

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, December 9, 2021, beginning at 6:00 pm.

In peace and friendship, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, Deputy Mayor Stewart acknowledged that the Municipality of Colchester is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

Roll Call

The roll was called with the following Councillors in attendance:

Mayor Christine Blair	
Councillor Eric Boutilier	District 1
Councillor Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart, Chair	District 3
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor Karen MacKenzie	District 6
Councillor Michael Gregory	District 7
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor Victoria Lomond	District 10
Councillor Wade Parker	District 11

Staff Present

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corp. Services/Acting Director of Solid Waste
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Venno, Recording Secretary
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer
 Jenn Martin, Economic Development Officer (*for Item 13*)
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support Technician
 Kelly Gratto-McCarthy, HR Specialist (*for Item 6*)

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the agenda be approved with the following additions:

- Item #9b, Cost Related to Demolition of Lower Truro Hall; and,
- Item #16, Negotiations in Closed Session.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That the minutes of the meeting held on November 10, 2021, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

None

ACTION ITEMS

Policy Amendments Concerning Planning Advisory Committee Membership

Paul Smith, Director of Community Development, provided an introduction of this item which relates to having Village Commission representatives on Planning Advisory Committees (PAC). Staff recommends proceeding with

policy amendments as presented, to allow Village representatives to serve on County PACs.

Discussion was held on why this is only being recommended for PACs and why not other Committees of Council; clarification on whether the Village representative would only have a voice on matters within the Village boundaries; if a Village representative from Tatamagouche would serve on the Central Colchester PAC and vice versa; if Village of Bible Hill representatives are aware the appointment would be for all matters dealt with by the Central Colchester PAC; support of the existing PAC; and importance of partnership and collaboration. A number of concerns were expressed including having a special seat on Committee for Village representatives rather than applying to serve as a citizen representative; having elected officials represent anything outside their own jurisdiction; and the potential for this being a step toward amalgamation.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Policy to Establish the Tatamagouche Planning Advisory Committee be repealed and incorporated into the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy; and

That amendments to the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy relative to the appointment of Village Commission representatives be approved as presented.” Motion carried (*Councillor MacKenzie opposed*)

At the November Council meeting, authority was granted to January Committee to approve policy changes related to PAC membership. This item will be brought forward in January for final approval.

Covid Vaccination Policy

Prior to Kelly Gratto-McCarthy, HR Specialist, presenting details on the proposed Covid Vaccination Policy, Rob Simonds, CAO, reminded Council of past discussions relative to staff undertaking an analysis, the intent of taking a blended approach, and Council’s wishes to have members of Council included in the Policy. It was also noted that November Council granted authority to January Committee to approve the Policy.

Ms. Gratto-McCarthy began by presenting the results of staff’s analysis of employee vaccination status indicating that 92% are fully vaccinated with an additional 5 employees being partially vaccinated. Based on these positive results, the Policy was developed recommending a blended approach of vaccination or rapid testing for those not vaccinated. Highlights of the Policy include:

- definitions relative to Covid-19;
- the Policy applying to all staff, members of Council, and citizen appointees to Committees of Council;
- requirements for providing proof of vaccination within 10 days of approval of Policy;
- Rapid Point of Care Test (POCT) requirements and procedures for employees, members of Council and citizen appointees to Committees of Council not vaccinated;
- procedures for reporting of POCT results;
- consequences for violation of Policy;

- Municipality to provide POCT kits;
- procedures for staff travelling for work related training and conferences, as well as personal travel;
- requirements for members of the public for essential and non-essential services; and,
- recognizes duty to accommodate Human Rights Laws and confidentiality.

Ms. Gratto-McCarthy also noted that the proposed Policy outlines the responsibilities of Council and various staff members: and, has been vetted through legal and provides a list of government resources for Covid-19 information.

A number of points/comments were raised during discussion on the Policy including clarification on conflicting language in Policy sections 7.01 and 7.02; following provincial government lead on mandatory vaccinations and providing a safe work environment; guidelines regarding pay for employees required to self-isolate and/or who have tested positive; vaccination numbers; comfort levels of staff; financial implications for tests; overall process and Policy being well received by CUPE partners; no pushback from provincial Unions relative to mandatory vaccination requirements; qualifications of a Council member as it relates to Policy requirements; and, the high vaccination rate of employees and support for job protection.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Covid-19 Policy be adopted as presented.” Motion carried (*Councillor Parker opposed*).

Small Flood Damage Reduction Projects Policy Amendments

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, provided a briefing on the proposed Small Flood Damage Reduction Projects Policy amendments which relate to changes to limit the cap to projects where a primary residence is being protected.

Brief discussion was held on the definition of primary residence and that this should be clearly defined within the Policy. Ms. Boudreau advised that a definition can be added and brought back to January Committee for consideration. Council agreed.

