



Committee Report

Community Communications Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: January 18, 2021
Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Town Hall, Council Chambers
32 Mill Street, Thornbury, ON

Community Communications Committee Recommendations

NOTE: The following are recommendations from the Community Communications Advisory Committee to be considered for adoption by Council

C Matters for Discussion

C.1 [Discussion around a Third Draft of the Communications Strategy](#)

****NOTE:** Appended to this document for reference are the **DRAFT January 18, 2021 Committee minutes**, in addition to the letter provided by Chair Milne on behalf of the Committee

Recommended (Move, second)

WHEREAS the Community Communications Advisory Committee are aware of a Notice of Motion by Council with respect to development of a customer service program for the Town and requested Chair Milne to provide a letter to Council to identify possible interim solutions with regard to the Town's customer service through the following motion:

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee requests Chair Milne to provide a letter to Council around the development of a service and response time policy, CARRIED.

AND WHEREAS the Community Communications Advisory Committee feels there is some urgency to the customer service initiative and requested the letter be considered by Council at the January 27, 2021 meeting;

AND WHEREAS the Community Communications Advisory Committee Chair John Milne provided the letter, as attached, for Council's consideration with respect to development of a service and response time policy;

NOW THEREFORE Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains receives the letter submitted by Chair Milne on behalf of the Committee and directs staff to implement the following recommended interim solutions:

- Item 1
- Item 2, etc.



Minutes

The Blue Mountains, Community Communications Advisory Committee

Date: January 18, 2021
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Town Hall, Council Chambers - Virtual Meeting
32 Mill Street, Thornbury, ON
Prepared by:
Sarah Merrifield, Executive Assistant Committees of Council

Members Present: Deputy Mayor Rob Potter, Councillor Paula Hope, Lyn Logan, John Milne, Tom Maloney, Jayne Sutherland, Mary Ferguson

Staff Present: Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry and Communications and Economic Development Coordinator Carling Fee

A. Call to Order

A.1 Traditional Territory Acknowledgement

We would like to begin our meeting by recognizing the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada as traditional stewards of the land. The municipality is located within the boundary of Treaty 18 region of 1818 which is the traditional land of the Anishnaabek, Haudenosaunee and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples.

A.2 Committee Member Attendance

Executive Assistant Committees of Council Sarah Merrifield confirmed that all Committee members were present.

A.3 Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Jayne Sutherland
Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Potter

THAT the Agenda of January 18, 2021 be approved as circulated, including any additions to the Agenda.

Yay (7): Mary Ferguson, Councillor Hope, Lyn Logan, Tom Maloney, Deputy Mayor Potter, Jayne Sutherland, and John Milne

The motion is Carried (7 to 0)

A.4 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, Community Communications Advisory Committee Members must file a written statement of the interest and its general nature with the Clerk for inclusion on the Registry.

None

A.5 Previous Minutes

Moved by: Mary Ferguson
Seconded by: Tom Maloney

THAT the Minutes of December 15, 2020 be approved as circulated, including any revisions to be made.

Yay (7): Mary Ferguson, Councillor Hope, Lyn Logan, Tom Maloney, Deputy Mayor Potter, Jayne Sutherland, and John Milne

The motion is Carried (7 to 0)

B. Staff Reports and Deputations

B.1 Deputations, if any

None

B.2 Public Comment Period (each speaker is allotted three minutes)

NOTE: In accordance with the Town Procedural By-law 2019-56 fifteen minutes is allotted at the Meeting to receive public comments regarding Community Communications Advisory Committee matters included on the Agenda. The speaker shall provide their name and address, and shall address their comments to the Chair. Comments shall not refer to personnel, litigation or potential litigation matters, or matters that are a follow-up to a Public Meeting.

NOTE: Committee meetings are taking place virtually to assist with social distancing with respect to COVID-19. Comments received from the public that have not been included on the Agenda will be read at the meeting by the Executive Assistant.

None

B.3 Staff reports, if any

None

C. Matters for Discussion

C.1 Discussion around a Third Draft of the Communications Strategy

Committee Chair John Milne provided an overview of the draft Communications Strategy changes the sub-committee is proposing. John emphasized that the intent of the changes is to focus on realistic, attainable goals, and model the use of plain language.

