

COVID-19 COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes
June 9, 2020

DATE: June 9, 2020
TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
PLACE: Zoom online platform

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Gary Clow; Councillors Jill Burridge; Gail MacDonald; Steve Gallant; Derek Smith; Darren MacDougall; Robert Hughes, CAO; Jeremy Crosby, Deputy CAO and Director of Infrastructure; Wendy Watts, Community and Business Engagement Manager, and Jade Veera, Recording Clerk

REGRETS: Nil

CHAIR: Mayor Steve Ogden

1. Approval of Agenda

It was moved, seconded and carried that the agenda be approved.

2. Approval of Minutes from June 2 meeting

The minutes from June 2 meeting were incomplete and it was agreed to be deferred for approval until the next meeting.

3. Business arising from the minutes

a) Insurance Tender Renewal (In-Camera)

Robert explained that staff was in contact with two of the main insurance providers on the Island - Cooke Insurance Group and Hickey & Hyndman Insurance Ltd. Both companies indicated that renewing the insurance might incur an increase due to COVID-19, so Robert suggested that we renew the insurance contract for another year with Hyndman. Council agreed to renew the contract with Hickey and Hyndman for one more year.

b) Council Remuneration and Allowances Commission appointment update (In-Camera)

Robert explained that he was in contact with potential commissioners and they have agreed to serve on the Commission. He noted that he will bring a resolution forward to the next meeting to appoint them.

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c) Community Campus Land Acquisition update (In-Camera)

There was a lengthy discussion on the negotiations of the Community Campus land acquisition. However, no action items or resolutions came from the discussions. Negotiations will carry on.

It was moved, seconded and carried that the meeting come out of camera.

d) Fire company lease update

Robert informed council that we received an update from Dave Swan, who advised that they needed another week to work with their lawyers. We expect to hear back from them next week.

Councillor Smith asked for an update on a condensed version of the lease agreement that he had previously requested and Robert advised that he will attempt to finish it this week.

4. Operational Update

a) Fullerton's Creek Park – natural playground

Robert brought up the map to show where the site for the natural playground is located.

Councillor Burrige asked if there are other plans in the pipeline for that property, so that Council can have a big picture view of what the intentions are for the park. Robert advised that an application for funding has been submitted for an edible orchard. These fruit trees may be integrated in the same area as the natural playground. He added that most of the things that were contemplated in the original plan is completed or almost completed. He further added that the idea is to get somebody to develop a new plan in consultation with residents and look at the site again and identify what else can be done. One of the initial ideas was to use a few parcels of the land to develop good wood lot practices and to demonstrate organic farming.

Robert provided an overview of the three concepts developed for the natural playground, highlighting that concept one is staff's favourite. These will be released to the public to gather as much feedback as possible. Deputy Mayor Clow also had a preference for concept one. Councillor Smith chose design two, as it runs along the field and allows room for expansion.

Jeremy highlighted the potential issue that may arise with parking despite the recent expansion. He suggested encouraging residents/visitors to park at the Town Centre and to use the trails to get to the park. He emphasized that residents have been complaining

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about the increase in traffic in the driveway to the park. Mayor Ogden suggested revisiting the possibility of getting an entrance to the park from the Trans-Canada Highway or having a roundabout by Clearview. He explained that he is concerned with emergency vehicles being obstructed from getting through if the road is blocked. Deputy Mayor Clow suggested that we should look into building a bigger parking lot since we own the land, and especially if parking will eventually become a problem.

Wendy informed Council that the plan will be released this afternoon and submissions for feedback will close on Thursday to get the comments to the developer in time before they start moving ahead with the project. The goal is to get feedback from kids.

Deputy Mayor Clow suggested that this would be an opportunity to expand on active transportation by getting trails from Clearview and Mount Herbert to Fullerton's. Councillor Burrige stressed the importance of identifying those nodes in the community (for example, Fullerton's) around which trails should be developed as a means of reducing congestion. She also added that signs/markings on those trails should be updated and those that are not in use should be decommissioned.

Mayor Ogden suggested that some sun shelters should be installed. Robert added that staff is looking into it. Councillor Gallant proposed using Town colours for the sun shelters.

