Ward Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre
700 River Street

1. Red River Ward Meeting 01-2024

Chair: Councillor Michael Zussino

2. Resource Persons

Lori Wiitala, Council & Committee Clerk

3. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and provided a land acknowledgement and introductory comments.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of meeting 02-2023 of the Red River Ward meeting held on September 14, 2023, were provided for information.

5. 2024 Budget

The Chair provided information relative to the above noted; the 2024 Proposed Budget Community Handbook was provided for information.

2024 Red River Ward Projects:

- pedestrian bridge repairs between Lakehead University and Confederation College, behind E.Q. Jennings School through to River Terrace

- McVicar Creek rehabilitation project at Brent Street, Crescent Ave and Theresa Street including Blanchard Street
- water main and street lighting repairs on Poplar Avenue
- topcoat Cedar Ave.
- residential paving on Summit Ave from Cornwall to John St and Whitney St between Summit Ave and High St
- sidewalk repairs on Elm St to Cottonwood St and along Junot Ave from Red River Rd to Stardust Cres
- Red River Rd at Clarkson St and Junot Ave - prospective location for a pedestrian crossover
- Red River Rd and Court St rehabilitation will continue through summer 2024
- Marina Park stage relocated to playground area, and the playground will move to the Tai Chi Gardens; the parking lot will be repaved, and consideration will be made to provide access to electrical and water for food vendors
- Conservatory parking lot renewal
- Vickers Park new playground and lighting installation

An anti-idling initiative to reduce emissions from city vehicles and assist with climate change is in preparation.

Organics program at the Thunder Bay Landfill will include bins for residential collection of organic waste which will lengthen the life of the existing landfill.

6. Ward and City Issues

The Chair asked those in attendance if there were any questions; the following discussion was held.

The Chair asked the constituents thoughts on the recommended tax increase, and all expressed that 5% and greater is too high. A constituent proposed selling assets to assist with reducing the tax levy.

Constituents raised concern regarding the proposed Multi-Use Indoor Sport Facility (MUISF) considering the municipal tax levy increase and the steady increases to the cost of living. It was recommended to have a plebiscite to allow citizens to the opportunity to voice their opinion on MUISF.

Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) received assistance from the province and 14 officers were hired.

It was recommended to sell Crooks parking lot and utilize the parkade; and to take down VictoriaVille parkade to reduce costs going forward.

Discussion was held relative to user fees, and it was agreed that user fees are necessary and affordable.

Discussion was held relative to backyard homes and at this time there is a high cost associated to build.

A recommendation was made for co-habitation of underutilized homes; this initiative could potentially assist with general maintenance and provide affordable housing.

Concern was raised regarding speeding, loud exhaust and potential drug dealing in the Hammarskjold parking lot, and snow plowing on Wishart Cres and along Clarkson Street before and after school hours. It was recommended to install speed bumps and increase patrols at Hammarskjold between the hours of 10 - 11 p.m., and to mirror the St. Bernard school pick up for CD Howe students.

Discussion was held relative to encampments and not all people without homes seek housing. The following organizations provide a bed: Grace Place, Salvation Army, Elevate and Urban Abbey. The transitional housing project on Junot Avenue was well received.

It was recommended to reinstate transit service on Christmas and New Years.

The following questions were received prior to the meeting.

1) Does the Taxi Commission still exist?

The City of Thunder Bay Property Standards and Committee of Revision merged to form City of Thunder Bay Appeals Tribunal in 2018, and the existing committees were consolidated into Appeals Tribunal with added responsibilities to include appeals under the Vehicle for Hire and Designated Driver Services By-law.

2) Hogarth St. experienced a water line break a year ago and the asphalt has not been repaired properly. At the last ward meeting the statement was made that the repair is the responsibility of the Sewer and Water Division and not the Roads Division, and that Sewer and Water has contractors to do the road surface

repairs. Having a big dip in the road for such a long time is unacceptable; there must be a way to get the Divisions to work together to get repairs done in a timely manner.

The information provided at the ward meeting is correct that the repair is the responsibility of the Sewer and Water Division and not the Roads Division; S&W uses a contractor to complete restoration work. Roads currently does some of the smaller restoration jobs for S&W but does not have the staff or equipment to take on all work.

3) On Hogarth St. time was spent grinding the concrete sidewalks to level for both pedestrians and the assuming the winter sidewalk plows; there is frost heaving and it has defeated the purpose of all that expense. Are we wasting money on this problem?

Frost heaving will always be an issue when trying to keep sidewalks level and safe for pedestrians and plows. Concrete grinding is a cost-effective solution for uneven sidewalks when compared to full slab replacement. By shaving down the lifted portion of the slabs and evening out the trip hazards, many locations can be repaired in a short period of time.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.