The Committee reflected on the importance of other Corporate strategies adhering to the style established in the Communications Strategy and being reflective of the Corporate Strategic Plan. The Committee discussed that Committee Chairs should consider meeting regularly to ensure consistency in the Corporate Plans being developed.

Chair John Milne noted there is a need to identify a standard for reply times to enquiries from the public, though noted this responsibility lies with the Chief Administrative Officer. Councillor Hope confirmed that a Notice of Motion was provided at Council regarding customer service, and as such, a staff report will be brought forward. John noted that if replying to enquiries is the most immediate, front-facing customer service challenge, there could be an interim solution developed until the staff report and program is fully realized and actioned. Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry noted that customer service is a fulsome discussion and further noted the Committee would be beneficial in developing the metrics.

Deputy Mayor Potter confirmed that with respect to communications standards, the Mayor speaks for Council.

Committee member Mary Ferguson enquired the best method for the Committee to make its priority for customer service known. The Committee discussed that a letter could go to the Chief Administrative Officer to indicate possible interim solutions until a fulsome customer service program can be developed. The Committee discussed that there is some urgency to this initiative and Chair Milne agreed to draft a letter. Staff confirmed that the letter should be directed to Council at the January 27, 2021 meeting for consideration.

Moved by: Lyn Logan

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Potter

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee requests Chair Milne to provide a letter to Council around the development of a service and response time policy.

Yay (7): Mary Ferguson, Councillor Hope, Lyn Logan, Tom Maloney, Deputy Mayor Potter, Jayne Sutherland, and John Milne

The motion is Carried (7 to 0)

Tim noted an update on the draft Communications Strategy will be provided at the February 2021 meeting with the goal of having the draft Strategy provided to Council at the end of February if the Committee endorses the document. Tim cautioned that the only question he has is around the hyperfocus of the Strategy as it focuses largely on a 1-year period of time where Council's direction was a 5 year Strategy. John noted it is important to consider why it is not reasonable to create a 5-year Plan and instead, by focusing on more immediate elements, a good foundation can be built for a multi-year Plan. John noted if necessary, the Committee could call a Special meeting to review the Strategy.

**C.2 Set Alternate Date for Committee-led, Virtual Public Engagement Session
Re: Corporate Communications Survey Highlights & Strategy Planning**

NOTE: this session, originally scheduled for January 13, 2021 was postponed.

Resolution from January 11, 2021 Council meeting:

THAT, at the request of the Community Communications Advisory Committee, Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains directs that the January 13, 2021 Community Communications Advisory Committee Public Meeting be rescheduled to a future date, CARRIED.

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee reschedules the virtual, Committee-led Public Engagement Session to February 10, 2021 and provides notice of the same to Council through email from Councillor Hope and Deputy Mayor Potter.

The Committee discussed the preference to hold the meeting on another date in February, and determined February 10, 2021 as the revised session date. Staff advised of the need to ensure 21-day notice requirements are met. Committee member Jayne Sutherland noted the importance of including the session in The Blue Mountains Review and on The Citizens Forum. The Committee discussed that no speakers had registered for the January session but confirmed that by fine-tuning the event title and adding a customer service focus, interest could be heightened. Executive Assistant Committees of Council advised that once the session had been cancelled, one member of the public signed up for the future session, but indicated it was for interest only, and did not wish to speak or provide comment.

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Potter
Seconded by: Councillor Hope

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee reschedules the virtual, Committee-led Public Engagement Session to February 10, 2021 and provides notice of the same to Council through email from Councillor Hope and Deputy Mayor Potter.

Yay (7): Mary Ferguson, Councillor Hope, Lyn Logan, Tom Maloney, Deputy Mayor Potter, Jayne Sutherland, and John Milne

The motion is Carried (7 to 0)

C.3 Update from Council - Councillor Hope (verbal)

Councillor Hope provided an overview of the additions to the budget with respect to Communications staff and emphasized Council's investment in communication. Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry spoke about the Capital Communications staff which was a position approved in the 2020 budget, along with the addition of a Communications Assistant and a Communications Coordinator which is being considered through the 2021 budget process.

The Committee requested that a Roundtable Update from each member be added to the agenda as a standing item.

C.4 Journalist Advice to Leaders Managing a Crisis Sub-Committee - Councillor Hope (verbal)

Councillor Hope pointed to the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Town staff that was communicated to the public. Councillor Hope noted the Town did not have to release this information, but the emergency control group determined it should be communicated. Councillor Hope enquired whether the Committee should create a list of procedures regarding what to do when confronted with a crisis.

