



Municipality of West Elgin

Minutes

Special Meeting of Council

August 1, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

160 Main Street

West Lorne

- Present:** Deputy Mayor Tellier
Councillor Navackas
Councillor Denning
Councillor Statham
- Regrets:** Mayor Leatham
- Staff Present:** M. Badura, CAO/ Treasurer
L. Gosnell, Manager of Operations & Community Services
Terri Towstiuc, Clerk
- Also Present:** Sam Smith, Senior Operations Manager, OCWA
Maegan Garber, Safety, Process & Compliance Manager-
Southwest Region, OCWA
Sam Sianas, Regional Hub Manager, Southwest Region,
OCWA
Dan Soos, Vice-Chair, Economic Development Committee
Pam Wardell, Economic Development Committee
Mike VanRaes, Economic Development Committee
Megan Bartlett, Recreation Committee
Cindy DeCosta, Recreation Committee
Courtney Kreamer, Recreation Committee

1. Call to Order

Deputy Mayor Tellier called the Special Meeting of Council to order at 4:00 pm.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved: Councillor Navackas

Seconded: Councillor Denning

That West Elgin Council hereby adopts the Special Meeting Agenda of August 1, 2024, as presented.

Carried

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures

4. Presentation from Ontario Clean Water Agency Re: Boil Water Advisory Event, July 24 - July 26

Sam Smith, Senior Operations Manager, OCWA, provided an opening statement regarding the recent boil water advisory (BWA) event that took place July 24 to 26, 2024. Mr. Smith provided personal background, along with information regarding the water transmission lines in West Elgin. Mr. Smith addressed the anxiety and stress the BWA event caused, while thanking all for their patience. Mr. Smith advised the BWA was a cautionary approach taken, to ensure the health and safety of West Elgin residents was not being compromised.

Maegan Garber, Safety, Process & Compliance Manager, Southwest Region, OCWA, provided Council with a brief professional background, and continued to a detailed presentation created to outline the approach and process that was taken during the BWA. The presentation included an overview of the system and map, the regulations that OCWA is required to adhere to, procedures for providing safe drinking water and sampling procedures. Details of the West Elgin distribution and sampling schedule were provided in the presentation, along with Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) acknowledgement. Ms. Garber concluded the presentation with corrective actions taken, how the BWA is issued and rescinded by the health unit, and what the known factors are.

Council discussion followed the presentation regarding communication factors between the Municipality, Southwestern Public Health and OCWA, and a request for clarification on the operators' exact procedures when water samples are being taken.

Moved: Councillor Navackas

Seconded: Councillor Statham

That West Elgin Council hereby accept the presentation from Meagan Garber, Safety, Process and Compliance Manager, Ontario Clean Water Agency, Southwest Region, for information and discussion purposes.

Carried

5. Economic Development Committee

Deputy Mayor Tellier addressed the need to fill empty storefronts and bring tourism to the municipality, while working in tandem with other committees, specifically the Recreation Committee.

Councillor Navackas advised that the current Economic Development Committee has expressed concerns that there is no direction from Council, and there is a common feeling of "wheel spinning" during conversations. Councillor Navackas expressed a need for rebranding and creating an Economic Development Plan, utilizing the County of Elgin's expertise and assistance in funding. With minimal funding, it is crucial to obtain a clear direction from Council and submit for appropriate funding within the 2025 West Elgin budget deliberations. Also utilizing the expertise of the West Elgin Planner would provide insight and opportunities for current residents to expand on their zoning usage, i.e. adding a "granny flat" for accommodation purposes.

Council discussed the reintroduction of a Chambers of Commerce, or Business Improvement Area (BIA), and the importance of assisting business retention, downtown revitalization with the main streets, facilitating entrepreneurship and enhancing tourism.

After discussion, it was sought that priorities for the committee should be to bring tourism with the assistance of Elgin County, downtown revitalization, and assisting landowner and facilitating entrepreneurship opportunities within the municipality.

5.1 Current Terms of Reference

5.2 Committee Member Delegations

5.2.1 Dan Soos

Dan Soos, Vice-Chair of the Economic Development Committee, third generational family to reside in West Elgin, and local business owner, addressed Council with his concerns with focusing solely on the downtown areas of the municipality, and assisting local business owner to be successful and remain in the municipality. Mr.

Soos advised that the recent EDC meetings were felt to be time wasted, and a consensus of circling within the meeting, without a sense of direction. Mr. Soos felt the reintroduction to a Chamber of Commerce would be a good idea and will be attending a meeting soon with Councillor Navackas with representatives from Dutton Dunwich and Southwold Economic Development Committees, facilitated through the County of Elgin.

6. Recreation Committee

Deputy Mayor Tellier and Councillor Navackas spoke regarding the Recreation Committee, as the Council representatives, and expressed concern regarding the lack of direction the committee has been given. The committee is composed of community members with many great ideas; however, the committee has hit many barriers and roadblocks, including lack of use for the arena and not being able to access prime-time rental times at the recreation center due to other bookings. The committee would like to see a dedicated recreation staff member to assist and answer questions that the committee may have, as well potentially pair with neighbouring municipalities to create a joint recreation committee to assist in the financial burden to facilitate more programming.

Magda Badura, CAO/Treasurer advised that she attended the last recreation committee meeting virtually, to provide guidance and suggestions. Ms. Badura advised the use of community surveys would be beneficial to gauge residents feedback, as well obtain feedback from the committee to seek direction of what they would like to accomplish. To move forward with increased programming, a proposed budget will be required and considered during the 2025 budget deliberations.

6.1 Current Terms of Reference

6.2 Committee Member Delegations

6.2.1 Megan Bartlett

Megan Bartlett, Co-Chair for the Recreation Committee addressed Council to obtain direction for the committee. The committee has expressed concerns with the lack of recreation available within the community, and many residents travelling to neighbouring communities for recreation events and activities. Ms. Bartlett also advised that the committee has significant ideas to support growth, health and wellness, providing connections for residents, financial

stream for the municipality and reducing barriers of entry. The committee would like to seek direction from council to provide a purpose for the committee and the level of importance that the committee holds to Council. The committee has a sense that they are considered volunteers for the Canada Day celebrations, and that possibly connecting with the Economic Development Committee would be beneficial to join grant writing and funding opportunities, to provide events to keep dollars and residents in West Elgin.

6.2.2 Cindy DeCosta

Ms. DeCosta did not address council.

7. Confirmatory By-law

Moved: Councillor Statham

Seconded: Councillor Navackas

That By-law 2024-57 being a By-law to confirm the proceeding of the Special Meeting of Council held on August 1, 2024, be read a first, second and third and final time.

Carried

8. Adjournment

Moved: Councillor Denning

Seconded: Councillor Statham

That the Council of the Municipality of West Elgin hereby adjourn the Special Meeting of Council at 5:46 to meet again at 4:00pm, on Thursday, August 15, 2024 (Regular Meeting) or at the call of the Chair.

Carried

Richard Leatham, Mayor

Terri Towstiuc, Clerk