

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of Council
Wednesday, February 24, 2021 @ 4:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Present:

P. Farwell	Mayor
T. Pollett	Deputy Mayor
R. Anstey	Councillor
G. Brown	Councillor
P. Woodford	Councillor

Advisory and Resource:

D. Chafe	CAO
B. Hefford	Town Clerk
K. Hiscock	Director of Finance (A)
J. Blackwood	Director of Engineering
B. Freeborn	Director of Recreation & Community Services
T. Barron	Director of Municipal Works
R. Locke	Director of Development
H. Lowe	Fire Chief
W. Maree	Communications Coordinator (A)

Regrets:

B. Dove	Councillor
O. Fudge	Councillor

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order at 4:00pm.

2. VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

Heritage Day/Week Proclamation

The Mayor proclaimed Monday, February 15, 2021 as Heritage Day and February 15-21, 2021 as Heritage Week in the Town of Gander.

Lymphedema Day Proclamation

The Mayor proclaimed March 6, 2021 as World Lymphedema Day in the Town of Gander.

Women's Institute Month Proclamation

The Mayor proclaimed February 2021 as Women's Institute Month in the Town of Gander.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion #21-018

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Woodford and seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollett that the Agenda for the Regular Meeting of Council on February 24, 2021 be adopted.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

4. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Motion #21-019

Regular Minutes for Approval

Moved by Deputy Mayor Pollett and seconded by Councillor Brown that the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of Council on February 3, 2021 be adopted as presented.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

None.

6. REPORTS – STANDING COMMITTEES:

A. Recreation & Community Services:

The Recreation & Community Services report was presented by Councillor Brown.

The Recreation & Community Services meeting was held on February 16, 2021. The meeting was chaired by O. Fudge, Councillor. Other members present included: T. Pollett, Deputy Mayor; G. Brown, Councillor; B. Freeborn, Director of Recreation & Community Services (A); D. Chafe, CAO; B. Hefford, Town Clerk.

The following items were discussed:

Outdoor Rink

The outdoor rink was being enjoyed by the public but due to a week of mild weather, it led to the rink being closed. Since then, the province has reverted to Alert Level 5 and public gatherings are prohibited. When the provincial health regulations are lifted and weather is conducive to flooding, the Department will review the ice rink.

Senior Advisory Committee

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the Senior Advisory Committee meeting that was held on February 5th. The Committee asked Council for the status on the Multiplex, Soccer and Track Fields, the East Gate Green Space as well the possibility of providing assistance with snow clearing for seniors.

Some seniors are finding it difficult to clear their property, especially the end of their driveways when the snowplow comes by numerous times. They asked if the Town could help with removing this snow from the end of their driveway. The Committee understands that snow clearing can be a barrier for some seniors. It is not feasible to have town staff and equipment assist in removing the snow in private driveways; however, they asked that the Department investigate partnership or social enterprise opportunities involving local service groups and organizations.

One idea is the Snow Buddies Program, where the goal is to match a student or adult volunteer with seniors to provide snow removal from their driveways and walkways. The Director noted that the Department will foster these ideas. If there are any groups or organizations that would be interested in helping, to please contact the Department.

The Director will also advise the Senior Advisory Committee that phase one of the Multiplex, Soccer and Track Fields will be going to tender soon and it is expected that work will begin on the new soccer and track fields in the spring.

With respect to the update on the Eastgate Green Space, the Director will advise that there is a design completed, which will be forwarded to the Senior Advisory Committee. However, a project of this size is costly and funding options are being reviewed to develop this public space. The Department has been working towards becoming an “Age Friendly Community” which would enable the Town of Gander to access additional funding programs that may be able to assist with this and similar projects.

Steele Community Centre

Due to provincial health restrictions, the Steele Community Centre is closed. The Department would like to advise the public that the staff are still working and can be reached by calling 651-5927 to provide assistance.

Indigenous Needs Assessment Survey

The Department received a request from the Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Circle of Newfoundland and Labrador (ASRCNL) to share a needs assessment survey for Indigenous athletes, coaches, and recreation users. This survey will provide insight to the needs of each community and allow them to better tailor programming. They will also be able to identify communities needs for funding allocations. The survey has been shared through the Town of Gander and Recreation & Community Services Department Facebook pages. For more information on the survey, please call 709-643-3150.

