



Minutes

The Blue Mountains, Accountability and Transparency Committee

Date: Thursday, May 9, 2024
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: Virtual Meeting, Teams
Prepared By:
Carrie Fairley, Executive Assistant Committees of Council

Members Present: June Porter, Paula Hope, Gail Ardiel, Connie Craddock, Robert Turner
Staff Present: Town Clerk, Corrina Giles

A. Call to Order

A.1 Traditional Territory Acknowledgement and Moment of Reflection

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

Chair Porter called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and noted that all members were present virtually, save and except Councillor Ardiel.

Gail Ardiel joined the meeting at 2:35 pm.

A.3 Approval of Agenda

Moved By: Robert Turner

Seconded By: Connie Craddock

THAT the Agenda of May 9, 2024, be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda.

Yay (4): June Porter, Paula Hope, Connie Craddock, and Robert Turner

Absent (1): Gail Ardiel

The motion is Carried (4 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 2023-62, Council or 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: Paula Hope

Seconded By: Robert Turner

THAT the Accountability and Transparency Committee minutes of April 11, 2024, be adopted as circulated, including any revisions to be made.

Yay (5): June Porter, Paula Hope, Gail Ardiel, Connie Craddock, and Robert Turner

The motion is Carried (5 to 0)

B. Staff Reports and Deputation

None

C. Public Comment Period

None

D. Matters for Discussion

D.1 Accountability and Transparency Policy

The Committee reviewed the draft Accountability and Transparency Policy the Town Clerk provided.

Member Turner noted the definitions in the draft policy were clear and appropriate. Member Craddock noted that the draft policy appropriately acknowledged the Town’s accountability obligations “to residents, the general public and other stakeholders”. She also supported the draft policy’s positive tone and clear, plain language.

The Committee discussed making minor amendments to some wording in the policy to highlight public participation. The Town Clerk spoke regarding deputations and noted to the Committee that all the information for providing a deputation can be found on the Town’s website. The Committee discussed the best way to get information regarding public participation to the community.

Member Hope suggested having Communications provide the Committee with information regarding how to talk to the Town, through newsletters and other communication vehicles. Member Hope further suggested providing information to the public about the various ways they can get in touch with the Town or Council. Chair

Porter noted that would be a good conversation to have at the June Accountability and Transparency Committee meeting, when Tim Hendry, Manager of Communications and Economic Development is in attendance. Chair Porter further noted that during the June meeting, another conversation to have with staff is how the Committee recommends education strategies, as noted in the Committee’s mandate.

Member Turner complemented the Town Clerk and Executive Assistant Committees of Council for providing an excellent process – specifically providing similar policies from other municipalities for Committee member review ahead of this meeting –that enabled Committee to bring forward this policy in an effective and expedited manner.

Moved By: Robert Turner

Seconded By: Gail Ardiel

THAT the Accountability and Transparency Committee requests the Town Clerk to provide the draft “Accountability and Transparency of Town Actions to the Public Policy” to Council for consideration and to proceed to a Public Meeting to receive public comments on the draft policy, in accordance with the Provision of Notice and Manner of Providing Notice to the Public Policy.

Yay (5): June Porter, Paula Hope, Gail Ardiel, Connie Craddock, and Robert Turner

The motion is Carried (5 to 0)

D.2 Lobbyist Registry

The Committee discussed how registering for the lobbyist registry needs to be easy, to not discourage registrations.

The Town Clerk noted in drafting this draft policy, she reached out to seek input from the Integrity Commissioner as the Integrity Commissioner often acts as the Lobbyist Registrar. The Town Clerk further noted the advice received was to not be too onerous in the registration process and to remain practical. The Town Clerk noted that this is the first time the Town has had a Lobbyist Registry and after enactment, if there are problems identified, amendments can be made to the by-law. The Town Clerk spoke further regarding the Registrar for the Lobbyist Registry noting some municipalities have their Integrity Commissioner and some have the Town Clerk as the Registrar.

The Committee discussed Section 9 – Enforcement of the By-law and agreed that enforcing the by-law should not commence until after six months of the enactment of the registry and agreed that providing ten days for the lobbyist to register themselves on the registry was sufficient.

Member Craddock requested clarification regarding item K in Exempted Activities which defines what lobbying does not include. Member Craddock noted that Item K reads “communications regarding a business or financial interest by not-for-profit businesses or other not-for-profit entity where such business or entity has no paid staff” and requested the Town Clerk to clarify the rationale for exempting a lobbyist from

registering lobbying activities when representing this kind of client. Member Craddock further questioned why is transparency not required in these circumstances? She asked for examples in order to better understand this exemption.

Member Craddock also noted that none of the definitions of the three kinds of lobbyists (paid consultant, in-house and voluntary unpaid lobbyist) included references to not-for-profit entities. In fact, the voluntary unpaid lobbyist definition only included for-profit organizations. Where and how do nonprofits and charities fit in the lobbyist registry? The Committee discussed and sought further clarification regarding these definitions and the exempted activities as noted in the draft by-law. The Town Clerk noted she would seek clarification on the items identified, and provide more information to the Committee, at the June meeting.

The Committee further discussed amendments to the enforcement and penalties section of the by-law and agreed to update this section providing for a stronger penalty should a lobbyist who has been banned continues to lobby. The Town Clerk noted that if an individual is banned from lobbying, correspondence will be sent out to advise staff and Council identifying the individual.

