Minutes

Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology (RABIT) Task Force

Meeting Date: May 31, 2021
Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting
Prepared by Kyra Dunlop, Administrative Assistant Committees of Council

A. Call to Order

Deputy Mayor Potter called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with Mayor Soever and Councillor Sampson present.

Town staff present were Chief Administrative Officer Shawn Everitt, Director of Operations Shawn Carey, and Executive Assistant Committees of Council Sarah Merrifield. Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry sent his regrets.

- **Task Force Member Attendance**

- **Additions to the Agenda**

  None

  Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and general nature thereof
  NOTE: In accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* and the Town Procedural By-law 2019-56, Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology (RABIT) Task Force members must file a written statement of the interest and its general nature with the Clerk for inclusion on the Registry.

  None

- **Review of Minutes (May 19, 2021)**

  Minutes reviewed and deemed sufficient.

B. Deputations

B.1 Deputations, if any

None

C.   Matters for Discussion

C.1   Internet Speed Test Challenge Update

- **# of Tests completed**
- **Quotation from CIRCA for detailed Data Analysis**

Item C.1. deferred.

C.2   Follow-up Direction from Council

THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains acknowledges receipt of the April 14, 2021 RABIT Taskforce resolution, as follows:

THAT in accordance with the April 14, 2021 RABIT Task Force request, Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains directs staff to set up a meeting between the Task Force and the University of Guelph R2B2 representatives for further discussion, CARRIED.

- **Meeting set for June 7, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.**

C.3   Action Item Tracking

- Request for Information, if deemed the right path forward
    - On hold indefinitely
- One-on-one meetings with Internet Service Providers
    - On hold indefinitely
- Internet Speed Test Challenge
    - Tim Hendry emailed to advise he would be unable to attend and it was requested that he provide an update to the Task Force by email following the meeting.
    - Mayor Soever noted that there were a number of areas still missing in the data collection and that issues persisted regarding the Speed Test Challenge icon placement and its indication of location. Deputy Mayor Potter has spoken to CIRA about the mapping glitch.
- Installation guidelines for conduit in The Blue Mountains Road Allowance ("Variation Agreement")
    - Director of Operations Shawn Carey advised that a draft policy was being discussed in the Senior Management Team
    - Frustration has been expressed by a local provider regarding the draft Variation Agreement and also with respect to ICON grant applications
    - Consideration for Town-owned conduit discussion. Shawn Carey noted that Town staff would continue to review the engineering standards and would be bringing a report to Council in fall 2021.
    - Shawn Everitt noted that a resolution from the Task Force to Council could be made and that a motion could be brought forward through the budget process. Shawn Everitt asked if there was an intention of the Task Force that non-internet service providers utilizing Town property are also charged.
- Eh!Tel and GBTel Inc. Universal Broadband Fund Proposals
    - Eh!Tel and GBTel advised that they do not expect to hear back regarding the proposal until mid-summer 2021

- R2B2 and the Town of The Blue Mountains
    - Executive Assistant Sarah Merrifield advised R2B2 representatives will attend the June 7, 2021 meeting and materials will be circulated to Task Force members in advance of the meeting.
- Telecommunications Memo from PDS
    - Deputy Mayor Potter noted that he had a conversation with Stewart Halliday, Grey Highlands Chamber of Commerce, regarding their interest in the RABIT Task Force work and that they may attend an upcoming meeting. Deputy Mayor Potter advised that Stewart is waiting to hear from Waterloo University regarding a long-term project that may also serve the interests of the RABIT Task Force.

C.4   Intelligent Cities Summit Presentation – Impact of Infrastructure Planning on Smart City Development

Mayor Soever noted that a dedicated staff person would be required to oversee this internet project.

Shawn Everitt left the meeting at 9:57 a.m. to attend another meeting.

Mayor Soever provided an overview of the Intelligent Cities Summit Presentation to the Task Force on the following:

- Importance of connectivity in the municipal context;
- Municipalities strategic importance to digital connectivity;
- Smart Community digital infrastructure deployment;
- Cost vs. Value;
- Need to build a digital infrastructure inventory; and
- Summary: Role of connectivity in the municipal context.

Deputy Mayor Potter thanked Mayor Soever for the presentation. Deputy Mayor Potter noted that the same themes are present in the external presentations, being that they provide a clear picture that building a strategy will be key and that they will need someone to implement the project.

Moved by: Mayor Soever

Seconded by: Councillor Sampson

THAT, with respect to the presentation provided on the Impact of Infrastructure Planning on Smart City Deployments at the Intelligent Cities Conference, the RABIT Take Force requests a BAI Communications representative to attend Council to provide the same, CARRIED

D.   Correspondence

**D.1.   KVC Technologies Inc.
Re: Provision of Rural Broadband**

Received for information.

**D.2   Rob Uhrig, Sales and Marketing Manager, Bruce Street Technologies
Re: RABIT Public Meeting**

Received for information. Deputy Mayor Potter will provide follow-up to Rob Uhrig.

E.   New and Unfinished Business

E.1   Additions to the Agenda

None

E.2   Items Identified for Discussion at Next Meeting

- Variation Agreement draft Staff Report
- Quotation from CIRA for detailed Data Analysis
- R2B2 meeting

F.   Upcoming Meeting Dates

June 7, 2021

G.   Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.