The Director has also reached out to the ASRCNL to let them know that the Department would be interested in discussing or providing recommendations on funding opportunities for the community.

Special Events Update

The Department wanted to advise the public that even though we are not able to host any in-person social events at this time, staff are continuing to provide virtual events through the Recreation & Community Services Facebook page. The following are some of the upcoming virtual events:

- February 26th – Blanket Fort Contest
- March 3rd – Super Fun Wacky Wednesday
- March 12th – Movie Night Contest
- March 15th – Leprechaun Trap Contest
- March 17th – Craft Corner – St. Patrick's Day Theme

Attached is a full listing of the events and contests for February and March. Further information on these events, can be found on the Recreation & Community Services Facebook page or by calling 709-651-5927.

B. Development and Tourism Committee:

The Development and Tourism Committee report was presented by Deputy Mayor Pollett.

The Development and Tourism Committee meeting was held on February 16, 2021. The meeting was chaired by T. Pollett, Deputy Mayor. Other members present included: G. Brown, Councillor; O. Fudge, Councillor; R. Locke, Development Director; B. Hefford, Town Clerk.

The following items were discussed:

Delegation: Gender Status of Women Council

The Committee welcomed a delegation representing the Gender Status of Women Council. The delegation advised that she is also a representative on the Multicultural Women's Organization of NL (MWONL) Advisory Committee.

MWONL is currently funded through Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) and would like to expand provincially and offer services to Central Newfoundland through the establishment of an office in Gander. This office would provide supports to immigrants and other newcomers. Although there is a satellite office for the Association of New Canadians located in Grand Falls-Windsor, it is felt that Gander and surrounding area is underserved, and it is essential to offer additional supports for newcomers moving to this area.

Currently, The Gander Women's Centre provides programming and other supports for new immigrants in Gander. However, their resources have reached capacity. The establishment of an MWONL office would provide much needed support for immigrants and the community.

They are respectfully requesting that Council write a letter of support asking MWONL to consider expanding to Gander.

The Committee feels that this office would be a great asset for welcoming newcomers to this area. Supports offered through MWONL would ensure a more positive outcome for newcomers in securing gainful employment and achieving successful social integration.

The Committee thanked the delegation for their time and bringing this opportunity forward.

After discussion, the Committee is recommending that Council submit a letter of support to MWONL requesting the establishment of an office in Gander.

Letter of Support Request: Rock Networks

The Committee reviewed a request from Rock Networks requesting a letter of support to secure Federal funding to bring high speed internet to rural communities that currently do not have access to reliable broadband connectivity.

Rock Network's intention is to build an Open Access Network which means that any Internet Service Provider (ISP) can access the network to provide services to underserved communities.

After discussion, the Committee recommends that Council provide a letter of support emphasizing the importance of reliable high-speed internet to the development and growth of rural Newfoundland communities.

In today's society, access to high speed internet is quickly becoming essential to efficiently complete everyday tasks. This is becoming more prevalent with the movement toward online learning created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mayor asked if it was appropriate to support a business provider of the service? The Chair indicated that the support would be for expanded high speed internet to the rural NL, not specific to any one company.

Statistics Canada 2021 Census

The Committee reviewed correspondence from Statistics Canada requesting Council's support in raising awareness about the next census that will take place in May of this year.

It is important for all Canadians, including the citizens of Gander, to provide accurate census information. The information provided by the citizens of Gander will have a direct impact on the analysis of socioeconomic trends needed to plan, develop and evaluate programs and services such as schools, daycare, family services, housing, emergency services, public infrastructure and more.

Motion #21-020

Statistics Canada 2021 Census

Moved by Deputy Mayor Pollett and seconded by Councillor Woodford that the Town Council of the Town of Gander support the 2021 census and encourages all residents to complete their census questionnaire online at www.census.gc.ca. Accurate and complete census data support programs and services that benefit our community.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

C. Public Works & Services Committee:

The Public Works & Services Committee report was presented by Councillor Anstey.

