

**The Corporation of the Township of Tay
Public Consultation Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 17, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
Remote Video and Telephone Conference**

Present: Mayor Walker
Deputy Mayor La Chapelle
Councillor Raymond
Councillor Talbot
Councillor Bumstead
Councillor Warnock
Councillor Norris

Staff Present: L. Barron – Chief Administrative Officer
D. O’Shea – General Manager, Corporate Services
S. Farquharson – General Manager, Protective and
Development Services
C. Bonneville – Municipal Clerk
E. Smith – Communications Specialist

1. Call to Order

Mayor Walker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Councillor Talbot
Seconded by Councillor Warnock

That the Public Consultation Meeting Agenda for March 17, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

Motion Carried.

3. Disclosure of Interest

No disclosures of interest were brought forward.

4. Opening Remarks

Mayor Walker advised that opening remarks will follow the presentation from the Clerk.

5. Statement of Public Notice

The Clerk described the method by which notice of this meeting was given.

6. Presentations

6.1 Presentation from the Clerk - Council Composition Review

The Clerk provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Council composition review and public consultation in relation to the proposal to eliminate the ward system and reduce the number of Council members.

The Clerk provided information on the current Council composition, ward boundaries, voting methods and timeline for next steps should Council choose to change the current Council composition and abolish or modify the ward boundaries.

The presentation included survey results from the initial round of public consultations (November to December, 2020); recent survey results from public consultations (February to March, 2021) and a summary of comments gathered from community engagement.

7. Correspondence Received

The Clerk stated that a total of 14 emails and 1 telephone call was received and that the results from same were collected and provided in the presentation.

At this point in the meeting Mayor Walker outlined the format for tonight's public meeting. Council will hear from residents concerning their views of ward versus general election, and the number of Council be that 5, 7 or 9 and following the resident input members of Council will be called on to give their views followed by a general discussion.

Mayor Walker provided some background on why Council is tasked with reviewing council composition. In 2019, the province advised municipalities that it was reviewing all municipalities in the province to determine efficiencies as it related to potential amalgamations, and

reductions in the number of elected officials at the local level. The province conducted a process where all mayors were interviewed concerning their respective council size and asked for input on potential amalgamation with neighbouring municipalities. Locally, Tay, Tiny, Penetanguishene and Midland submitted a joint proposal to the province, suggesting that decisions related to amalgamations should remain at the local level and not through the province. The province also conducted a comprehensive resident input survey concerning possible amalgamations; the results of this survey have not been made public and possibly never will be.

In the end, the province decided, possibly due to other pressing issues to leave the decision on council size and other efficiency decisions at the local level but it expected municipalities to seriously consider this and other efficiency measures including amalgamation.

8. Question & Clarification Period - Public

Mayor Walker inquired if there were any questions or comments from the audience and noted that General Manager, O'Shea will call your name to speak.

M. Lund advised that he is strongly opposed to an at large election it would not be a democracy and fail to represent all residents. With the large population base of Victoria Harbour the majority of Council members will reside there; this will not present fair representation and the rural and agricultural areas are already neglected. M. Lund questioned how this debate evolved, does Council have extra time on their hands, are they not willing to represent and help the electors? M. Lund stated that an at large election approach would not be efficient it would create a monopoly of power.

M. Cage was called on to speak but was having technical difficulties. Mayor Walker offered to call Mr. Cage the following day to hear his concerns and comments.

R. Willett expressed concerns with the reduction to the number of Council members and agreed with the comments provided by Mr. Lund regarding his opposition to an at large election.

V. Reaume advised that initially she was in agreement with the proposed changes but seeing the results of the two surveys is in favour of maintaining the ward system and 7 members. With the new committee structure 7 members of Council is working well. V. Reaume expressed the need for rural Tay to have a specific voice.

S. Bumstead agreed with comments made by Mr. Lund, the current ward system has been in place since amalgamation and is working well. Other Townships may be going to an election at large but Tay's infrastructure is unique with large settlement and rural areas in the mix. S. Bumstead is opposed to reducing the number of council members and expressed concern with an at large election for residents in rural Tay should the majority representation of members reside in the Port McNicoll and Victoria Harbour area.

B. La Chapelle stated that he conducted a comparison of the pros and cons of an at large election versus a ward system and is of the opinion that a ward system provides residents to speak to someone from their ward. B. La Chapelle would like the ward system to remain, it is working well but questioned if there is a need for efficiency should wards with 2 Councillors be reduced to 1 and altered according to forecast of population growth. Mayor Walker provided the formula and criteria set out by the Province to determine the equation of population of each ward and with respect to growth staff is cognizance of this and slight adjustments to ward boundaries can be taken into consideration.

M. Burt requested that there be no change to the number of Council members as seasonal residents are becoming permanent residents the population is growing therefore there is a need for 7 council members.

9. Question & Clarification Period - Council

Mayor Walker inquired if there were any questions or comments from Council.

Councillor Norris spoke to the results of the survey and the Province mandate to reduce the size of Council for efficiency measures and his preference is to reduce the size of council to 5 members and an at

large election is the best option for Tay to achieve diverse representation.

Councillor Raymond questioned why this change was initiated and spoke to the organization review carried out by KGMP recommending a new organization and committee structure. Reducing Council to 5 members' results with quorum being 3 members which can be challenging and to reduce the numbers for efficiency measures the initial savings will be momentary. Councillor Raymond stated that Tay has 5 geographic boundaries; Victoria Harbour, Port McNicoll, Waubaushene, Waverley and rural Tay each with their own uniqueness and because of this the ward system is viable; an at large election will not provide equal representation. Councillor Raymond referred to a study conducted by the University of Waterloo measuring the impact of an election at large and the Province directives that council composition be reviewed for efficiencies.

Councillor Warnock supports the current council composition as it serves the municipality well and reiterated that the reason for the review wasn't initiated by the residents. The organization review process recommended change to the committee structure which is working well with 7 members, reducing the members will not generate a cost savings; shared services will. Councillor Warnock spoke to the pros and cons of an election at large versus the current ward system and supports the ward boundaries for greater representation and noted that an at large election poses additional campaign costs which will be a deterrent to young people and those with limited resources to run for council. Councillor Warnock recommended that Council listen to the residents and if change is needed a question to the electors be placed on the ballot for the next election.

Councillor Bumstead supports reducing the council member numbers from 7 to 5 and eliminating the wards as this approach will result with greater efficiencies and a collective municipality. Councillor Bumstead summarized his Council responsibilities, additional committees he represents and his work schedule and stated he still finds time for his personal life. The organization review recommended that the Township improve services and work collectively to identify needs such as reviewing the Council structure; reducing the number of Council members will reduce salaries of Council. Councillor Bumstead spoke

to the strategic plan recommending that the wards be eliminated and would like for Council to work towards achieving this recommendation.

Councillor Talbot stated there is no need for change and would prefer that things remain as is, the system in place is working well for the Township.

Deputy Mayor La Chapelle agreed that Tay is unique with 5 geographic areas and it is nice for the residents to reach out to someone who resides in their ward and knows the area. Deputy Mayor La Chapelle stated that great comments were received but will reserve his opinion until all the facts are presented. Regardless of the provincial directives we have a good working Council and will do what is best for the municipality.

Mayor Walker stated that some of the comments received this evening were uncalled for especially with respect to the agricultural community being neglected, they are significant members of the municipality.

Mayor Walker spoke to the Provincial directives that municipalities find efficiencies and stated that the County of Simcoe is in the midst of a service delivery and council complement study which could see the County Council complement reduced from the existing 32 to 16 members. Locally, Tay have partnered with Tiny, Midland and Penetanguishene for the North Simcoe Service Delivery Study which is an exercise to gauge our level of service across all business units of the municipalities to see where opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness exist.

Mayor Walker advised that Council did not have a preview of the survey statistics presented in tonight's presentation but to keep in mind that a survey is not a referendum, just because a decision does not comply with the wishes of a majority of survey respondents all input is taken into consideration.

Mayor Walker supports elimination of the ward system for numerous reasons, it would ultimately provide for an agricultural/rural voice and be very beneficial for the Township as been the case experienced by other municipalities who have gone to election at large. With respect to council complement either 5 or 7 will work, if an election at large system is favoured 7 would be preferred and adjusted if needed.

In conclusion Mayor Walker stated that at some point the province will review what municipalities have done concerning their directive and decide if the measures taken at the local level meet the with their approval and spirit of the direction given, if not the province will simply implement the desired changes.

10. Closing Remarks

Mayor Walker thanked the public for their comments and participating in tonight's Public meeting, all comments received are appreciated and will be taken into consideration.

11. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Bumstead
Seconded by Deputy Mayor La Chapelle

That this Public Consultation Meeting of Council adjourn at 8:22 p.m.

Motion Carried.

Mayor

Municipal Clerk