



## Ward Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, October 24, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**

**Current River Community Centre, 450 Dewe Avenue**

**1. Current River Ward Meeting 03-2023**

Chair: Councillor Andrew Foulds

**2. Resource Persons**

Krista Power, City Clerk

Tina Larocque, Coordinator - Boards, Committees and Special Projects.

**3. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed everyone in attendance and provided introductory comments.

**4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of Meeting 02-2023 of the Current River Ward meeting held on June 15, 2023, for information.

**5. Strong Mayors**

City Clerk Krista Power provided an overview of the Strong Mayor legislation and provided the following information:

- The Ontario Government has introduced legislation changes to the Municipal Act by regulation that gives mayors new tools to advance provincial priorities, including building 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure.

- Currently, 20 cities and towns in Ontario already have strong mayor powers, this could increase to 50 cities as of October 31 as a result of the Premier's announcement in August of this year expanding the potential for strong mayor powers to 21 additional cities including Thunder Bay.

- At the September 18, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting, a report was presented to City Council relative to Strong Mayors and can be found online at the City of Thunder Bay's website.
- The City Clerk has a statutory responsibility to inform Council, administration and the public on legislative changes that affect council's governance structure, functionality in addition to ensure the public is informed on how municipal councils make decisions.
- Strong Mayor Powers are currently tied to the housing target, Thunder Bay has been assigned a target of 2200 homes by 2031.
- Mayor Boshcoff confirmed in writing to the Minister which is required to qualify for the Building Faster Fund and also for Strong Mayor Powers.

Strong Mayor Powers provide for:

- Authority to make decisions about Council Committees
- Powers relating to the administrative functions of administration including the power to appoint and dismiss the City Manager and heads of divisions
- Duty to introduce the City's budget
- Veto power as it relates to defined provincial priorities (including housing, transit, roads, utilities and servicing)
- Ability to provide directives to staff that relate to provincial priorities.
- City Council has limited ability to override mayoral vetos with 2/3rd vote of City Council.

City Clerk Krista Power advised that all decisions and directives of the Mayor are required to be provided in writing to the City Clerk and the City Clerk has an obligation to share decisions and directives with City Council and with the public.

The City Clerk Krista Power advised that the Mayor's decisions can be found on the city's website at strong mayor powers - City of Thunder Bay.

Residents thanked the City Clerk for an excellent presentation on the Strong Mayor's legislation.

City Clerk Krista Power responded to questions.

The Chair thanked the City Clerk Krista Power for attending the meeting.

## **6. Ward and City Issues**

### **6.1 Lack of Housing Concerns**

A discussion was held relative to the lack of affordable housing in the city.

The Chair advised that a report from planning services recommending City of Thunder Bay's housing pledge identifying strategies and actions to achieve provincial housing target of 2,200 homes by 2031. Also with the Housing Accelerator Fund that the city had applied for, it would bring in more money federally, provide incentives, reduce costs and may influence developers to build the types of housing that are needed in our community.

Concerns were raised that many landlords have changed their rentals into Airbnb for short term rentals. The Chair advised that this issue has been brought forward to the Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee to bring attention to this issue.

The Chair responded to questions.

### **6.2 City Budget**

A discussion was held relative to the City budget. Concerns were raised to the changes to the public consultations with the post budget deputation meeting being eliminated. The Chair advised that there are more responses provided through the on-line submissions than the average of 5 people who attend the post budget deputation evenings.

A discussion was held relative to City Council changing the availability for a number of outdoor rinks, due to a necessary response to declining user numbers and financial challenges. There would be changes to a number of outdoor rinks as some are set for closure, and some supervised boarded rinks being downgraded to unsupervised rinks. There was further discussion on a grant process available for community centres with outdoor rinks to hire students to supervise the rinks.

### **6.3 Annual review of City Manager's position**

Questions were raised as to the process of the City Manager's performance review.

The Chair advised that Council provides direct feedback to the City Manager, along with completes an annual performance review. It is a long,

detailed process with a matrix being used of how they evaluate performance.

The Chair responded to questions.

#### **6.4 Current River Dam Lights**

A discussion was held relative to the lights on the Current River dam.

The discussion was held relative to the lighting system on the dam that is visible from Cumberland Street that frequently since the project's completion, several lights have been non functional. The Chair advised that the new parts are in, dam lights are repaired and will be working this weekend. The lights were under a warranty period and will not be a financial cost to the City.

#### **6.5 Future Development on Huron Avenue**

A discussion was held relative to the future development on Huron Avenue. A developer had purchased the property and it is zoned for the future development, no zoning amendments would be required.

Concerns were raised as to why the residents in the area were not consulted, and what avenue does a resident have to express their concerns about development.

The residents raised the following concerns:

- Concerns were raised for children's safety, with the extra traffic in the already congested area of this construction, with the school, soccer fields, playgrounds near by. Was a traffic study completed for a site plan control agreement.
- With the many units to be built on rock, concerns were raised with potential blasting of rock that may create future issues/damage to residents homes.
- Residents inquired if a drainage plan was included in the site plan control as homes already have existing water issues.

The Chair advised that the concerns will be brought forward to Administration.

#### **6.6 Community Safety**

The Chair provided an overview of the discussion that had taken place at the previous ward meeting in regards to community safety and drug

houses. Chief of Police Darcy Fleury and Deputy Police Chief Ryan Hughes had advised that there is a process to form grounds to obtain a warrant, and once the warrant is written and arrest has been made, drugs can be ceased. Information from the public is very important in these cases, which could entail the number of people or cars that stop at the residence, license plates, the frequency of the people visiting a residence. If there are any public health issues, call the Health Unit and if there are property standards issues to call by-law enforcement office, as these actions would disrupt these actions. The Chair reminded residents to not place themselves in danger. A resident suggested that Police attend a future ward meeting as many residents missed the opportunity at the last meeting.

The Chair responded to questions.

#### **6.7 Pool 6 and the Waterfront Masterplan**

A discussion had taken place relative to the Pool 6 property, Alexander Henry and the tug boat. Questions were raised as to whether the lease for the operators could be created into a permanent lease and make it a destination for tourists. The Chair advised that there is a Waterfront Master Plan that will shape that area.

The Chair responded to questions.

#### **6.8 No regulation on the number of pets**

A question was sent through the Office of the City Clerk email prior to the meeting. The City of Thunder Bay has no maximum in regards to allowable number of dogs. This opens the way for all sorts of situations that are not beneficial to the people involved, the dogs in the home itself and the neighbors. Excessive noise, unsanitary grounds, breeding business, hoarding. Question was raised as to why the City won't bring in a by-law to set a reasonable maximum number of dogs?

Response from Doug Vincent, Manager Licensing and Enforcement:

In Ontario, a municipalities' role in regulating pets through a By-law is clearly defined in the Municipal Act. Generally, a municipality can choose to enact By-laws that require the "licensing & control" of animals (prohibit running-at-large, requires licensing/tags, tether on leash, poop'n scoop, etc.) and to protect the public by operating a Municipal Pound, establishing a Control Order process and creating offences and

associated fines for non-compliance. However, in Ontario, municipalities cannot regulate animal welfare issues (care, treatment, sanitary standards, etc.) as these matters are provincial (and criminal) in jurisdiction and fall to the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) organization and the police; we cannot enact “animal welfare” By-laws.

When our current By-laws concerning animals are reviewed, we will seek input from the public and ensure any new by-laws reflect the scope and limitations of our jurisdiction and seek to explore any concerns, including the number of pets permitted, brought forward at the time of that review.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.