The Public Works & Services Committee meeting was held on February 16, 2021. The meeting was chaired by R. Anstey, Councillor. Other members present included: P. Woodford, Councillor; G. Brown, Councillor; T. Pollett, Deputy Mayor; O. Fudge, Councillor; D. Chafe, CAO; T. Barron,

Director of Municipal Works and Services; B. Hefford, Town Clerk; G. Whitt, Administrative Support Clerk.

The following items were discussed:

Trailway Maintenance

The Director informed the Committee that the Town received a response from the province referencing clarification on the responsibility of the T’Railway maintenance. Pictures of the affected areas that require maintenance were submitted to the province for review. In response, the Manager of Park Operations and Visitor Services said there were areas in the T’Railway Provincial Park that were of higher priority at this time. Should the Town of Gander decide that repairs to this area are of high priority and would like to undertake the work required, then a permit will need to be issued by the Parks Division prior to commencing any scope of work. This permit will be awarded through an application process.

The Committee agrees that the Town should apply for a permit to complete the T’Railway maintenance requirements identified.

907, Hyundai Loader

The Director informed the Committee that unit 907, Hyundai Loader is currently out of service and is at the dealership for repair. In the interim, a replacement loader is in place and snow clearing operations will remain at the current level of service.

22 Cotton Street

The Committee reviewed correspondence and associated claim for damages from the resident of 22 cotton Street suggesting damages to trees on his property was caused by a Town snow blower during snow clearing operations in the winter of 2020 and was brought to the attention of the Town in May 2020.

The Department investigated the damages in May of 2020, and it was determined that the identified damage could not be attributed to Town of Gander snow removal operations or negligent actions. The damages may have been caused by a variety of factors, most of which were natural occurrences resulting from high snow accumulations.

The Committee recommends the Town not accept liability for this claim.

Notable Dates

- The next Waste Transfer Station is scheduled for March 13th. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. This date may be subject to change depending on the provincial government Covid -19 alert level in place at that time.

Details on this event can be viewed on the Town of Gander Website at www.gandercanada.com

D. Public Safety & Protective Services Committee:

The Public Safety & Protective Services Committee report was presented by Councillor Anstey.

The Public Safety & Protective Services Committee was held on February 17, 2021. The meeting was chaired by R. Anstey, Councillor. Other members present included: O. Fudge, Councillor; H. Lowe, Director of Protective Services/Fire Chief; B. Hefford, Town Clerk; L. Small, Administrative Assistant (via TEAMS).

The following items were discussed:

Gander Academy Site Review-Crandell Engineering Ltd.

The Committee reviewed the site plan for the Gander Academy reconstruction. The project design for entrances and parking lot area had a provision for raised crosswalks on Fraser Road. The Committee agreed that raised crosswalks are useful traffic calming tools. The Committee also agreed that two raised crosswalks would be preferred.

This item is now referred back to the Engineering Department with this Committee's recommendation.

E. Engineering, Planning & Controls:

The Engineering, Planning & Controls Committee report was presented by Councillor Woodford.

The Engineering, Planning & Controls Committee meeting was held on February 17, 2021. The meeting was chaired by P. Woodford, Councillor. Other members present included: T. Pollett, Deputy Mayor; B. Dove, Councillor; G. Brown, Councillor; J. Blackwood, Director of Engineering; B. Hefford, Town Clerk.

The following items were discussed:

Delegation – Alan Brokopp, Englobe Corp.

The Committee was joined by Mr. Alan Brokopp from Englobe Corp. who provided the Committee an overview of the conceptual design his firm recently completed for the proposed roundabout for the Cooper/Memorial intersection. Mr. Brokopp explained that the proposed design has been tested and met all the criteria for traffic flows and that the one lane roundabout could be constructed without any acquisition of private land. He indicated that this one lane design would be a good introduction to roundabout traffic control for motorists in Gander prior to the more complex two-lane systems, which could be constructed at other intersections throughout town in the future.

