



Policy Development and Strategic Direction Committee Minutes

Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Electronic Participation only

Present: Mayor Bailey, Councillors Wheat, MacAlpine, Laferriere, Howes, Bell, Peirce, Chambers, Miller, Coleman and Gatward

Staff: Bradley, Duesling, and Boyd

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Howes
Seconded by Councillor Coleman

That the Policy Development and Strategic Initiatives Agenda for May 11, 2021 be approved, with an addition under 'Other Business'.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes from Previous Meetings

5.1 Policy Development and Strategic Direction Committee Minutes of April 13, 2021

Moved by Mayor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Peirce

That the Policy Direction and Strategic Initiatives Committee minutes of April 13, 2021 be approved.

Carried

7. Consent Items

7.2 Consent Items to be Received

Moved by Councillor Laferriere
Seconded by Councillor Bell

That the following consent items be received as information:

1. RPT-21-116 - Additional Residential Unit (ARU) Project Update.
2. Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks - Notification of Proposal on Modernizing Environmental Compliance Practices and Ontario Community Environment Fund Re-Launch.

Carried

In response to a question, Pam Duesling, General Manager of Development Services reported that staff is following-up on the scope of the community consultation and further information will be circulated.

8. Staff Reports

8.1 RPT-21-127 - Consultation on Legislative Changes Regarding Code of Conduct and Integrity Commissioners

Moved by Councillor Coleman
Seconded by Councillor Peirce

That the County of Brant supports the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's resolution regarding options for enforcing compliance with Municipal Codes of Conduct amongst Council Members;

That this support be communicated to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to inform the Province of Ontario's consultation on Strengthening Accountability for Municipal Council Members;

And that members of the public be encouraged to inform the Province's consultation through participation in the survey, available through the Province of Ontario's website.

Carried

8.2 RPT-21-128 - Changes to the County of Brant Code of Conduct

In response to questions, Heather Boyd, Director of Council Services clarified that Section 9.1 confirms that business conducted In Camera remains confidential until and unless the matter is released by resolution of Council. It was noted that Section 8.1 regarding the receipt of gifts was already part of the Code of Conduct. The proposed additional wording notes the reason for this section. Ms. Boyd suggested that clarification be sought from the Integrity Commissioner regarding hospitality / trade show items during a conference.

In response to a question regarding Section 16.1, Michael Bradley, Chief Administrative Official, noted that when a former member of Council applies for employment immediately after their term of Council, it can be difficult to defend the hiring as an unbiased decision, which can result in litigation. This would apply to the local boards and committees also subject to the Code of Conduct but would not prevent a former Member from being appointed to a local board or committee. It was noted that this also addresses concerns about a Members' influence over the creation of a potential position.

Moved by Councillor Wheat
Seconded by Councillor Laferriere

That the County of Brant adopt the following amendments to the County of Brant Code of Conduct for Members of Council:

1. New Section 5.17 *"Members of Council who are also Members of local board or municipal corporations owned in whole or in part by the County of Brant must be alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest between their roles and when in doubt about a potential conflict should seek the advice of the Integrity Commissioner"*.
2. Addition to Section 8.1 to read *"No Member shall accept a fee, advance, gift or personal benefit that is connected directly or indirectly with the performance of his or her duties of office, unless permitted by one or more of the exceptions listed in Section 8.3. **The acceptance of a gift, benefit or hospitality can imply favouritism, influence or bias on the part of the Member**"*.
3. Addition to Section 9.1 to read *"No Member shall disclose or release or publish by any means to any member of the public, or in any way divulge any confidential information, including personal information or any aspect of deliberations acquired by virtue of their Office, in either oral or written form, except when required by law or authorized by Council resolution to do so. **This section applies to Members during their term of office and afterwards for as long as the information remains confidential by law**"*.
4. New Section 31.1 to read *"The Integrity Commissioner is appointed by Council and reports to Council as a whole with the administrative support of the Clerk"*.
5. New Section 31.2 to read *"The Integrity Commissioner may only be removed from office, before the end of the term of their contract, by a special 2/3 majority of Council"*.
6. New Section 16.1 to read *"No Member shall seek employment with the County of Brant for a period of at least two (2) years following the end of their term"*.

That amendments to the County of Brant Code of Conduct by-law be presented for Council's consideration;

That staff be directed to coordinate with the Integrity Commissioner regarding any content to be incorporated on the County of Brant website;

And that suggestions from the Integrity Commissioner not addressed through these recommendations be referred for further analysis and a subsequent report.

Carried

8.3 RPT-21-129 - County of Brant Integrity Commissioner Contract

In response to a question, Ms. Boyd clarified that the Working Group would be responsible for reviewing proposals and making a recommendation to Council, which may also involve interviews with proponents. The current Integrity Commissioner would be eligible to submit a proposal.

Moved by Councillor Howes
Seconded by Mayor Bailey

That the County of Brant undertake a competitive bid process for the procurement of Integrity Commissioner Services to administer the County of Brant Code of Conduct for Members of Council;

And that Council appoint a three (3) member Working Group to review bids and make a recommendation to Council regarding the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner.

No Vote. Motion to Amend Follows

Mayor Bailey, Councillor Laferriere and Councillor Gatward volunteered to sit on the Working Group.

Moved by Councillor Chambers
Seconded by Councillor Miller

That Mayor Bailey, Councillor Laferriere and Councillor Gatward be appointed to sit on the Working Group to Review Bids for the Integrity Commissioner Contract.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Howes
Seconded by Mayor Bailey

That the following motion be approved, as amended:

"That the County of Brant undertake a competitive bid process for the procurement of Integrity Commissioner Services to administer the County of Brant Code of Conduct for Members of Council;

That Council appoint a three (3) member Working Group to review bids and make a recommendation to Council regarding the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner;

And that Mayor Bailey, Councillor Laferriere and Councillor Gatward be appointed to the Working Group to Review Bids for the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner".

Carried

10. Chief Administrative Officer's Update

Michael Bradley, Chief Administrative Officer, updated Committee on the following:

- The County's Gypsy moth program is underway. This includes aerial treatment of County lands which is being conducted over the next two (2) weeks over 600 acres, assistance being provided to residents for treatment on private properties and planning for assessments following treatments. In discussion, it was confirmed that this treatment is timed in such a way that it does not affect other species (i.e. monarch butterfly).
- The County's COVID-19 response continues with ongoing Emergency Operations Centre meetings, noting some staff groups were vaccinated as part of the Phase 1 and 2 Priority Essential Workers.
- Staff initiatives were held during Mental Health Awareness Week to promote good mental health in the workforce.
- Correspondence has been received from a number of contractors and consultants outlining the evolving and ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on supply chains that may impact County projects. A report on the impact on the capital program will be forthcoming.

11. Other Business

11.1 Upcoming Agenda Items

Councillor Chambers requested that discussion on a proactive drainage program be added to the next agenda for the Policy Development and Strategic Direction Committee.

It was further requested that a presentation / information on a possible Cannabis Production By-law be considered at a future meeting.

13. Next Meeting and Adjournment

Committee adjourned at 6:55 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, 6:00 p.m. by Electronic Participation.

Secretary