

COUNCIL COMMITTEE

The Regular Session of the Council Committee of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted virtually, via Zoom Webinars, on Thursday, June 11, 2020 beginning at 6:00 pm.

Roll Call

The roll was called with the following Councillors in attendance:

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| Mayor Christine Blair | |
| Councillor Eric Boutilier | District 1 |
| Councillor Bill Masters | District 2 |
| Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart, Chair | District 3 |
| Councillor Mike Cooper | District 4 |
| Councillor Lloyd Gibbs | District 5 (joined at 6:14 pm) |
| Councillor Karen MacKenzie | District 6 |
| Councillor Michael Gregory | District 7 |
| Councillor Bob Pash | District 9 |
| Councillor Tom Taggart | District 10 |
| Councillor Wade Parker | District 11 |

Regrets

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| Councillor Ron Cavanaugh | District 8 |
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Staff Present

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corp. Services/Acting Director of Solid Waste
 Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works
 Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Venno, Recording Secretary
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer
 Tim Smith, Manager of Information Services
 Kelly Gratto McCarthy, Human Resources Specialist
 Dave Westlake, Emergency Management/Protective Services Coordinator
 Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Gregory
 Seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That the agenda be approved with the following additions:

- Item #14b, Municipal Elections By-law;
- Item #14c, Policing Resolution; and,
- Item #16b, Pool Safety, RECC.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Pash
 Seconded by Councillor Taggart

“That the minutes of meetings held on February 25, March 5 and May 14, 2020, be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

There was no business arising from the meetings held on February 25, March 5, and May 14, 2020,

ACTION ITEMS**Community Energy & Emissions Plan – Award of Contract**

Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner, introduced this item providing a summary of the Community Energy & Emissions Plan; the Request for Proposals issued and submissions received; review and evaluation process; grant funding received; and budget implications. Staff is recommending that the contract be awarded to Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG).

It should be noted that at their meeting on May 28, 2020, Council granted authority to June Council Committee to award the contract for the Community Energy & Emissions Plan.

Moved by Councillor Masters
Seconded by Councillor Taggart

“That Council authorizes staff to award the contract for the Community Energy & Emissions Plan in the amount of \$94,975, excluding HST, to Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG), with source of funds being the Low Carbon Communities grant, in-kind Municipal staff time, and the municipal operating budget.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Insurance for Colchester Ground Search and Rescue Volunteers

At this point, Councillor Gibbs joined the Webinar.

Dave Westlake, Emergency Management/Protective Services Coordinator, provided an overview of this item indicating that a request was received from the Colchester Ground Search and Rescue Association (CGSAR) for insurance benefit coverage, the same as was recently approved for Colchester Volunteer Firefighters. The overview included the current base level of insurance coverage being provided to Volunteer Firefighters, background information on CGSAR, and financial implications for insurance coverage for 35 CGSAR members. It was noted that if coverage is approved, this would be an unbudgeted expense in fiscal 2020/21.

Discussion was held regarding membership numbers, retention and recruitment, and training requirements of members.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the same insurance benefit coverage as approved for the Volunteer Fire Services be provided to the Colchester Ground Search and Rescue Association contingent upon cost sharing with our other Municipal partners.”

Motion **Defeated**. (Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Stewart, Councillors Masters, Cooper, Gibbs, MacKenzie, Pash, and Taggart opposed)

Moved by Mayor Blair
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the same insurance benefit coverage as approved for the Volunteer Fire Services be provided to the Colchester Ground Search and Rescue Association; and,

That staff seek cost sharing opportunities with our other Municipal partners.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Updated Terms of Reference –
Flood Advisory Committee,
Debert Source Water Protection
Advisory Committee, French
River Source Water Protection
Advisory Committee**

Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works, advised that this item is to update the Terms of Reference for the Flood Advisory Committee, Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee and French River Source Water Protection Advisory Committee, to properly reflect Council policy. A summary of the amendments was provided, as detailed in the Action Item and accompanying documents.

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Pash

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the County Flood Advisory Committee, Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee and French River Source Water Protection Advisory Committee be approved, as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Council Proceedings and
Committees Policy Amendments**

Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer, advised that the proposed changes to the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy include the addition of the newly approved Debert Business Park Advisory Committee. Additionally, the Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee and French River Source Water Protection Advisory Committee, both Standing Committees of Council, have also been added to the Policy.