Chair Porter questioned when the by-law is reviewed. The Town Clerk Corrina noted that when the by-law goes to Council for their consideration, Council could request a review of the by-law be brought forward and provide the timing when they would like the review brought forward. Corrina further noted that the Lobbyist Registrar will provide a report to Council and suggested that could be a good time for Council to request a review of the by-law to determine if there are amendments needed or if it is working well.

Member Ardiel suggested Council and staff receive training on this topic, to help everyone understand what a lobbyist is and, why and how the registry works. Member Ardiel questioned who would provide training. The Town Clerk noted that if the Integrity Commissioner is appointed as the Lobbyist Registrar, she will ask them to provide a training session to Council, staff, and the public. Corrina further noted that other municipalities have FAQs, that were easy to understand and suggested that the Communications Department help with creating that document. Chair Porter noted that a flow chart would be helpful as well.

Town Clerk, Corrina spoke regarding the code of conduct attached to the draft by-law and requested the Committee to provide feedback on the code of conduct. Member Turner noted the code of conduct was excellent and adds value to the by-law. Member Craddock suggested that when a lobbyist registers, that they be required to acknowledge that they read the code of conduct, if it can be an automated process.

Member Craddock noted that once the Accountability and Transparency Policy and the Lobbyist Registry are in place, that would be a good time to communicate with the residents, the two significant initiatives that the Town has completed, to enhance accountability, openness, and transparency. Member Craddock further noted that

residents need to know about it for a practical reason as well as it speaks to the Town's commitment to accountability and transparency. Member Craddock suggested discussing further when the Communications Department attend the next Committee meeting.

Chair Porter asked the Town Clerk about the timeline for implementation, noting there already has been a public meeting on the Lobbyist Registry. The Town Clerk noted she will return to the June 13, 2024, Committee meeting with the information requested and noted that following the June meeting, we could confirm timing. The Clerk advised that Executive Assistant Carrie would complete the Committee Report for inclusion on the July 8, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting. The Town Clerk further noted she will provide a staff report to the July 8, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, with the draft by-law requesting enactment of the by-law. The Town Clerk advised if Council provides their endorsement, the by-law will go to the July 15, 2024, Council meeting, for Council enactment.

Chair Porter spoke regarding the Accountability and Transparency Policy, seeking a timeline for adoption of that policy. The Town Clerk noted that there is 21 days notice required for the public meeting and further noted that she will come back to the next committee meeting with a summary of what the timeline looks like.

Moved By: Paula Hope
Seconded By: Gail Ardiel

THAT the Accountability and Transparency Committee receives the draft Lobbyist Registry Bylaw for information and requests the Town Clerk to provide additional information to the next Committee meeting, for consideration.

Yay (5): June Porter, Paula Hope, Gail Ardiel, Connie Craddock, and Robert Turner

The motion is Carried (5 to 0)

Moved By: Robert Turner
Seconded By: Connie Craddock

THAT the Accountability and Transparency Committee requests the Town Clerk to provide a timeline for the enactment of the Accountability and Transparency Policy to the next Committee Meeting.

Yay (5): June Porter, Paula Hope, Gail Ardiel, Connie Craddock, and Robert Turner

The motion is Carried (5 to 0)

D.3 Follow-up Direction from Council

None

E. Correspondence

None

F. Work Plan

The Committee reviewed the Work Plan and updated it accordingly. Chair Porter noted the items marked in red on the work plan are to identify new items that have been added to the work plan. Chair Porter speak regarding the strategic plan noting there is a staff report coming forward from the CAO at a future Committee of the Whole meeting. Member Craddock questioned if the Committee would be assisting with the update of the strategic plan. Chair Porter noted more will be known once the staff report is released. Member Ardiel spoke regarding the importance of the strategic plan.

Chair Porter spoke regarding the code of conduct noted on the work plan noting the Integrity Commissioner will be providing training. The Town Clerk noted the new Integrity Commissioner was appointed on April 1, 2024, and training for Council has been scheduled, in Closed Session on May 22, 2024. Chair Porter questioned if the Committee Members would also be receiving training. The Town Clerk noted that when the former Integrity Commissioner provided training to Council, the Executive Assistant sent the video to the Committee members, for their information, as it relates to the Code of Conduct.

Member Turner noted that in order for the strategic plan to move forward and be successful, there needs to be a focus on the process to be used and that is where he feels the Committee should focus, to ensure the next plan is completed diligently and expeditiously. Member Turner further spoke regarding his concerns about the recent turnover the Town has had at the Director level and its affect not only on the strategic planning process but on the operationalization of the completed plan.

G. New and Unfinished Business

G.1 Additions to Agenda

None

G.2 Items Identified for Discussion at the Next Meeting

Chair Porter requested the Committee to provide, in advance, any questions or items they would like to discuss at the June meeting, so it can be added to the agenda.

H. Notice of Meeting Dates

Accountability and Transparency Committee, June 13, 2024, In-Person, Council Chambers, Town Hall

Accountability and Transparency Committee, September 12, 2024, Virtual

I. Adjournment

Moved By: Connie Craddock

Seconded By: Paula Hope

THAT this Accountability and Transparency Committee Meeting does now adjourn at 4:27 p.m. to meet again June 13, 2024, in-person or at the call of the Chair.

Yay (5): June Porter, Paula Hope, Gail Ardiel, Connie Craddock, and Robert Turner

The motion is Carried (5 to 0)