



Staff Report

Administration – Communications

Report To: COW_Finance_Admin_Fire_Community_Services
Meeting Date: July 8, 2024
Report Number: FAF.24.085
Title: Informal Public Engagement Opportunities Follow Up
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, Manager of Communications and Economic Development

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.24.085, entitled “Informal Public Engagement Opportunities Follow Up”;

AND THAT Council approves the plan as presented and directs staff to proceed with implementation efforts to schedule and promote the Coffee/Breakfast with Council events, beginning September 2024, and the Community BBQ with Council event to be scheduled for Sunday, August 18, 2024;

AND THAT Council approves funding to support these initiatives at an upset limit of \$2,000.00 to be funded through the 2024 Council Operating budget;

AND THAT Council directs staff to provide a follow-up report in Spring 2025 to debrief on these new initiatives, including a full breakdown of costs and staff time.

B. Overview

This report provides Council with further details and a proposed implementation plan related to informal opportunities to engage with residents and stakeholders.

C. Background

At the April 29, 2024 meeting, staff presented report [FAF.24.042 “Informal Public Engagement Options”](#) to Council. The report provided a variety of draft public engagement ideas for Council to consider.

Through the meeting, Council approved the following motion:

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.24.042, entitled "Informal Public Engagement Options";

AND THAT Council direct staff to prepare an implementation proposal, including opportunities to offset costs, that includes an emphasis on creating an attractive space for informal dialogue with the Community.

D. Analysis

Based on the discussion and direction provided by Council, staff have developed the following implementation plan, which includes three recommendations.

1. Council Participation at Town/Community Events
2. Coffee/Breakfast with Council
3. Community BBQ with Council

1. Council Participation at Town/Community Events

There are many community events scheduled throughout the year that Council members could attend to engage with residents.

The Town will have a formal presence at some of the events through a booth or table managed by the Town's Communications and Economic Development staff, and Council members are always welcome to participate at the Town booth.

In addition, the Blue Mountains Public Library will also have a formal presence at some events, and Council members are welcome to participate at the booth with library staff.

Event	Date	Details
Clarksburg Century of the Classics	August 24, 2024	No Town or Library presence
Seniors Fair	Mid-September 2024 Date TBC	Town and Library presence with opportunities for Council to volunteer
See the Salmon Run	End of September 2024 Date TBC	Library presence
Beaver Valley Fall Fair	September 6 & 7, 2024	Town and Library presence with opportunities for Council to volunteer
Guitar Trail	September 7, 2024	BMVA led event with opportunities for Council to volunteer

Event	Date	Details
Open Fields	October 5, 2024	Town-led event with opportunities for Council to volunteer
Thornbury-Clarksburg Rotary Turkey Trot	October 12, 2024	Library presence with opportunities for Council to volunteer
Apple Harvest Festival Weekend	October 12 – 14, 2024	BMVA led event with opportunities for Council to volunteer
Apple Harvest Festival	October Date TBC	Details TBC
Clarksburg Pumpkin Walk	Early November 2024 Date TBC	Library presence
Thornbury BIA Olde Fashioned Christmas	December 2024 Date TBC	Town-supported event with an opportunity for Council to volunteer to serve free hot chocolate for the community tree lighting

In addition to the community events in the above chart, The Blue Mountains Public Library hosts a ‘Books in the Park’ event series throughout the summer and fall. Council members are welcome to attend the events and volunteer alongside Library staff.

- July 19, 2024 – Ravenna Park
- August 9, 2024 – Lions Park
- August 23, 2024 – Bayview
- September 13, 2024 – Heritage Park
- September 27, 2024 – Moreau Park
- October 4, 2024 – Ravenna Park

If Council members are available and interested in volunteering at any of the community events listed above, please notify a member of the Town’s Communications and Economic Development team and staff will assist with scheduling.