Councillor MacDonald asked if the cost of the project is over budget and Robert replied that we have a budget of \$100,000 to work with and explained that while there are some items that may push the budget over - there are others that can bring it under, and we plan to work with what we can afford to meet the budget. Councillor MacDonald suggested that some benches be installed as well and queried if this would fall on us or the developer. Robert replied that this would be us, but one of the ideas is to create natural seating with stumps and other materials to match what is on the natural playground.

b) Affordable Housing

Robert informed Council that Concord Properties was suggesting a rezoning of building A and B from commercial to mixed use. These are the two sites which they were willing to sell or trade with us. Robert indicated that we own the next parcel on St. John Avenue. However, at this there is no road but when the road is expanded, we may be able to trade this parcel with A and B as per Concord Properties proposal. Robert specified that he asked them if they were interested in a mixed use building with market housing and affordable housing, but they indicated that they were not interested. They explained that if we want to build affordable housing these are the two lots they would

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suggest that we purchase from them for building on. Robert advised that he intends to contact the province to find out where they are at with the plans to conduct an affordable housing study.

Councillor BurrIDGE expressed her dissatisfaction in having two buildings allotted just for affordable housing. She added that her preference is to have a blend of both, where affordable housing is built in with market housing to avoid marginalizing residents. Mayor Ogden expressed similar concerns and queried the possibility of moving forward with the model that best suit the needs of the Town, especially if the Town is developing the project without the private sector. Robert replied that it should be possible for us to do so; however we will be competing with the private sector. He suggested that we could put an RFP out to ask a private developer to work with us on it. Mayor Ogden proposed incentivizing Concord Properties with a density bonus where the developer would be allowed to build a little higher and in return have 30-40% affordable housing built in. Robert suggested that we continue negotiations with them.

Councillor BurrIDGE added that she would have liked to have the stats on how many affordable houses are being built in comparison with the target required. Robert specified that the housing study is meant to provide those numbers.

5. Business Resumption Plans

a) Day Camps

Robert informed Council that staff has been looking at operating the day camp at the gym from June 29. If we were to have the day camp at Cotton Park, the numbers would have to be greatly reduced and the restrictive space will impact the experience; whereas at the Town Centre it will be easier to spread out the kids between the gym, splash pad, skate-park, the stage, and the green spaces behind the building. Robert specified that this would mean that no one else would be able to use the gym in the day time for the summer but noted summer is usually the down time for the gym. The day camp will run with 25 students and 5 instructors.

Councillor BurrIDGE expressed her approval that the program is running this year and inquired if we are prioritizing children with parents who have to go back to work. Wendy mentioned that she is not aware of the numbers, but she knows that the program is filling up quickly. Councillor BurrIDGE suggested that we might want to touch on parents who need to go back to work in our communication, so that those who need it can register first. Mayor Ogden expressed the same concern.

Councillor MacDonald asked if the numbers were cleared with the Chief Medical Officer to which Robert stated that we have and we fit the restrictions.

On a different note, Robert added that we received confirmation that the playground equipment does not need to be washed down and sanitized, and this will save us a lot of money. Councillor MacDonald referenced Prime Minister Trudeau's speech noting that money has been freed up for municipalities who have had extra expenses incurred through COVID-19 and suggested that we should look into this to get reimbursed for those expenses.

Councillor Smith noted that the day camp is a Stratford initiative for Stratford tax payers and residents should have first priority on the program. Council members were, in majority, of the same view.

6. Waterfront Planning Review and Park/gateway Conceptual Design

- a) Robert informed Council that originally the RFP was to develop a waterfront park in the WPS zone, including the rehabilitation of the treatment site. He added that in this study we are recommending that all waterfront core areas are reviewed. They include the residential area, the mixed use and the public space zone, as well as the Bunbury Mall property area. Robert stated that a number of discussions were held with Murphy Group who had an architect work on conceptual plans of the waterfront area. The plans included buildings along Trans-Canada Highway with some residential components and the redevelopment of the Bunbury Mall property, as well as some parts of the Town's waterfront area. Robert noted that it made sense to include them in the planning review of all the waterfront zones.