Committee member Jayne Sutherland commented that perhaps a newsletter, or similar, that conveys what is going on around Town, community events, County and Town news could also be used to provide crisis communication.

Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry noted the first draft of the Communications Strategy identifies Crisis Communications Plan development, along with Media Relations Training for Council and Senior Management.

C.5 Town Operations Communication Initiatives - Councillor Hope (verbal)

Committee member Mary Ferguson left the meeting.

It was noted that there are positions in Communications that are being considered to assist with capital project communications. These positions will be funded through the project budgets, not through general taxation. Further, these positions are not for general communications purposes, but specific to the capital projects. The 2020 Capital Planning Project Coordinator was approved in the previous budget, and the 2021 Planning and Development Coordinator and General Communications Assistant are being considered in the 2021 budget.

C.6 Follow-up Resolution from Council

NOTE: the following motion was passed by Council on December 14, 2020.

THAT Council receives Staff Report FAF.20.186, entitled "Corporate Communications Survey Results";

AND THAT Council acknowledges that staff report FAF.20.186 "Corporate Communications Survey Results" is being provided directly to Council at the request of the Committee;

AND THAT Council acknowledges the results of the Corporate Communication Survey for information;

AND THAT Council acknowledges that the survey responses will be analyzed with resulting action items incorporated into the final draft of the Communications Strategy, CARRIED.

D. Correspondence

None

E. New and Unfinished Business

E.1 Additions to Agenda

The Committee noted there is some confusion regarding how notice is provided to Council regarding Committee initiatives. The Committee requested further information on the mechanism to obtain Council approval for Committee work.

E.2 Items Identified for Discussion at the Next Meeting

- Draft Communications Strategy
- Roundtable Update from each Committee member (standing item)
- Clarification regarding Committee of Council Process/Protocols- the manner in which Committee initiatives are provided to Council

F. Notice of Meeting Dates

February 10, 2021 – Special Committee meeting
Committee-Led, Virtual Public Engagement Meeting
Town Hall, Council Chambers (virtual)

February 16, 2021
Town Hall, Council Chambers (virtual)

G. Adjournment

Moved by: Councillor Hope
Seconded by: Lyn Logan

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee does now adjourn at 11:36 a.m. to meet again at the call of the Chair.

Yay (6): Councillor Hope, Lyn Logan, Tom Maloney, Deputy Mayor Potter, Jayne Sutherland, and John Milne

Absent (1): Mary Ferguson

The motion is Carried (6 to 0, 1 absent)

RECEIVED VIA EMAIL

From: John Milne [REDACTED]
Sent: January 22, 2021 11:23 AM
To: Corrina Giles; Alar Soever
Cc: 'Shawn Everitt; Sarah Merrifield; Krista Royal
Subject: REVISED ADDITION TO COUNCIL AGENDA

Corrina:

Good morning.

Further to my earlier email & a conversation with Mayor Soever, please add the following to next week's Council meeting agenda:

At the Community Communications Advisory Committee (CCAC) meeting on January 18, 2021, there was discussion around the Town's service levels and response times to resident inquiries.

It is understood that a recent motion by Councillor Hope and Mayor Soever addressed this subject. We were told by Manager of Communications & Economic Development Tim Hendry that staff is currently reviewing service levels/response times, planning on having new standards in place by the end of Q1.

In the interim, it was felt that residents should be advised of this review and that some form of temporary standards be put in place.

A notice such as the following could be issued as a Press Release and/or addressed in the Mayor's weekly video:

While staff and council work toward putting new service levels and response times in place by the end of Q1, a number of temporary standards are being applied:

- All inquiries should be answered within defined timeframes.
- In the event that an inquiry cannot be satisfactorily resolved within the defined timeframes, staff/council should provide an estimate for a timely resolution.
- All residents making inquiries/calls should be asked if they are satisfied with the response given & if anything further is required; in the event that they are not satisfied, next steps should be agreed upon. If required, issues should be escalated – with expected response times communicated to the individual making the inquiry.
- Residents could be encouraged to share thoughts regarding how the Town might improve its service Levels with [insert agreed-upon appropriate name].

I hope that this suggestion is of value.

As always, the CCAC is at your disposal to help as Staff and Council strive to better engage our community.

JM
[REDACTED]