



## **At Large Townhall Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, June 10, 2024, 7:02 p.m.  
S.H. Blake Memorial Auditorium**

### **1. At Large Town Hall Meeting 01-2024**

Chair: Councillor Rajni Agarwal

Present: Councillor Rajni Agarwal  
Councillor Mark Bentz  
Councillor Shelby Ch'ng  
Councillor Kasey Etrene  
Councillor Trevor Giertuga

### **2. Resource Persons**

Katie Piché, Council & Committee Clerk

There were approximately 10 people in attendance.

### **3. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed those in attendance.

A roundtable of introductions was held with Councillor Agarwal, Councillor Bentz, Councillor Ch'ng, Councillor Etrene and Councillor Giertuga.

### **4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the At Large Town Hall meeting held on November 2, 2023, for information.

The Chair provided an overview of the above noted meeting minutes.

**5. City Manager Update**

Councillor Kasey Etreni provided an overview of the hiring of John Collin as the new City Manager, effective June 17, 2024.

**6. 2024 Budget Update**

Councillor Mark Bentz provided an overview of the 2024 Budget, upcoming 2025 budget, and the 2024 Q1 Financial Status Update.

**7. 2024 Infrastructure Projects**

Councillor Kasey Etreni provided an overview relative to 2024 upcoming infrastructure projects, and also how to navigate the Construction Projects page on the City's website:

[Construction Projects - City of Thunder Bay](#)

**8. Asset Management Update**

Councillor Trevor Giertuga provided an overview on the Asset Management Plan Phase Two which was presented to Committee of the Whole on May 6, 2024. The Phase Two Plan presents the current state of all city owned assets that meet the Tangible Capital Asset (TCA) policy threshold of over \$10,000 replacement value for individual assets or over \$50,000 for pooled assets. Work continues on the development of the third phase of the Plan, and the Phase Three plan is required to be approved by Council by July 1, 2025.

A discussion was held relative to the City's Asset Management Plan and the replacement of the police station, including the replacement value within the plan vs. the proposed cost to design and build a new facility that would meet the needs of the Thunder Bay Police Service.

A question was asked relative to the City's Asset Management Plan and how much of the overall deficit is tree deficit and why are trees listed within the plan. It was noted that value relates specifically to trees on boulevards and in parks and not all trees are part of the deficit. Administration will follow up.

## 9. Multi-Use Indoor Sports Facility Update

Councillor Shelby Ch'ng provided an update relative to the recent ratification of the Design-Build Request for Proposal (RFP) for an indoor turf facility on the site adjacent the Community Auditorium. It was noted that the RFP will have a mandatory bid cap of \$42.7M including both the facility and the site works. Operating costs, including debt financing and asset renewal will be included in future budgets. It is expected that construction will begin on the facility in Spring 2025.

The following question relative to the indoor turf facility was received prior to the Townhall meeting:

There has been a lot of discussion about fundraising to contribute to the cost of the Indoor turf facility and I believe there is great opportunity. This is a building that every young family in Thunder Bay will enter at some point and a natural place for companies to want to have their name included on a donor wall. The question I have is how a fundraising program could dovetail with the selection of an operator. Will an operator want advertising rites and how would that impact fundraising? I also know it is difficult for the City to get into the fundraising realm and compete against other non profits. This is why I believe a non profit entity should be created that would include various sporting organizations (Soccer, football, cricket etc.), the City, Fort William First Nation and possibly the Chamber on the Board of the non profit. This would place the operation of the facility in the hands of an organization that isn't profit driven and as a result rental costs could be kept in line. The entity would be tasked with fundraising a set amount, and I believe \$5 million over 5 years would be reasonable. Who knows maybe the Campaign will exceed expectations. This money could be used to pay down the amount debentured. My fear is everyone talks about fundraising but it is going to be difficult if it is not incorporated into the process of putting an operator in place. I think the Community will feel much better knowing the ducks are placed in their row with respect to operating and fundraising. Also I'd ask you to remember that the Art Gallery and Tennis Centre have all fundraised and received City support. What are your thoughts?

Director-Engineering & Operations Kayla Dixon provided the following response, prior to the meeting:

Thank you for your question and suggestions on fundraising for the indoor turf facility. You are correct that the City would not be in a position to lead the fundraising campaign. Soccer Northwest and other user groups have said they do not have the capacity to operate the facility to date. This means if the City

moves to a third party operator, it will be a paid operator, similar to the Tournament Centre, so tying fundraising to the facility operations will not likely be recommended. Administration will be looking at opportunities to have external entities pay for naming rights at the facility and user groups will be encouraged to create a formal fundraising campaign now that the facility has been approved.

A question was asked relative to turf facility and how it has been a long process. A discussion was held relative to the project, cost, potential funding, partnerships and fundraising and the need for the project to move forward.

## **10. General City Issues**

A question was asked relative to manhole covers throughout the city that are not centered on the street and not always level with the asphalt. It was noted that it depends on the sewer configuration and it's not always possible to have the manhole cover in the center of the street.

A resident raised a concern relating to how potholes are filled and how the asphalt is not being packed down enough.

A question was asked in regards to the City's pothole filling process, and how it is determined when the pothole machine is used vs. manual pothole filling. Administration will follow up.

A question was asked relative to the Leland Street/Donald Street new sidewalk installation and how sidewalk projects are prioritized. A discussion was held and it was noted that new sidewalks are sometimes installed based on external funding received, and for Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliance /transit accessibility. Administration will follow up.

A question was asked relating to the City's water pressure, and if there would be enough water pressure to fight fires across the city if there was ever another state of emergency in the city such as the 2012 flood. Administration will follow up.

## **11. Unsheltered Homelessness Update**

Councillor Shelby Ch'ng provided an update relative to unsheltered homelessness in the City. Councillor Ch'ng advised that the Response to Unsheltered Homelessness Task Force (comprised of the following: City Parks,

Municipal Enforcement, Fire, Community Strategies, Indigenous Relations; Thunder Bay District Health Unit; Thunder Bay Police; Elevate; PACE; and Lakehead Region Conservation Authority) continues to meet every 2 weeks to receive updates on and assist with coordinating the response to encampments.

It was noted that Administration continues work on the report back to Council with options on designated encampments within the city. The report is scheduled for the June 24, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting.

A question was asked relative to the McVicar area and safety concerns within other residential areas around the City. Discussion was held on the following:

- growing frustrations in the community
- options - short and long-term solutions
- Waterloo decision
- Communities with designated encampment sites
- Human Rights approach vs. compassionate approach
- types of potential alternate housing options

A question was asked relative to panhandling enforcement and if there is a by-law. Administration will follow up.

It was noted that lobbying efforts are occurring through the Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee.

## **12. Housing Accelerator Update**

Councillor Rajni Agarwal provided an update relative to the Housing Accelerator Fund, including background information, highlights on the delivery of housing initiatives, next steps and how residents can stay connected on the most up-to-date information on the program.

## **13. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.