



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF SMITHS FALLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

May 27, 2024, 5:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, Town Hall

Members Present: S Pankow, Mayor
J Brennan, Councillor
C McGuire, Councillor
P McKenna, Councillor
J Miller, Councillor
D Quinn, Councillor
S Robinson, Councillor

Staff Present: M Morris, Chief Administrative Officer
K Costello, Clerk
P Dowber, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer
K Grenke, Manager of Development Services
J Crowder, Manager of Economic Development

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Brennan to read the Land Acknowledgement.

2. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by S Robinson

Seconded by J Miller

THAT the May 27th, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda be approved as circulated.

Carried

4. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND/OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by P McKenna
Seconded by S Robinson

The Minutes of the May 13th, 2024 and May 21st, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meetings be approved as circulated.

Carried

6. DELEGATIONS

7. CAO/DIRECTORS VERBAL REPORTS

J Crowder, Manager of Economic Development

The 2024 Powwow has been cancelled due to funding gaps. Stakeholders meeting next week to discuss the funding options and Powwow structure moving forward in an effort to bring the powwow back for 2025.

2023 Community Awards were distributed last week. Bud Fawcett, Alexandra Lannin, Alex Mariona, Miley Bonneau and Dorothy Hudson were the recipients. Special thank you to guest speaker Nancy Stevens, founder of Help Kenya and Ryan Collins.

There were three successful community events this past weekend:

- Porchfest
- Kids Fishing Tournament
- Walk for Alzheimer's

There are many events planned for June as well:

- Pull the Pumper at the Community Centre (June 1)
- Beatlemania celebrating a new exhibit at the Heritage House Museum
- Opening of the Friday afternoon/evening Farmers Market (June 7)
- Downtown Business Association Night Market (June 15)
- Paddlefest at Lower Reach Park (June 15)

The Citizen of the Year ceremony will be held on June 3rd at the Smiths Falls Golf & Country Club. Hosted by the Kinsmen Club in partnership with the Town. Tickets are available.

Staff planning the 2024 Canada Day event at Lower Reach Park. Currently seeking vendors. Anyone interested is to contact the Economic Development office.

Town working with various organizations for a BR&E survey. Encouraged all businesses to take part in the survey. This survey will help inform the upcoming investment attraction and BR&E Strategic Plan. Request for Proposal to go out at the end of June.

P Dowber, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer

P Dowber updated Council on the Asset Management Plan as there is a deadline of July 2024. Looking at coming in late July with a report to Council which is a bit late. Ministry representative has been notified. Council must approve the Asset Management Plan report.

M Morris, Chief Administrative Officer

AMO Conference coming up. Ministry is now accepting delegation requests. Deadline of June 7th is approaching rapidly. To be added as a Priority Item.

8. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE CONSENT REPORTS

9. IN CAMERA/CLOSED SESSION

10. PRIORITY ISSUES/REPORTS

10.1 Visitor Survey Report – 2023 Year End Report 2024-66 (J Crowder)

J Crowder reviewed Report 2024-066. The purpose of the Visitor Information Collection Program – 2023 Survey Summary Report is to provide Council insights from tourist visitation activities during the 2023 season. The program was designed as a 3-year initiative, this being the second year, for the purpose of identifying and tracking visitor demographics and trends over a prescribed period of time. The program is in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Association.

We received the same number of responses as 2022, being 278. 76% of visitors travelled to Smiths Falls as their primary destination, and visited multiple regional locations during their visit, especially if staying more than 1 day. Total combined spending by survey respondents this year was approximately \$100,000, with the average visit/trip spend of approximately \$370.00.

C McGuire noted that he would like to see more input from the boaters. J Crowder advised that the Chamber of Commerce and Le Boat all have the cards. Not a lot of online survey promotion.

ACTION: For information only.

10.2 Projected Debt Levels Report 2024-065 (P Dowber)

P Dowber reviewed Report 2024-065 to provide Council with information on a long-term view of current and anticipated debt at the Town of Smiths Falls. Current long-term debt is approximately \$15.1M with an ARL of \$1.6M. Over the next few years, as the new Water Tower and upgrades to the Trunk Watermain are completed, additional debt of over \$17.5M may be required pending any potential award of further grants for this project. Funding for the Tower project of \$3,666,500 has been secured through the ICIP Green Infrastructure Stream, with the first payment of \$61,239 received earlier this month. Budget implications will be reflected in the 2025 budget process. This does not consider any grants that the Town may receive. Will come back to Council with a breakdown with our current loans, rates/terms, etc. This is part of the work that will come forward with the Asset Management Plan.

ACTION: For information only at this time.

