

COVID-19 COMMITTEE

Minutes

DATE: May 26, 2020
TIME: 10:07 a.m. – 12:06 p.m.
PLACE: Zoom Online Platform

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

REGRETS: Councillor Darren MacDougall

CHAIR: Mayor Steve Ogden

Mayor Ogden called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. and welcomed Corporal Glen Dudley of the RCMP.

1. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Councillor Gail MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Steve Gallant that the agenda be approved as circulated.

2. Approval of Minutes from May 12 and May 20, 2020

It was moved by Councillor Gail MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Derek Smith that the minutes be approved as circulated.

3. Discussion with Invited Guest (RCMP) regarding Enforcement of Covid-19 Restrictions

It was noted that a lot of people are not respecting the social distancing rules and we would like to know what the approach should be from the Town. Corporal Dudley stated that these issues should be directed to the RCMP - staff should never approach people in these situations. They should call the RCMP who will investigate, and if necessary will pass the issue on to the Conservation Office. The RCMP does not have a list of people who are self-isolating, but the Conservation Office does, so they can do a follow-up if required.

Corporal Dudley stated that the RCMP is taking a more educational approach. They don't want to go to a park and start handing out thousand dollar fines to kids. They would rather work with them and educate them. He believes the big goal is to work with the public health office. Mayor Ogden thanked Corporal Dudley for responding to citizen complaints.

Robert noted that one of the things Council asked about was some kind of a contingency plan when we open everything on June 1. Corporal Dudley replied that there is no contingency plan as such, it would be based on risk assessment;

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however, there are other detachments that will assist if needed. Robert added that a list of things that the Town will be opening on June 1, 2020 was sent to Cindy Bowring.

The question was asked if the RCMP was receiving many complaint calls, and Corporal Dudley replied just one or two a shift and they are mainly repeat calls.

Councillor MacDonald asked Corporal Dudley if patrolling was taking place and he replied that it is and the response has been great from both kids and adults.

Councillor Burridge noted that she is a parent and likes to see kids outside and playing. She asked how to have a conversation with people who call because they see rules being blatantly ignored. Corporal Dudley reiterated that they should call the RCMP, and they may not get the answer they want, but the RCMP is trying to educate people. Councillor Burridge felt that signage is a good idea. Mayor Ogden stated that if everything else fails we have the ability to close the skatepark/parks. Robert noted that we will be putting signage in all our parks as soon as they are ready. He also reiterated that all callers with complaints should be directed to call the RCMP immediately.

Mayor Ogden thanked Corporal Dudley for attending. He added that he appreciates the consultation and cooperation of the RCMP and asked Corporal Dudley to let the Town know if there is anything he needs.

Corporal Dudley left the meeting at this time.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Community Campus Land Acquisition

Robert noted that the offer was made last week and closes today (May 26), but we haven't had an official response from them yet.

b) Planning Act Public Meetings

Robert noted that the province told the Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities (FPEIM) that they are 'putting their eggs in the basket' of amending the Emergency Measures Act and Public Health Act, to give Cabinet the authority to waive any Act requirements. However, they are getting push back from the Green Party on this amendment. The Legislature opens today, so some kind of an Act probably will be passed during the next three days of this sitting in order to give Cabinet some ability to amend requirements of Acts. If they do make that amendment over the next few days and Cabinet acts on it quickly, we might have an answer in a few weeks. Robert noted that he has asked the planning director to come up with a Plan B in the interim. On next week's call we will have a better idea whether Cabinet has the ability to address

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our concern. We will likely have a good Plan B in place as well, so Council can decide how to proceed.

Mayor Ogden noted that he called Minister Thompson, but he hasn't heard back from him yet; however, he added that he left a very detailed message for him. Robert suggested the Mayor also reach out to Minister Fox and Minister Aylward to get as many people as possible working on the issue.