2. Coffee/Breakfast with Council

Based on the previous discussion, staff recommend scheduling a bi-monthly Coffee/Breakfast with Council event beginning September 2024. The events will be informal, with no set agenda, and with coffee, tea and light breakfast snacks offered. Through this format, residents can

mix/mingle and talk informally with Council members in a relaxed setting. The events can be hosted at different venues throughout the community.

Staff recommends hosting four Coffee/Breakfast with Council events between September 2024 and March 2025. This will allow enough time for the events to generate awareness and momentum to encourage participation. Following the March event, staff and Council can assess if the events should continue throughout 2025 or if the format/frequency needs to be adjusted.

The 2024/2025 schedule is proposed below:

- September 2024 – Town Hall or BVCC
- November 2024 – Ravenna Hall
- January 2025 – Craigleith Heritage Depot
- March 2025 – Fire Station 2 (Grey Rd 19)

Staff selected the meeting locations to align with Council's direction to keep the cost low or minimal. Each of the above locations is a Town facility that the Council can use at no cost, and all dates are during regular business hours to avoid staff overtime costs. If approved, Town staff will work with Council to confirm the date and time of each meeting to ensure that all of Council is available to attend.

There is an opportunity to host Coffee/Breakfast with Council events on weekends or in other areas of the community at private facilities such as the Lora Bay Recreation Centre or at The Shed in the Windfall subdivision. If Council wishes to explore weekend or private facility options, budget should be allocated accordingly.

3. Community BBQ with Council

Based on the previous discussion, staff recommend hosting a free community BBQ this summer in August. Instead of hosting a Town-only event, staff have identified an opportunity to partner and host the BBQ on the same day as the Thornbury Farmers Market, scheduled for Sunday, August 18, 2024. If approved, the exact time of the community BBQ will be confirmed and advertised.

Offering the community BBQ on the same day as an already scheduled community event will benefit both the Town and the event through enhanced promotion and cross-attendance.

To keep costs low, staff also recommend that the Town consider opportunities to partner with local service clubs to help with volunteer support.

Other Informal Public Engagement Opportunities

In addition to the three recommended initiatives included in this staff report, staff brainstormed other public engagement ideas that were included as part of FAF.24.042 "Informal Public Engagement Options". Based on available staff capacity and prioritization, the other ideas that Council expressed interest, such as the Library Storytime events with Council, will be explored and considered for 2025.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders.

F. Environmental Impacts

No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

G. Financial Impacts

No funds are included in the 2024 Operating Budget to support these initiatives and no staff time was allocated in work plans for these additional initiatives.

If Council wishes to proceed with the recommended options, sufficient budget should be allocated to cover costs such as food, refreshments or snacks, advertising/promotion costs (signage, newspaper ads, etc.), and applicable staff time and potential overtime to help with planning and set up/clean up.

1. Council Participation at Town/Community Events - \$0

- There are no hard costs associated with Council participating at the events listed within this staff report, as Council will be attending to volunteer on their own behalf or will be supporting the efforts of Town and/or Library staff.

2. Coffee/Breakfast with Council - \$800

- Estimated cost of \$200 per event to cover refreshments/food and miscellaneous promotional costs.
- Estimated staff time of six hours per event to cover staff time for advertising, planning, set-up/clean-up.

3. Community BBQ with Council - \$750

- Estimated cost of \$750 to cover equipment rentals, food, refreshments, snacks and miscellaneous promotional costs. There is an opportunity to reduce the cost based on the opportunity to partner with a local service club or community group.
- Estimated staff time of 15+ hours to cover staff time for advertising, planning, set-up/event work/clean-up.

H. In Consultation With

Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer

Allan Gibbons, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

Jennifer Murley, CEO Blue Mountains Public Library

Ryan Gibbons, Director of Community Services

Thornbury Farmers Market Staff

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry, Manager of Communications & Economic Development communications@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

None.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hendry
Manager of Communications & Economic Development

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	FAF.24.085 Informal Public Engagement Opportunities Follow Up.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 20, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tim Hendry - Jun 10, 2024 - 1:49 PM

Shawn Everitt - Jun 20, 2024 - 9:54 AM