



Ward Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 27, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
South Neebing Community Centre
1841 Mountain Road

1. Neebing Ward Meeting 03-2024

Chair: Councillor Greg Johnsen

2. Resource Persons

Joel DePeuter, Director, Development Services
Matthew Miedema, Manager - Engineering Division
Shannon Labelle, Acting Senior Planner
Tina Larocque, Coordinator - Boards, Committees & Special Projects
Wayne Bahlheda, Council Composition Review Committee member

3. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair called the meeting to order, welcomed Administration and those in attendance, and provided introductory comments.

There were approximately 22 people in attendance.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Neebing Ward meeting held on Thursday, June 20, 2024, for information.

5. Planning Overview

Shannon Labelle provided an introduction and a general overview of the planning department such as:

- Providing information to the public and development community on matters related to land use.

- Provide information to the public, reviews applications, and participate in the development of zoning by-laws.
- Reviews applications for zoning, site plans.
- Formulate recommendation to Council.
- Consult applications and proposals.
- Planner reviews planning applications as applications can be technical.
- Works to manage land use and development in the city.

Discussion was held relative to some of the recent changes in the Planning Act, how to appeal, notices, and exceptions. Notices regarding the Planning Act, will have contact information to provide comments. For more information to email: planning@ctb.ca

Discussion relative to a hobby farm and concerns were raised with the chickens and cows on the property and zoning. Shannon Labelle will further review zoning and will follow up with the concerned resident.

6. Infrastructure & Engineering Overview

Matthew Miedema provided an introduction and a general overview of the Engineering division such as:

- Long-range planning design
- Construction supervision
- Records management of storm drainage systems, sanitary sewage collection and treatment, water supply, treatment and distribution, and roads and bridges.

Concerns were raised relative to road conditions at Caspian and Cypress. Discussion taken place relative to the relative to the many expenses related to the size of road, including curb and gutter.

Discussion was held relative to traffic light upgrades. Matthew Miedema advised that there are upgrades being completed in the new year, as old roads still have a dial up connection, Tbaytel will be working on the fibre optic internet networks.

7. Council Composition Update

Committee member - Council Composition Review Committee Wayne Bahlieda provided a presentation relative to Phase Two of the Council Composition Review.

The presentation included an overview of the committee make up and process, and key findings from the consultations in Phase One.

Wayne Bahlieda presented the two options that are being presented to the community for feedback during Phase Two:

- Option 1 – 10 elected at-large, mayor
- Option 2 – 4 wards (2 each) + 2 at-large, mayor

Wards will divide via main thoroughfares (Red River Road / Dawson Road; Oliver Road; Arthur Street) and will run east to west to include waterfront, urban, industrial, rural, potential growth areas in each ward

Names will be replaced with numbers

Wards will be balanced according to: population, income, education, number of households, and diversity.

Wayne Bahlieda advised of public feedback opportunities that were held in the months of October and November.

Wayne Bahlieda responded to questions and comments from constituents:

- Why include at-large in the ward model - why not straight ward?
 - Inclusion of at-large reflects feedback at the Indigenous Circle focus group who discussed the increased chance for an Indigenous candidate to be elected during an at-large race.
 - The division into 4 wards (2 councillors) resulted in 8 councillors vs. the 10 councillors reflected in overall Phase 1 feedback.
 - Current system is hybrid and is unique to Thunder Bay. Committee wanted an option that maintained the hybrid model.
- Is there research on what model would increase diversity?
 - Data shows that there is increased diversity with ward system related to the expense in running.

- There was discussion that 2 councillors per ward increases representation and allows residents to connect with one or the other or both.
 - Comparator cities have found that this model can help with representation and improves the democratic process.
 - There was discussion regarding at-large campaigns relying heavily on name recognition.
- Question was raised as why there was not a third option to keep the current model. Wayne Bahlieda advised that in the 1st phase of consultation, there was many residents who expressed that they wanted change in the composition of city council.

Wayne Bahlieda emphasized the importance of formal feedback as it assists the committee in making the final recommendation to Council.