Mayor Ogden wondered why we couldn't use the same approach as Royalty Oaks even though it is for a different Act it is a requirement for a public meeting. Robert stated that we could come up with a process, but he absolutely can't guarantee the process would be upheld by the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission (IRAC) or by a court. Mayor Ogden asked Robert if he was able to get any information from our legal counsel, and Robert replied that he hasn't spoken to legal yet because he wants to have a plan for them to review.

Councillor Burrridge noted that a public meeting in the case of planning would not require a site visit (referring to Royalty Oaks), and to incorporate a site visit into our public meeting would make things more difficult. She would like to stick to our normal public meeting process which is just to present the plan.

Mayor Ogden noted that he will call the Ministers and he will let everyone know how the calls go. Councillor Burrridge will try to contact some of the developers and ask them to call their MLA's on this issue.

5. Operational Update

a) Speed Humps

Jeremy noted that a lot more people have been asking for speed humps this year. We have deployed all the speed humps, and we are putting them in based on the provincial specifications. He noted that we sometimes get calls complaining about them, but we explain that they are only going to be there for a month and then will be moved to another location. Jeremy added that we get the biggest complaint each year from the Rosebank Road residents and he felt a permanent hump would be the solution for that area, and he would like to revisit it at some point. The street is long and on a hill which presents a problem. Deputy Mayor Clow felt that sometimes you just have to go ahead and do what is best for the majority and that would be to put in a permanent speed hump. Councillor Gallant agreed with Deputy Mayor Clow; and noted that since it has been a problem for many years, we should just go ahead and put in a permanent hump.

Councillor Burrridge has not received any calls from the Rosebank area since the speed sign went in. Jeremy agreed that the speed sign has made a big difference, but he felt once residents get used to it they will get complacent.

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Jeremy wanted to clarify the number of speed signs that we can get. Joe Driscoll has informed him that we will only be able to get two or three – not five as originally thought due to the budget, but one will be on a trailer so we can move it around and collect data.

Deputy Mayor Clow noted that the speed hump in Clearview is working really well and he has received some good feedback. Mayor Ogden noted that it is important that communication to residents is necessary when a speed hump goes in. People need to be aware that although they are going in (temporary speed humps) they will be moved to a new location after 30 days. Robert suggested putting permanent speed humps in the areas where we get the same people asking for them year after year.

Councillor MacDonald asked for a price comparison of the permanent versus temporary speed humps, and Jeremy replied that a permanent speed hump is approximately \$2500 to \$3000 and the temporary speed humps are approximately \$1200 to \$1500. He added that after two years the permanent ones will have paid for themselves, and they also become the responsibility of the province.

Councillor MacDonald asked if any new humps could be 'built' higher than the ones on Marion Drive, and Jeremy replied that we don't want to put in anything that is abrupt because we do get residents complaining if it is anything more than a hump. He also noted that we have not received any complaints since the hump went in on Marion Drive.

Robert noted that we did speak to the province about the underpass. The bridge engineer indicated that we would have to sandblast it to bring it down to the metal before we could paint it. We will need to bring it forward as a budget request for 2021 because sandblasting is quite an expensive process. Jeremy felt that there are tamper proof lights that could be put in to brighten the area up. However, it isn't in the budget right now so he will bring back some cost information. Councillor Burrige would like to see this run through the Active Transportation Committee, because only one person brought it to her attention. Councillor Smith stated that he would have a problem using Town funds to fix up someone else's property (underpass sandblasting) but he has no problem with the Town installing some lighting because it is a safety issue.

It was noted that water pools quite a bit on the Bunbury side of the underpass and in the winter it freezes over and is very hard to walk on. Jeremy will look into it and if required he will get the province involved.

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b) Preparation for June 1 Openings

Town staff is busy getting everything ready and sanitized for the June 1 opening; however, we haven't seen the playground plan from the province yet for the cleaning of the parks. Jeremy added that the library is also planning to open on June 1 and has provided the Town with their operational plan. However, it will be 'curbside service only' starting out.

