



MUNICIPALITY OF **West Elgin**

Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting

From: Jackie Morgan-Beunen, Chief Building Official

Date: 2020-11-12

Subject: Pre-Budget Approval for Electronic Building Permit Application System

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from Jackie Morgan-Beunen, Chief Building Official re: Pre-approval for Electronic Building Permit Application System; and

That West Elgin Council pre-approve of \$6,000 for the Building Department 2021 operating budget for the implementation of an electronic building permit application submission system.

Purpose:

To request that council support the building department by single-sourcing software through 2021 pre-budget approval so that the municipality can leverage a cost-effective and industry leading software application that will assist the building department's goal of delivering a cost-effective, accessible and customer friendly online application tool.

Background:

Cloudpermit is a cloud-based end-to-end e-permitting solution that allows municipal building departments and their customers to complete the entire building permit lifecycle in one digital workspace. A number of municipalities have made electronic applications a reality, but it has come at a significant cost of staff time and computer software/hardware. Generally, these processes take from several months to more than a year to implement. They involve installation of complex software that require frequent updates and come at a cost only large municipalities with building permit activity that far exceeds West Elgin and Dutton Dunwich's.

Cloudpermit is a cloud-based e-permitting software which is hosted, updated and maintained by a service provider over the internet using industry leading best practices. The system will be set up so that we can run both departments from the same 'control panel' but be able to track permits in either municipality such that we can still run reports as necessary. This will make things very seamless and keep everything clear and organized from an administrative perspective. The estimated implementation period for this system is 3 weeks.

The application process will proceed as follows;

- Originating from a link on our website, the applicant creates a project and uploads the required application, forms and drawings using a user-friendly step by step process. The applicant can also authorize designers to upload drawings directly to their project. When the applicant believes the application is complete, they direct the system to advise the municipality of an application.

- Upon notification of a complete application, the municipality logs into the website to view and download the information.
- The municipality proceeds to conduct a plans review electronically. Once satisfied, the approved plans are uploaded back to the applicant's project with a building permit.

For the building industry, benefits of this cloud-based system include:

- Zero printing costs for applications to submit (this includes building plans, truss/heating drawings, site plans, etc...)
- Travel time and expense to/from the municipal office to drop off/pick up applications/permits is eliminated
- Ability to track several permits at one time
- Inspection scheduling/results electronically
- Allows for quicker application process given that designers can submit plans/drawings directly to their project online.
- Permit holders will log onto the website and request an inspection for their project with their suggested time of morning or afternoon.
- The Building Official will receive the notification and confirm if the requested time can be met.

Other benefits of this system include:

- Applicant's ability to monitor the progress of an application
- Improved process around building inspections as we will be able to conduct inspections and issue reports in the field, rather than having to come back into the office to retype notes and input into Keystone
- Ensures only complete applications may be submitted
- Saves time on duplication of tasks
- Shorter lead times on permit issuance due to complete applications being submitted
- Availability of plans on-line at all times
- In line with West Elgin's strategic priorities which supports speeding up the development process.

After being introduced to the electronic applications process by Cloudpermit and having some past experience with other software platforms that offer electronic application systems, I have determined that Cloudpermit is ideally suited for both the Municipality of West Elgin and the Municipality of Dutton Dunwich as Cloudpermit specializes in working with small-mid sized municipalities. In Canada, the City of Windsor was its first client and they have since enrolled over 30 municipalities including Southwold and Middlesex Centre.

Keystone does not have established processes in Ontario which support a similar process for electronic building permit applications. Based on the cost of this item and the limited number of complete options, a single source procurement is proposed.

Cloudpermit has offered to provide the software at a reduced price given that the base price for system for a single similarly sized Municipality is \$12,000/year each. Cloud permit has agreed to charge \$12,000/year for both, or \$6000.00/municipality annually. Based on an expected 100 permits per year for each municipality, the cost per permit is \$60.00.

Financial Implications:

\$6,000.00 from the Building Department's operating budget which is funded by building permit applications. This would have no impact on the tax levy. Additional hardware for plans review – 32" monitor \$250 - \$300 and a tablet for onsite inspections and mobile plans access - \$350 - \$500 (to be shared by both municipalities).

Policies/Legislation:

West Elgin Purchasing Policy and Procedure

Related Documents:

Cloudpermit Comparative V1

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Pre-Budget Approval for Electronic Building Permit Application System - 2020-10-Building.docx
Attachments:	- Cloudpermit Comparative V1.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 2, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jana Nethercott