10.3 Permitting Backyard Hens within Town Limits Report 2024-058 (R Chesebrough)

M Morris delivered Report 2024-058 and outlined options for Council to consider when determining the viability of backyard hens within the boundaries of the Town of Smiths Falls. Report outlines some benefits but also some considerations for Council to consider. Zoning bylaw does have a public consultation process that must be undertaken. Items that Council should consider:

- Local veterinary services for chickens is only offered 1 day a week and at only one local veterinary service.
- There is no livestock disposal facility in town
- Look at capacity of Bylaw Enforcement staff
- The Town has no where to take chickens that have been picked up either by Bylaw Enforcement Staff or residents.
- Cost for administering inspections, annual inspections, and complaint inspections.
- The increase in wildlife that is attracted into Town boundaries because of the backyard chickens. Municipal Bylaw Enforcement staff are not permitted or trained to deal with wild animals.
- The pilot project in Toronto was suspended.

- Concerns in the United States with Avian Flu as well.

M Morris advised of two options:

Option 1. Council direct staff to prepare a Zoning Bylaw amendment and conduct public consultation (including an in-person meeting and an online survey) to determine the level of interest and acceptance of the proposed program before Council makes any final decisions. Further, staff would provide a financial estimate to administer the program and the associated costs for staffing and the inspection and maintenance of the program.

Option 2. Council rejects the backyard hen proposal based on the concerns identified in this report. This would be consistent with the previous reports presented to council.

J Miler supports Option 1. Does not want to permit roosters.

C McGuire noted his disappointment that our zoning bylaw comes into play. Hoping that if we do something on a trial basis that we could work around that. Does not think hens should be different than pets. Supports Option 1. C McGuire wants to make sure that the zoning bylaw removes activities and sticks with land use.

S Pankow questioned if an exemption to the Zoning bylaw permits the use. Not concerned with the risks identified. Supports Option 1. Would like a streamlined approach.

P McKenna likes the idea of public consultation. Cap the number for the first year to get an idea of costs. Climate Action Working Group did discuss this, and this does reduce the environmental impact in a small way.

D Quinn does think we should do public consultation but knows that chickens can be expensive. More enforcement will be needed. What happens to the chickens when they are done laying eggs? There is no place in Town to take them. Supports Option 2.

S Robinson likes the idea of producing your own eggs. Would support a pilot program at the end of a public consultation first to ensure this is what the public want.

J Brennan advised that he does not want to go around a bylaw amendment. Agrees with some of the concerns noted in the report Supports Option 1 but not supporting backyard hens at this time. Would like comment from the Health Unit.

K Grenke reiterated that there is a mandatory public process for the zoning bylaw. Staff will discuss how public consultation will be staged. Zoning bylaw would have to mimic the animal control.

ACTION: Option 1 supported.

10.4 Bill 185- Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act Report 2024-067 (K Grenke)

K Grenke reviewed Report 2024-067 and updated Council with information regarding recent changes to the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, Provincial Policy Statement and other applicable provincial legislation and policy. Changes are wide ranging but overall positive. On April 10, 2024, the Province introduced Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, which contains changes to fifteen statutes, including key land use planning and development related legislation, including the Planning Act and Development Charges Act. The same day, a revised 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) was also released. On May 23, 2023, staff reviewed an earlier PPS draft with Council and provided comments to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and housing as it related to the proposed key themes including natural heritage, land use compatibility and growth management planning. K Grenke reviewed and summarized the key changes to the PPS and applicable legislation.

ACTION: For information only.

10.5 AMO Delegations

M Morris advised Council that he is looking for suggestions for delegations at the upcoming Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference.

The Connecting Link delegation was a success at the ROMA Conference in February but one the delegation to the Ministry of Health needs to be recalibrated and directed to another audience (Minister of Mental Health & Addictions).

J Brennan noted that funding infrastructure could be a delegation request. S Pankow noted that the Eastern Ontario Mayor's Caucus is not meeting until after the deadline but that trunk upgrades are already in process. J Brennan noted he was fine if the Eastern Ontario Mayor's Caucus is already discussing this.

M Morris also noted that the Enabling Housing Funding is expected to be announced before August and that MPAC assessments are also being discussed at the Eastern Ontario Mayor's Caucus.

M Morris also reminded Council that Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville is also looking for advocacy and more funding. Council noted their desire to pass a resolution first.

ACTION: Staff to submit a delegation request to the Minister of Mental Health & Addictions.

11. COMMITTEE, BOARD AND EXTERNAL ORGANIZATION UPDATES

C McGuire reminded all of the upcoming Heritage Conservation District Public Meeting on May 30th at the Welcome Centre and hosted by the Town's Municipal Heritage Committee.

12. INFORMATION LISTING/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

12.1 Letter from the Toronto Zoo

ACTION: Add to a future Council meeting for a resolution to support.

13. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

14. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by S Robinson
Seconded by C McGuire

THAT the Committee adjourn its proceedings 6:16 p.m. and stand so adjourned until the next duly called Committee meeting.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk