



Ward Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 6, 2023, 7:02 p.m.
S.H. Blake Memorial Auditorium

1. At Large Town Hall Meeting - 01-2023

Chair: Councillor Mark Bentz

2. Resource Persons

Amy Coomes, Project Manager - Infrastructure & Operations
Katie Piché, Council & Committee Clerk
Lori Wiitala, Committee Clerk & Legislative Specialist

3. Attendance

There were approximately 9 individuals in attendance, including those who signed the attendance sheet.

4. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair provided introductory comments and welcomed those in attendance.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the 03-2022 At Large Town Hall meeting held on June 8, 2022, for information.

6. Asset Management Plan

Project Manager - Infrastructure & Operations Amy Coomes provided a PowerPoint presentation relative to the above noted and responded to questions.

The following items were discussed:

- What is an asset and what is Asset Management?
- Steps to development asset management plan
- Inventory - core assets
- Lifecycle activities and strategies
- What are the risks?
- Climate change considerations
- Levels of services
- Communities - What do citizens want?
- Continual improvement

A discussion was held relative to the City's infrastructure gap, including information on increasing capital and requiring a financial plan to decrease the gap.

It was noted that further information on Asset Management can be located on the City of Thunder Bay website, on the Get Involved page.

7. 2023 Budget

Councillor Mark Bentz provided an overview relative to the 2023 Budget including specific items that were brought forward and passed during the 2023 budget process, including the following:

- Council direction to find \$2.2 million in permanent savings for 2024: Administration to report back further in June and December 2023 with budget cuts, including service level reductions, FTE reductions, efficiencies, and other ways to save costs.
- \$1 million from reserves being used as a one time injection
- 2024 will be another heavy taxation year, significant costs related to police and health unit, waste management, and digital strategy.

Councillor Bentz advised that due to being an election year (in 2022), there was no Council Direction report leading up to the budget process. Administration is looking into possibly changing that process in future election years.

A discussion was held relative to the budget process and how Administration is looking at changing how to streamline the budget process, and how to make it more engaging and more relevant to the public.

A question was asked relative to why the city is adding additional sidewalks, curbs and asphalt when it never has been needed in these areas before, and also stated that these projects lead to high costs. The Chair advised that new sidewalks may need to be added due to legislation such as the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) and advised that government funding is often applied for regarding Transit and accessibility projects.

A constituent raised a concern regarding using hot asphalt to fill potholes in cold weather and concerns about the asphalt not getting packed down. Administration will follow up with a response.

A constituent asked a question regarding the Homes for the Aged debenture and what year will it be retired. Administration will follow up with a response.

A constituent asked a question relative to the 2022 and 2023 Year-End Variance Reports and asked why both reports were both a \$10.9 million variance. Administration will follow up with a response.

A question was asked relative to park zoning, parking spaces and other greenspace. It was suggested that the spaces, if re-zoned, could be used for housing. Some specific industrial spaces that have been abandoned or are vacant could be used as well. It was noted that private properties cannot be re-zoned by the City unless the property owner applies to have it re-zoned.

8. 2023 Capital Projects

Councillor Trevor Giertuga provided an overview relative to upcoming capital projects in the city.

A constituent asked a question relative to the status of a pilot project regarding a different type of asphalt the City has been using. Administration will follow up with a response.

Councillor Shelby Ch'ng provided a summary of work done to date, relating to the River Street culvert project and advised that Project Engineer Mike Vogrig expected the project to be complete mid-July 2023.

9. Inter-Governmental Affairs Update

Councillor Kasey Etrene and Councillor Shelby Ch'ng provided an overview relative to specific items the committee has been lobbying for, including

A discussion was held relative to specific target areas to be focused on at the annual AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario) Conference.

A constituent commented on the Northwest Arterial Plan and Transit Master Plan and asked a question relating to the City looking into moving the proposed designated truck route from Dawson Road to Wardrope Avenue. Administration will follow up with a response.

10. General City Issues/New Business

A constituent asked a question relative to a potentially hazardous piece of property on William Street, near Confederation College behind the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. The constituent asked if it poses a safety threat due to many wood piles on the property. Administration will follow up with a response.

A constituent submitted a question prior to the townhall meeting relative to street cleaning timelines. Administration advised that each year, the north side and south side neighbourhood zones are prioritized from 1 to 10 on a rotating schedule and swept in that order. Street sweeping is weather dependent but usually begins the latter part of April or the beginning of May. Downtown cores, bike lanes and arterial routes are completed first in the early morning before traffic picks up and usually takes 6 to 8 weeks to complete. Once these areas are done, sweeping efforts move on to residential streets and are typically finished around the end of July.

The Regional Multicultural Youth Council (RMYC) submitted a question prior to the townhall meeting relative to why the position of Thunder Bay Child Advocate to promote the Thunder Bay Children's Charter was left vacant again on the current City Council. A request was also made by RMYC that City Council appoint a Child Advocate to be responsible for monitoring what is outlined in the Thunder Bay Children's Charter and ensuring that this is implemented accordingly. Administration provided the following overview of the Children's Charter and response:

In February 2004, a resolution of Council was passed relative to the City of Thunder Bay working with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and other

interested groups to develop a Thunder Bay Children's Charter and mandate of the Child Advocate for approval by City Council. This coalition was to address the health and social needs of children, particularly obesity. Former Councillor Joe Virdiramo was appointed by Council to serve as the first Child Advocate in 2004. He continued in the role until 2014 when he stepped down. At that time the community partners interest in the coalition had dwindled and that there wasn't a significant interest in bringing everyone together and get it started again. In December 2014, former Councillor Frank Pullia had taken on the role. In 2017, former Councillor Pullia presented a formal motion to Council to re-establish the coalition Council, but the motion lost as the needs of children were being addressed in other ways through the City as well as community organization so the need of the original role was not required. The membership of the original coalition no longer had met and had not been operational since its last report in 2010. The original role arose from a community agency program that had concluded, and there was no defined role for the position at that time. It was noted that Administration will follow up further with a response.

A constituent submitted a question prior to the townhall meeting relative to the City's infrastructure gap. Councillor Mark Bentz advised that as per Council direction, the capital budget must be continually increased to minimize the gap. Councillor Bentz also discussed reserves and an infrastructure priority list.

A constituent raised a concern about previous pothole damage that had occurred to their vehicle. The City's claim process was discussed. The Chair advised the constituent that if they were not satisfied with the outcome of the claim, they could contact Legal Services to discuss the matter further.

11. Adjournment

The Chair thanked members of administration and constituents for attending in person and those watching online.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.