Deputy Mayor Clow asked about the plan to get everyone back working in the office, and Robert replied that he is still recommending we err on the side of caution and wait for phase 4, as the Chief Public Health Officer is still saying that people should work from home. He added that we have not received any calls stating that our office is not open nor are we receiving any complaints about the level of service being provided. He added that phase 4 will likely be sometime between the middle of June to the first of July, but this hasn't been confirmed. Robert stated that if Council wants to open the office sooner we can, but added that some staff would be uncomfortable. He noted that it is Council's decision, but the decision should be based on the residents getting what they need, as well as following the Chief Public Health Officer's advice.

Deputy Mayor Clow wanted to know the thoughts of the other Councillors on this issue. Mayor Ogden polled Councillors - Councillor Smith stated that he will let the provincial government take the lead on this issue. He added that if we have another case of Covid-19, we would need to go right back to where we were before. Councillor MacDonald stated that she is interested to know what the Chief Public Health Officer has to say. Robert stated that everything he has read so far is recommending that staff work from home as much as possible at this point in time and his recommendation is to keep people at home as long as possible to keep them safe. Councillor MacDonald asked if the managers are in the office on a daily basis and Robert replied no, the office is not open.

Councillor MacDonald noted that the main thing is social distancing and she has noticed a big improvement at the Town Centre with the plexiglass, signage and arrows. She also noted that in most cases staff members have their own office. Councillor BurrIDGE noted that she has not received any calls or pressure from residents to open the office, so she is good with people continuing to work from home. Councillor Gallant stated that from day one we said it is about the safety of our staff and working from home is one way to protect them. He agreed with Robert's recommendation and felt it best to wait.

Mayor Ogden stated that he is of the opinion that if we can provide the services transparently that residents need, either from home or from the office, it is probably better for people to stay home until a later date.

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Councillor MacDonald stated that if everything is being done that needs to be done that's fine, but she was curious why the rest of the Island's municipalities are back to work and we are not. She felt that we could monitor the situation and make sure the work is being done, and believes that it is.

Deputy Mayor Clow felt that the sooner we get our employees back to the office the better, so he is not 100% for phase 4. Councillor BurrIDGE noted that if the service is still being provided to residents why not wait another few weeks.

Wendy mentioned that yesterday's media release, and what the Mayor will be speaking about today in his interview, is that the office was going to remain closed for the time being, and to date there have been no comments either way on social media. We do state that when or if a resident has something that needs to be done that can't be done electronically, the resident can call ahead and make arrangements with the appropriate employee, and the employee will make themselves accessible to the resident during office hours.

Mayor Ogden would like Robert and Jeremy to look at the risk of opening the front reception area and Robert replied that we do have an operational plan to open the office, so when we decide to open we will be ready.

Mayor Ogden noted that we will revisit the issue next week.

c) Feed the Bees Promotion

Mayor Ogden gave his congratulations on the big promotion of Feed the Bees. It became viral and hit the big times. Jeremy Crosby added that it was on Compass last night and that's the big time.

d) Stratford and Area Watershed Improvement (SAWIG) Board Elections

For information purposes. Winston Maund retired as president of SAWIG, so the watershed group held an election and Connie Gaudet, who was previously the vice-president and the acting president, has been elected as president. David MacPherson has been elected as vice-president. Mary Hughes remained as treasurer, and Ann Grayborne has joined as a new member and is secretary of the Board. Colin Livingstone also joined the Board as a new member. Robert noted that he reached out to Connie Gaudet to offer congratulations and had a conversation with her regarding the environmental coordinator position. The ad will go out this week and Robert wanted the Board to be aware of the new position.