Moved by Mayor Blair
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amendments to the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy be approved, as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Interest Policy Amendments

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, provided Council with an overview of this item noting that the Interest Policy was last updated in June of 2000. Staff’s review of the Policy included information gathered from 27 municipal units, and current interest rates and economic conditions. Proposed changes include some housekeeping amendments; responsibilities regarding mailing addresses and timing of invoices; conducting more frequent reviews of the policy; and reducing the interest rate from 1.25% to 1% monthly.

Concern was expressed regarding all responsibilities falling to the residents once bills have been mailed as well as extensive mail delivery delays. Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, advised that Section 4 of the Policy provides for discretion in two instances where interest may be reversed: when PVSC has made an error; and, when an error is made by Municipal staff or in other circumstances deemed appropriate.

Suggestions were made to have notices included with tax bills and reminder notices as well as having articles in newsletters regarding interest and responsibilities.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Interest Policy be approved, as presented, effective June 30, 2020.”

Motion Carried. *(Councillor Taggart opposed)*

Disposal of Surplus Parkland – Peppard Drive, Onslow Mountain

Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development, provided a brief recap of this item which deals with a request to purchase a parcel of County owned parkland on Peppard Drive. This request was previously before Council and during the initial discussions, Council had concerns about whether there was a All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) trail through the property and the matter was referred back to staff for more information.

Staff consulted with the ATV Association of NS who confirmed there are no established trails in the area. Mr. Macpherson indicated that it may connect to a trail if you go back far enough back into the woods. In the southern direction, there is no evidence of trails continuing in the community. It appears to be a more local issue, being utilized by locals in the neighbourhood.

Brief discussion was held on whether there has been input from neighbours and/or communications with area Councillor. The Municipal Solicitor advised that prior to final decision on this matter, notice must be given, and the community would have opportunity to provide input. Mr. Macpherson indicated that all neighbours would receive notification by letter.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That staff be instructed to give appropriate notice and bring this matter before Council once notice requirements have been satisfied.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Code of Conduct Complaints Policy

Mr. James provided an overview of this item indicating that in January 2020, Council adopted a Code of Conduct. At the March 26th Council meeting, Council directed staff and the Solicitor to bring forth procedures regarding review processes for dealing with informal and formal complaints under the Code of Conduct. The draft Code of Conduct Complaints Policy purposes

these procedures. Key features of the Policy were outlined in the Action Item and detailed in the Policy as distributed.

Brief discussion was held on how this affects possible future amendments to the Code of Conduct upon completion of the provincial Code of Conduct review. Mr. James advised that this Policy does not affect the current Code of Code, rather it is a Policy under the Code that allows for processes on how complaints are handled.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Taggart

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the proposed draft Code of Conduct Complaints Policy be adopted.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

High School Graduations

At this point in the meeting, Deputy Mayor Stewart removed himself as Chair so he could speak on this item. Alternate Chair Councillor Cooper assumed the position of Chair.

Deputy Mayor Stewart brought forward the issue of High School Graduations indicating this is an education matter and a Provincial responsibility. The Province recently advised that community graduations could be arranged with municipalities being at the top of their list of who could organize, followed by businesses, community groups and/or not-for-profit organizations. This is another example of downloading on municipalities. Deputy Mayor Stewart advised that it is his understanding that employees of the Department of Education are not to participate or be involved with any community organized graduations. There have been discussion at the NSFM Board level and the consensus is that municipalities should not be involved in actively hosting such events or celebrations. Deputy Mayor Stewart indicated that he feels if a community organization would like to take on the role of hosting a graduation celebration, the Municipality should endorse their efforts. Students have worked hard and should not suffer due to circumstances beyond their control.

Clarification was sought on how the Municipality would endorse with concern being expressed about how endorsement may be interpreted. Deputy Mayor Stewart advised that endorsement would be by publicly declaring the Municipality approves of the community graduation and supports the groups putting proposals forward. The endorsement is not intended as the Municipality providing financial support.

Detailed discussion was held with a number of points being noted including the province downloading to municipalities; the 2.9% increase for education that the province cannot justify; and, monies being budgeted each year for graduations through school boards and since there are not going to be traditional graduations, money for other graduation events should come from those budgets.

A suggestion was made that letters be sent to the schools offering congratulations to all 2020 graduates. Another suggestion was to extend congratulations on behalf of Council through radio announcements.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

“That the Municipality of Colchester endorses community-based graduations providing they meet Public Health Guidelines and those set forth by the Province of Nova Scotia.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

At this point in the meeting, Deputy Mayor Stewart resumed his role as Chair.