8. Ward and City Issues

8.1 Community Safety

The Chair discussed the information that was provided from Chief Darcy Fleury at the previous meeting regarding community safety. He provided an update on what how the Police are addressing the resident's concerns:

- Focusing on the speeding at the transition zone from 50 km/h to 80 km/h on West Arthur Street
- Random checks of trucks carrying unsafe loads to the landfill.
- Spot checks on ATVs and snowmachines using residential roadways and/or driving on personal property.

8.2 Road Maintenance

Discussion was held relative to the lack of road maintenance on Mountain Road, 15th Side Road, and Foot Hills Drive. Concerns were raised with Foot Hills Drive not being built properly, drainage needed on Mountain road. Further discussion was held relative to the amount of taxes paid by residents in the ward, but limited services are provided. Residents raised concerns that Mountain Road is not wide enough for pedestrians to walk on and that it should be resurfaced.

Discussion was also held relative to road conditions and the design of the end of Mountain Road and Chippewa. Matthew Miedema advised that the road design will be reviewed prior to the resurfacing of the road.

8.3 Temporary Shelter Village Initiative

The Chair advised that Temporary Shelter Village Initiative was presented at the November 25 Committee of the Whole meeting, with administration recommending the Miles Street location. At that time City Council did not support the location, Council recommended that the report be referred back to Administration to determine alternate sites that are achievable within the approved budget.

There was discussion about the proposed sites and questions were raised as to why the housing would be temporary, as there is a large need for permanent housing in our city. Further discussion was held about existing programs and funding from other levels of government.

Questions were raised as to why Administration is only seeking locations on the south side of the city. The Chair advised that Administration was recommending locations where people are currently living, and services that are already existing.

8.4 Northwestern Ontario Recreational Trails Association

Discussion was held relative to the trails created by the Northwestern Ontario Recreational Trails Association on Broadway Avenue. Questions were raised about how these trails are funded. The Chair advised that the trails are created by a volunteer group, and they have limited funding. The trails are free to use by everyone, however they have memberships that are available to purchase that helps them generate money to assist with their work on the trails. They continue to work with landowners and townships when creating the trail system.

8.5 Designated Truck Route

A discussion was held relative to the designated truck route. The Chair advised that Administration would take a look at this in the new year. Concerns were raised with the Transport Trucks speeding, causing many accidents and fatalities that have occurred.

8.6 City Manager's Growth Strategy

The Chair provided a general overview of the City Manager's Growth strategy, which focuses on the City's need for population growth to keep up with inflation and demand and to create growth opportunities in the City. The City Manager has a proposed 3% annual growth rate to help the city compete with inflation. Some of the Growth Strategy Initiatives are:

- Focusing on growth in Thunder Bay and bringing business to our city
- To stop the cutting of services and increasing taxes
- Developed a Growth Department
- One Stop shop model, where residents can access support for development and this model will extend into other areas of city services. This will enhance customer service which will enhance image, which will enhance growth.
- To review a new governance structure and creation of standing committees, creating efficiency and more focused meetings.

The Chair advised that this Growth Strategy will be an ongoing effort and will include many departments across the City.

8.7 Boulevard Garden By-law

A discussion had taken place relative to the draft Boulevard Garden and Maintenance By-law.

Concerns were raised with the restrictions within the by-law that prohibits many existing gardens. Many residents are not aware of this by-law, the majority of boulevard gardens would need to be modified, and many raised planter boxes would need to be completely removed to align with proposed regulations. There would be many limitations on what can be grown, especially with food plants as there are height restrictions included in the by-law.

The Chair advised that Council has not made a final decision and the Report relative to Boulevard Garden and Maintenance By-law was deferred to the December 16, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting and will be discussed further at that time.

8.8 Indoor Turf Facility

Discussion had taken place regarding the Indoor Turf Facility and the costs involved.

Questions were raised as to why the City of Thunder Bay is building an indoor turf facility when many of these groups are already active without this facility. The Chair advised that the Indoor Turf Facility project would offer year-round sports and recreational opportunities for the community,

including the possibility of many cultural events indoors. This facility would attract people and groups to Thunder Bay.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.