Robert read through sections of the RFP and suggested that council may take the time to review the document and send along their feedback. The RFP includes the development of conceptual designs for the gateway that was previously suggested by Deputy Mayor Clow. As noted by Robert, some beautification of the gateway took place in 2014, but there is more to do and suggested that we may want to look at adding East Point Coastal Drive on the gateway and seek some financial support from them since Stratford is the starting point of East Point Coastal Drive. Councillor Smith added that as a taxpayer, he would not be in favour of the gateway project.

Robert noted that in the past the province did not approve access to the site from Trans-Canada highway, but with 35,000 cars on the highway, a right in to the site can help to get people off the highway.

Deputy Mayor Clow asked if Council should be looking at the 2014 plan to see what they came up with back then. Robert replied that that he will send around the 2014 plan and added that when Viridis Design developed a linear plan for the waterfront park some of

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the sites that are available today were not available back then. Since that time the Town bought 30,000 square feet of land. Robert noted that the linear design back then does not take that into consideration and this is why he proposed a new study.

Mayor Ogden queried the possibility of having a walkway/boardwalk to Cotton Park, such as an underpass and the feasibility of a form based design approach to this area. Councillor Burrridge explained the approach and process of a form based design, and reiterated how this concept can help the Town to show off its personality.

Councillor Smith inquired about the cost of the study and Robert explained that we do not have a figure for this yet but the project has a budget of \$1,000,000 and typically, we would spend 10% or more on the design. Councillor Smith noted that he is not in favour of businesses in the area as the Gray Group and the Murphy Group are looking to build businesses in Stratford and he does not want to cut back on their initiative. Mayor Ogden highlighted the appeal in having businesses by the waterfront and expressed his willingness to work with the Gray Group and the Murphy Group to achieve this.

Councillor MacDonald suggested that council members should probably review the documents again before any big decision is made. Councillor Burrridge proposed that the project be brought forward to all the committees as it ties in with the mandate of most, if not all, committees. Robert noted that the document will be sent to Council to forward to all the committee members to get their feedback.

7. Town Council Resolution Items

Robert stated that the resolution items have all been vetted through this committee and they are all going to council tomorrow.

8. COVID-19 Operational Status Report

No update this week. Jeremy noted that staff will be updating a few items pertaining to the reopening of some of our spaces. He also informed Council that the report is there if they have anything they want to share.

Robert noted that we do not have a plan yet on reopening the fitness centre and walking track. At this time, reopening of these facilities is potentially scheduled for phase 4. Robert explained that staff has been in contact with private gyms that are opening up to see what their experiences have been like.

9. COVID-19 Contingency Fund

Robert noted that we will keep an eye out of potential funding that may become available. He added that an application was made for the top up fund for emergency workers and we were able to get \$1000 for two of our employees who qualified.

10. Communications to Residents

Mayor Ogden informed Council members that he did an interview with CBC on our plans for Canada Day. He invited all Council members to record a message/greeting for Canada Day. Councillor Burrridge raised some concerns on the video compilation where residents are asked to drop us their videos on a USB. Wendy advised that this is per the request of the person who is compiling the videos for us and the files would usually be too big to be sent by email. Councillor Burrridge asked about setting up a page on the website to upload the video and Wendy explained that the website is not the easiest platform to work with on a short timeframe. Wendy reassured Council that we will be working with the public if they are struggling to send the video on a USB and added that we have reached out to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee as well. Robert took a minute to acknowledge staff's work on 'Black Lives Matter' where all our social media accounts went silent to show support to the movement and to raise awareness on racism and discrimination in our communities.

11. Council Inquiries

Nil

12. Other Business

Councillor Gallant inquired about the light under the underpass and Jeremy advised that staff is looking into that and he will report back with an update. Councillor Gallant asked about the air conditioning system for paramedics over at the new building. Jeremy explained that staff has been in contact with the contractor to get this remedied and has received an email today to confirm that they are looking into the different scenarios and they will have the manufacturer of the e-pump come over to look at the system.

13. Date of Next Meeting

TBD