Trailer Parks

Councillor Taggart raised the issue of unlicensed trailer parks indicating that he and Mayor Blair have been receiving emails on this issue. Complaints are also being received from the four licensed Recreational Vehicle (RV) Parks in the area. In addition to the emails and complaints, concern was expressed that these unlicensed sites are not being regulated and are damaging the overall beauty of the Shore.

Discussion was held on environmental concerns, no zoning in rural areas, provincial regulations, and what Municipal regulations could be put in place. Referring to comments regarding no zoning in rural areas, the Municipal Solicitor noted past instances of finding ways to deal with land-use management in areas not zoned. Also, he noted that there is a provision under the Tourist Accommodation Act, and it may be worthwhile to write a letter to the Minister to explore this situation.

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That staff review the issue regarding unlicensed trailer parks for recreational vehicles (RV) and advise Council on provincial regulations and potential steps that the Municipality could put in place to regulate, to allow Council to make an informed decision on the best way to move forward; and,

“That a letter be sent to the Minister of Tourism requesting that the situation with unlicensed trailer parks be explored.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Streetlight at Intersection of Broderick Beach and Highway 2, Five Islands

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Pash

“That a streetlight at the intersection of Broderick Lane and Highway 2, be referred to staff for investigation.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Municipal Elections By-law

The CAO advised that in anticipation of the October Municipal Election, this item is being brought forward to gauge Council interest in implementing a

Municipal Elections By-law which would allow for having additional advance polls. Given the situation with social distancing requirements and Public Health Guidelines, this would provide opportunity for more staggered voting for constituents.

The Municipal Solicitor indicated that the Municipal Elections Act sets one advance poll date and one additional date as set by Council resolution. A by-law would be required to have additional dates and times for advance polls. Due to the timelines of getting a by-law approved, First Reading would have to come forth at the end of the month and following public notice requirements, a Special Council meeting in July for Second Reading.

Moved by Councillor Masters
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

“That staff proceed with drafting a Municipal Elections By-law to be brought forward at the June Council meeting.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Policing Resolution

Councillor Taggart raised the concern of lack of staffing with police across Canada. He has requested that FCM staff assist with putting together a resolution that will be specific to National Policing to ensure there are enough officers to fill postings across Canada. The intent is to bring this resolution before Council at the end of the month and if supported by Council, forward to the September FCM Board meeting to take on as a National Advocacy issue. To meet FCM scheduling, Councillor Taggart indicated that he is asking that June Council be authorized to consider and support. The Municipal Solicitor advised that Council Committee does not delegate authority to Council, and it is just a matter of adding the item to the June Council agenda.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Community Event Grants Update

This Information Item provides Council with an update on the status of two Community Event Grants that were approved during budget deliberations. Staff received confirmation that the Colchester Legion Branch 26 – RCMP Musical Ride and the Downeast Bluegrass & Oldtime Music Festival have been cancelled. No funds will be distributed for these events from the 2020/21 budget.

COVID-19 Update

As per the request of Council at the March 26th Council meeting, this item serves to provide Council with ongoing operational and administrative updates and implications relative to the COVID-19 Pandemic. A copy of the Municipality of Colchester Return to Office Plan was also included with this Information Item.

Pool Safety, RECC

The CAO advised Council about a pool safety issue that he recently learned of at through his involvement on the RECC Building and Finance Committees. There has been some premature corrosion on the hangars which hold the baffling in place in the pool area at the RECC. RECC staff are in the process of going out for quotes and an Action Item will be brought forward at the end of the month for Council review and consideration.

Director's Report

A report from the Director of Corporate Services was circulated in the package for tonight's meeting.

Referring to the additional applications received under the Low Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program, Councillor Taggart inquired about why there were so many more applications this year; what the percentage increase is; and where demographically the additional applications are from.

Moved Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

"That staff do an investigation relative to the additional applications received this year under the Low Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program."

Motion **Defeated**. (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Stewart, Councillors MacKenzie, Gregory, Pash and Parker opposed*)

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Gibbs
Seconded by Councillor Pash

"That the meeting go into closed session at 8:54 pm."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gibbs
Seconded by Councillor Masters

"That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:44 pm."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Pash
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

"That the meeting adjourn at 9:45 pm."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Tracey Venno
Recording Secretary