



Ward Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 7:04 p.m.

Slovak Legion

801 Atlantic Avenue

1. McKellar Ward Meeting 03-2023

Chair: Councillor Brian Hamilton

2. Resource Persons

Lee-Ann Chevrette, Community Safety & Well-Being Specialist

Gordon Stover, Committee & Meeting Management System Coordinator

3. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair provided introductory comments and introduced the resource persons.

Approximately 85 people were in attendance.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the 02-2023 Ward meeting held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, for information.

5. Crime & Community Safety Initiatives

Community Safety & Well-Being Specialist Lee-Ann Chevrette provided an overview and responded to questions relative to the City of Thunder Bay Community Safety and Well-Being Plan including the governance structure of Round-tables, Advisory Committees and City Council.

Information was provided relative to each of the 6 Priority Areas (Anti-Racism & Discrimination, Mental Health & Substance Misuse, Housing, Community Violence & Gender-based Violence, Poverty Reduction & Financial Empowerment and Supports for Children, Youth & Families).

Following the presentation, discussion and 'open-forum' was held with those in attendance. Concerns were raised relative to the following issues:

Drug Use and illegal activity near the Alley Restaurant property on May Street, formerly Superior Bowling Alley.

Suggestions to look at a different approach instead of harm reduction to help address the issues.

"Spring up to Clean up" program is getting busier and requires additional volunteers/support every year to complete.

Entrance/Exit to the East End "Subway Tunnel" is still a neighbourhood safety concern needing to be addressed. The tunnel is also prone to flooding and needs repairs including additional lighting.

Lack of police presence in the East End, and not having resources to respond to minor/petty incidents.

The Chair provided information relative to a recent AMO Conference where issues such as police shortages, funding, social assistance rates, safe injection sites were discussed. These are not issue unique to Thunder Bay but are seen across Ontario.

Housing, Homelessness and encampments are becoming more prevalent issues in Thunder Bay needing to be addressed.

Discussion was held relative to funding required from federal and provincial governments to address these issues.

Lee-Ann Chevrette explained the Crisis Response Team including Police involvement and Mental Health Professionals.

Suggestions were made for more lights and cameras in the affected neighbourhoods.

6. 2024 City of Thunder Bay Budget

The Chair provided a brief overview of the proposed 2024 City of Thunder Bay Budget Process.

The 2024 Budget Calendar will include:

- Council Budget Consultation: New process to take place in March after the budget is ratified to gain Council feedback on areas for improvement for the following budget cycle;
- Public Budget Consultation: Change in timing of initial public consultation to take place in April rather than June so feedback can be provided to Council as part of the annual Budget Direction report to link public feedback with the establishment of budget direction to Administration;
- Informal Question and Answer Session with Council & Public: Replace “Pre and Post Budget Deputation” meetings with an in-person public Question & Answer Townhall meeting. To maintain public engagement while providing specified session for both Council & the community to have the opportunity to engage with corporate department leaders in person for more focused discussion.

Key dates for Public consultation:

- Informal Question & Answer Session (Operating and Capital):
 - Council Session – January 25, 2024, 4:30 – 5:30 pm
 - Public Session – January 25, 2024, 6:00 – 7:30 pm

7. Downtown Revitalization

The Chair provided information relative to the following:

VictoriaVille Mall demolition set to begin in 2024.

Traffic flow will greatly improve in the area after demolition.

Road construction/repairs are scheduled for Simpson Street in 2024.

Discussion was held relative to vacant buildings in the McKellar Ward including clean-up costs, tax recovery, and ownership responsibility.

Vacant Buildings By-law was passed in 2022 by City Council. As a result, 10 derelict buildings are scheduled to be demolished in the near future.

8. Ward and City Issues

8.1 Community Calendar - Get Involved Website

A resident mentioned the website is well done. Suggestion was made to add more City issues to this website such as Art Gallery updates.

8.2 Taxes

Concerns were raised relative to increased spending for emergency services.

8.3 Back-lane Maintenance

Concerns were raised relative to required back-lane clean-ups. City not maintaining, garbage pickup being done by volunteers and neighbours in the area.

8.4 Fort William Gardens Parking

Concerns were raised relative to more enforcement needed in the area particular around hockey games. There is no enforcement after 4:30 or on weekends. The Chair advised that this will be scheduled to change in the near future with the additional hiring of by-law officers.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.