered and will be placed on the floor to show appropriate distancing (2 meters) for customers to separate from others and staff and only a maximum of 3 people in the Municipal Building lobby at one time.
- Expanded Cleaning protocols have been developed for return of staff to the office – June 1st -12th (Phase 1) and for the opening of the office for June 15th (Phase 2).
- Contingency planning for dealing with potential cases of Covid-19 will be established for the next wave of Covid-19. These items will be addressed at a Joint Occupational Health and Safety to be scheduled for the near future.
- Further considerations include:
 - The possible controlled use of recreation facilities for specific purposes such as pickle ball, badminton, tennis, indoor bike track, rollerblades etc and staff will begin to work on contingency plan for usage of facilities
 - The potential for alternative physical activity programming (children and adults)
 - The promotion of park and trails usage
 - Utilizing government programs for hiring of students to deliver alternative recreation programs and for maintenance related work
 - Planning for Council returning to in-person meetings – spacing requirements and extended cleaning protocols
- Warden Mosher said that Council will give some thought to Council beginning to hold meetings in person again and will make that decision soon.
- Councillor Kaiser-Kirk noted that JOHS refers to the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

e. In Camera Session-Negotiations

On motion of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council moved into an in-camera session for negotiations at 8:15pm.

On motion of Councillor Baker, Council reconvened to regular session at 8:46pm.

Adjournment

On motion of Councillor Kaiser-Kirk, seconded by Councillor Malloy there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 8:46pm.



Recorded By
Municipal Clerk/Special Projects Coordinator



Approved By
Warden Mosher