Adoption of Council Strategic Priorities Report

Rob Simonds, CAO, and Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer provided an introduction and overview of the process undertaken at the recently held Strategic Priorities session, as well as a detailed overview of the Strategic Priorities Report as included in the package for this evening’s meeting.

Concern was raised regarding the rankings in the Strategic Priorities Chart, specifically with J Class Roads, Cell Service, and Internet priorities. Lengthy debate was held on the rankings; the roles of the Municipality versus advocacy roles relative to some of the priorities; the importance of the various priorities as it relates to community and citizen safety; the point ranking process; and the priorities of citizens. Discussion also took place on how the J Class Roads Funding Policy is characterized in the Chart and that this should be changed to better reflect a broader scope for this priority. A more

appropriate description, such as J Class Road and Roads Assessment, was suggested.

Moved by Councillor Cooper and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that it adopt the 2020-24 Strategic Priorities Report and that it frequently refers to the Report at future Council meetings, including quarterly updates and during annual strategic priority reviews.

AND

That Council request the CAO to schedule an annual Priority Setting Update Session prior to the start of the annual budget process.” Carried unanimously.

Deputy Mayor Policy Amendments

Mr. Trefry advised that during the recent review and amendments to the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy relative to voting procedures for Committee Chair appointments, the basis of voting procedures outlined in the Deputy Mayor Policy was used, however, a few deficiencies were noted during staff’s review. The proposed amendments to the Deputy Mayor Policy addressed those deficiencies, providing clarity around voting procedures for the election of Deputy Mayor and replicates the procedures for the election of Committee Chairs in the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy.

Brief discussion was held with clarification being sought on section 13(a) of the Policy, and how ballots are prepared.

Moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that amendments to the Deputy Mayor Policy be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

During discussion, Council expressed interest in having language in the Council Proceeding and Committees Policy to afford opportunity for candidates vying for a position of Committee Chair to address Council. This would be consistent with past practice of the election of Deputy Mayor.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That amendments be made to the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy to include language regarding when two or more members are nominated for positions of Chair of Committees of Council, that they be afforded opportunity to address Council.” Carried unanimously.

Cost Related to Demolition of Lower Truro Hall

The CAO indicated that the costs related to the demolition of the Lower Truro Hall was raised at the Dangerous and Unightly Committee today and it was the wishes of the Committee to have this referred to staff. The Municipal Solicitor advised the Lower Truro Hall is owned by an Association which is now defunct. The Hall is on lands that have no title but was originally owned by the Dickie family. The concern is that the normal course for demolition costs would be a lien against the property.

Moved by Councillor Cooper and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That the matter of costs related to the demolition of the Lower Truro Hall be referred to staff to bring back options for Council consideration.” Carried unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Debert Business Park – Housing Concepts

This item provided Council with an update on the Debert Business Park Housing Concepts including; staff’s undertakings to date; the Request for Quotations for the development of a conceptual plan for a 30-acre parcel of municipal land; scope of work; Fathom Studios being selected to complete the work; costs and source of funding for the study; next steps; and estimated timelines.

Update – Regional Accessibility Plan

Mr. Smith provided an update on the progress of the Regional Accessibility Plan. The Committee has engaged the services of a consulting firm, reachAbility, to assist with the preparation of the Plan. The initial meeting with the consulting firm was held on November 15th where the work plan, public engagement and community audits were reviewed. Community engagement and environmental scans will proceed in December and January. The Plan is scheduled for completion around mid-March 2022.

Director’s Report

A report from the Director of Public Works was circulated in the package for tonight’s meeting.

Points of discussion on the Director’s report included an inquiry about parts for the Screen for Grit Chamber project; systems capacity in Tatamagouche and Debert as it relates to planning and development; and materials being used for the Tatamagouche Wastewater Treatment Plant roof.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:33 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 10:50 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Negotiations – Event Contribution

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the event contribution as discussed in closed session be approved.” Carried unanimously.

Deputy Mayor Policy

Referring to the discussion held earlier in the evening on the Deputy Mayor Policy item, specifically regarding the motion recommending changes to the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy which would allow opportunity for candidates vying for a position of Chair of a Committee of Council, the CAO inquired if Council wished to have staff bring forward similar changes for the Deputy Mayor Policy. It was agreed that similar changes be brought forward for Council consideration. Also during this discussion, Council suggested that the same changes be put forth for the election of Alternate Chair.

**Negotiations – Bridge Funding,
Cliffs of Fundy Geopark**

Moved by Councillor MacKenzie and seconded by Councillor Parker

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that \$25,000 from 2022–23 allotted \$75,000, be advanced to the Cliffs of Fundy Geopark in order to carry them over to the next fiscal year.” Carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the meeting adjourn at 10:58 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary