

## **Staff Report 2020-0213**

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Meeting Date: June 9, 2020

Subject: 2020 Council and Committee Meeting Schedule Amendments and Public Information Meetings for Planning related Matters

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the 2020 Council Meeting Schedule, attached as Schedule A to Staff Report 2020-0213 be amended to include additional Regular Council (COVID-19) meetings in July and August and an additional Special Council (COVID-19) in August;

That the 2020 Council Meeting Schedule, attached as Schedule A to Staff Report 2020-0213 be amended to include four (4) additional Planning and Development Committee meetings for the purpose of holding Public Information Meetings (PIMs) in September, October and November;

That the 2020 Council Meeting Schedule, attached as Schedule A to Staff Report 2020-0213 be amended to remove the 2021 Budget Meeting dates (November 17, November 24 and December 8);

That the Committee of the Whole structure for General Committee and Planning and Development Committee meetings resume in September 2020;

That an additional General Committee and Planning and Development Committee meeting be scheduled for November 17, 2020;

That an additional Town Council meeting be scheduled for November 24, 2020;

That the December 15 Town Council meeting be rescheduled to December 8, 2020; and

That a copy of Staff Report 2020-0213 be provided to the Region of Peel for information purposes.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The 2020 Meeting Schedule was approved by Council in September of 2019.
- On April 7, 2020 the Procedural By-law 2015-108 was amended to suspend its Committees of the Whole (General Committee and Planning and Development Committee), and Standing Committees and provide for two (2) meetings: a "Special Council Meeting (COVID-19 Pandemic)", and a "Regular Council Meeting (COVID-19 Pandemic)".
- The COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted the Council meeting structure and a need for additional meetings has been identified.

- Staff is requesting the 2021 Budget Meeting process be removed from the 2020 Meeting Schedule and postponed to early in 2021 after the Region of Peel has adopted their budget.
- Amendments to the Council Meeting Schedule can be made by a Council resolution where deemed necessary.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this report is to amend the 2020 Council Meeting Schedule to provide Council with an opportunity to meet in July and August of 2020, if required, post-pone the 2021 Budget Meeting process, and provide for additional Planning and Development Committee meetings to hold Public Information Meetings (PIMs).

### **Background**

The 2020 Meeting Schedule has been significantly impacted due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

On March 24, 2020 at an Emergency Council Meeting, Council amended its Procedural By-law 2015-108, as amended, to permit electronic participation for regular and special Council meetings.

On April 7, 2020, Council further amended its Procedural By-law 2015-108, to suspend the Committee Meeting structure in favour of council meetings to ensure Council had the opportunity to consider regular business albeit in a more limited manner during the emergency. Two (2) additional components were created, a “Special Council Meeting (COVID-19 Pandemic)” to allow for Council to be proactive in addressing pressing issues related to the emergency at the Special Council Meeting (COVID-19 Pandemic) and a “Regular Council Meeting (COVID-19 Pandemic)” to address the most pressing regular business matters directly at the Regular Council Meeting with modified procedures governing timing, notice and public participation.

### **Additional Meetings in July and August**

Staff have reviewed the existing 2020 Council Meeting schedule in consultation with senior management and developed the proposed forecast included in Schedule A to provide for additional meetings over the summer months, if required.

The proposed meeting schedule outlined in Schedule A is structured to add one (1) Special Town Council (COVID-19) Meeting on August 11 for an update on the COVID-19 pandemic, and two (2) Regular Council (COVID-19) Meetings, on July 7 and August 25 to consider pressing business matters, if required.

**Resuming General Committee and Planning and Development Committee Meetings**

On April 7, 2020 Council suspended future General Committee, Planning and Development Committee and Committee of Adjustment meetings, which stalled the advancement of many planning applications and Town initiated projects that require a statutory public meeting in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act*. Provincial legislation that restricts the number of people gathering has also prevented Councillors from holding in-person community meetings associated with development applications and Town initiated projects.

The province amended the *Municipal Act, 2001* (Bill 187) to permit municipalities to conduct virtual meetings of a committee of council, which includes Planning and Development Committee. While there is no obligation to facilitate electronic meetings, should a municipality determine it to be desirable and appropriate, they may proceed. The provincial regulation allows the implementation of planning decisions if no appeal is filed, however, if an appeal to an application is filed, the matter will remain dormant for the duration of the provincial emergency.

At this time, Council has not received any recommendation reports on development applications or Town-led planning projects, resulting in a backlog of applications. Since the initial closure of Town Hall, Planning and Building Department services have remained fully operational, albeit remotely and in partnership with Information Technology (IT) have developed online forms for the submission of electronic applications for small residential and miscellaneous projects, as well as scheduling building and site inspections. There are currently three (3) Planning Act applications and three (3) public meetings immediately ready to proceed to Council.

The Planning and Building Department is currently processing ten (10) planning applications including three (3) development proposals that could be scheduled for a statutory public in the next few months.

Staff recommend that the regular Committee of the Whole structure (General Committee and Planning and Development Committee) resume in September 2020. The Procedural By-law provides for these meetings to be conducted as electronic meetings, and it is anticipated that public participation is achieved through posting a livestream of the meeting for public consumption and delegations through telephone conference.

If supported, a Procedural By-law amendment would be required to remove the suspension of the Committees and eliminate the two (2) components created to better manage the emerging pandemic.

**Public Information Meetings**

Currently, there is a need to address a backlog of planning applications requiring public meetings, Staff is recommending that four (4) Planning and Development Committee

meetings be held on September 8, September 15, October 6 and November 3 for the purposes of holding public information meetings under the *Planning Act*.

#### Public Notices

Typical meeting notices provide a range of options for residents and businesses to access additional information such as contact information for the assigned planner and how to provide written comments by mail or e-mail. Staff will make modifications to the mail and/or newspaper notices to include how to engage in the process, where to submit questions / comments electronically and how to register as a delegate in order to provide comments directly to the Committee. This enhanced public notification will increase the amount of meaningful public engagement should Planning and Development Committee resume virtually. It should also be noted that a notice of complete application is already provided to residents, which includes the assigned planners contact information and links to submitted studies and reports. Council members may further supplement meeting notice through social media channels.

Planning Staff will monitor the development applications and Town-initiated projects to determine which are eligible for a virtual Committee meeting.

Virtual Committee meetings can occur in the same manner that Council is currently meeting on the WebEx application platform, which allows for public engagement through home telephone, computer or a mobile device. Applicants will be able to present their development proposals to the Committee and the public and then respond to questions/comments from Council and registered delegations. Staff reports will outline resident concerns received up until the report is prepared. Staff reports will continue to summarize and respond to resident concerns.

#### Public Engagement for Planning Matters

Public engagement in the planning process often includes information booths, town hall meetings, engagement websites, surveys, pop up displays, open houses, workshops, and community meetings. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, formal community engagement associated with Town projects and applications was halted with the closure of Town facilities and Provincial restrictions on in-person gatherings.

The ability of the public to participate in Planning and Development meetings is expected to be accomplished through posting a livestream of the meeting for public viewing and delegations through telephone conference.

#### 2021 Budget Meeting Dates

Staff have requested that the 2021 budget dates (November 17, November 24 and December 8) be removed from the 2020 Council Meeting Schedule to allow more time for 2021 budget planning and to better understand the economic impact that the pandemic has had on the Region and the community. Staff are actively monitoring for economic

stimulus opportunities and expect the federal government to provide direct support to municipalities which will impact the 2021 budget. The Region of Peel has also deferred their 2021 budget discussions to early 2021 for similar reasons and to better align with the provincial budget process. At this time, future dates have not yet been confirmed but will come forward with the Proposed 2021 Council and Committee Meeting Schedule in the Fall of 2020.

## **CONCLUSION**

At the time Council elected to suspend Planning and Development Committee meetings for the foreseeable future, there was no way of anticipating the length of time before the Committee could resume its 'business as usual' in-person schedule. While the Provincial Re-opening Plan has allowed for some services to resume, it does not allow for the resumption of large gatherings as is typical at public meetings and open houses. If the Province allows gatherings in the future, modifications to Council Chamber and/or overflow space(s) may be needed to accommodate larger crowds.

As the proposed changes require amendment to what was approved by Council in September 2019, staff is requesting Council approval. In order to be transparent to the public the approved meeting dates will be posted to the Town's website along with the modified meeting schedule.

The Town's Procedural By-law provides for the situations where there may be a requirement for Council to meet in addition to the dates outlined in Schedule A, to do so at the request of the Mayor or by Council resolution.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

## **COUNCIL WORK PLAN**

Subject matter is not relevant to the Council Workplan.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Schedule A: Proposed Amendments to the 2020 Meeting Schedule – July to December 2020