6. Sustainable Communities Expression of Interest

Robert noted that the province issued a request for Expression of Interest in April and the deadline was May 5, 2020. He reached out to the Deputy and found out that the deadline has been extended indefinitely, so he would like to get the Town's

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submission sent in. What we would be proposing is a *Beyond Net Zero Community Campus*; and we would generate more electricity from renewable than we need. We are suggesting that we design the buildings to be energy efficient and that we produce enough energy on-site to meet the needs that we will still have after doing the energy efficient design. The province, in its program, will bring in experts to help with the design. We drafted our submission on the basis of Beyond Net Zero and we noted a few potential partners. It was also circulated to the Sustainability Committee for their comments and we received a few comments back. We are now seeking approval from Council to submit the proposal. Councillor Smith asked for a bit more detail and Robert explained that if they like the proposal they will set us up with a team that would help us to investigate it to figure out the options. Deputy Mayor Clow asked what the cost would be to the Town and Robert replied that he doesn't know the answer to that question yet. Ideally, we will select technology that has a payback that is reasonable – say less than 10 years. In this case, he felt that the province would bring other resources to help with the implementation, but noted that it is Council's decision at the end of the day. Councillor Burrridge felt that it would be wise to answer this Expression of Interest and get the Community Campus in there and make it ready for the expertise that the province would put towards it. Everyone agreed to go ahead with the submission.

Robert left the meeting at this point 11:50 a.m.

7. Covid-19 Operational Status Report

Jeremy noted that the report is included for information purposes. He noted that the report is going out weekly on any new initiatives that we are planning. As each phase opens up there is a little more information provided.

8. Covid-19 Contingency Fund

No Report at this time.

9. Communications to Residents

Mayor Ogden will be doing an interview later today, and he and Wendy will review the information before-hand.

Jeremy stated that in regards to fire pits, we are getting a lot of questions regarding the regulations around chimineas. He doesn't think they can be purchased with the chimneys on them like in the past. He added that he had a call from a resident who wanted to buy a pellet burning device that doesn't give off sparks and has low emissions, but under our bylaw it is not allowed. We plan to embark on a review of our Unsightly Premises and Nuisance Bylaw to see if we can make some changes because there are a number of new appliances being sold that have sparks coming from them.

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Councillor MacDonald noted that we are announcing that the skatepark is open but there was no stipulation with that announcement. If we want to encourage social distancing at our skatepark that information should go out at the same time. Wendy replied that we can add that information in, but she also cautioned that we have no authority to enforce it ourselves. Councillor MacDonald felt that it is still important that the message gets out to residents. It was noted that signage has been ordered and Jeremy C will check to see when we can expect to receive it.

10. Council Inquiries

Councillor Smith would like to see us put out a little blurb about how pleased we are with people who are following the rules.

Councillor Smith noted that we had a house fire on Marion Drive (cigarette in the mulch) and the 10 year old woke up and saved everyone in the family and he is going to be recognized by the fire department. Jeremy C noted that the Provincial Fire Marshall has been distributing information on barbeques, and he will check with Kevin Reynolds and Joe Driscoll, who are staff members, but are also volunteer fire fighters, regarding information on mulch.

Councillor Gallant asked where we are with Cotton Park and Jeremy C replied that we are working on the RFP now that the companies that do this type of work are fully operational. Once the work is done our staff will look after them for the rest of the year.

Mayor Ogden asked if any work was going to be done on the Islands around Sobey's and Petro Can and Jeremy replied that we are turning them back to just grass and they will be mowed on a regular basis. He added that he will check with the maintenance crew to see what the schedule is for the islands.

Deputy Mayor Clow asked for an update on the sludge removal and Jeremy replied that things are progressing well so far and we are working well with the Department of Environment to get the sampling done. The process should be completed by the end of the week.

Councillor Burrridge noted that she has received some emails regarding shore access so she walked to the shore through the path. There are a lot of trees down and it may be a safety issue. Jeremy will have either Joe Driscoll or Billy Ramsay check into it.

11. Other Business

Nil

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.