The Committee raised concerns about the impact this infrastructure would have on the adjacent properties and potential difficulties that may be created for adjacent owners in accessing their property. There was also a discussion about the trailway bisecting the roundabout, pedestrian traffic movement, snow clearing operations and how each would be affected following the construction. Mr. Brokopp indicated that his firm have constructed numerous roundabouts in similar circumstances and assured the Committee that they are an effective method of traffic control and traffic calming that will provide a much safer and efficient intersection that currently exists. Roundabouts also provide many benefits when compared to a traffic light-controlled intersection. Mr. Brokopp relayed, to the Committee, that he would further explore design options that would address Council's concerns about access for adjacent property owners. He also agreed to develop preliminary construction estimates for Council's review and consideration.

The Committee thanked Mr. Brokopp for taking the time to discuss the proposed roundabout, with the Committee, and looks forward to seeing the revised design and construction estimates.

Discretionary Notice – 295 Magee Road

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of Gander has received an application to occupy the building at the above noted address for the purposes of a craft shop.

It is noted that this area is zoned **Rural Residential** and **Craft Shop** is permitted as a Discretionary Use under the Town of Gander's Development Regulations.

There were no objections received by the advertised deadline.

Motion #21-021

Discretionary Notice – 295 Magee Road

Moved by Councillor Woodford and seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollett approval for the Discretionary Use at 295 Magee Road for the purposes of a craft shop as attached.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

Traffic Study Recommendations - New K-3 School

The Committee reviewed correspondence from Mr. Jim Ennis, the Construction Manager for the new Gander Academy construction project. Mr. Ennis was seeking feedback, from Council, on the traffic study that was completed by Crandell Engineering for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure for the new school site.

Of particular interest, was the recommendations brought forward that involved measures on Town owned property. This item was forwarded to both the Public Works and Public Safety Committees for review. Both Committees agreed with the proposal and raised no objections. Public Safety inquired about the possibility of having both the north and south crosswalks raised as opposed to only the south, as indicated in the report. The Director advised that his department reviewed the proposal and indicated that there were no concerns other than the potential impact of the private residential property owner who would be directly adjacent to the new raised crosswalk and that it may have a negative impact on that driveway access.

The Committee recommends that the public be engaged on the proposed infrastructure change in accordance with the Town of Gander's Traffic Calming Policy, giving residents the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have prior to construction. The Director will discuss the potential of having the north crosswalk raised however, it appears that installation may create a drainage issue.

Deputy Mayor Pollett identified potential conflict and excused herself for discussion.

Correspondence – Accessory Building Regulations

The Committee reviewed two pieces of correspondence related to the newly proposed Accessory Building Regulations. The first concern raised was the allowable size restrictions prior to the requirement for Council's discretion and the associated public consultation recommended in the draft regulations. They also raised concerns over the proposed increased sideyard, rearyard and building separations for large accessory buildings and the requirement for drawings which they felt was unnecessary.

The second piece of correspondence is requesting that Council consider decreasing the sideyard requirement for accessory buildings constructed in front of the rear building line.

The department will work with the Town Clerk's office to incorporate changes. The draft changes will be returned to the Committee for review consideration.

Deputy Mayor Pollett rejoined the meeting.

Municipal Town Plan

The Committee reviewed correspondence from the consultant responsible for the new Municipal Town Plan who had contacted the Provincial planning office seeking clarification on what would constitute a minor change to the newly proposed Municipal Town Plan. More specifically, Council was interested to know if parcels of land abutting developed residential properties, which are currently zoned Open Space Recreation but proposed for Residential Medium Density, could be retained as Open Space Recreation without the requirement for an additional public hearing. It was determined that because this item was already subject to significant public input and addressed in the Commissioner's Report, an additional public hearing would not be required.

The Committee is recommending that the Director identify, more specifically, the affected areas and consult with the property owners to try and come to an arrangement that would be agreeable to all parties. Following this, a recommendation will be brought forward to the Committee for their review and recommendation to Council.

F. Finance & Administration:

The Finance and Administration Committee report was presented by Councillor Brown.

The Finance & Administration Committee meeting was held on February 18, 2021. The meeting was chaired by G. Brown, Councillor. Other members present included: P. Woodford, Councillor; R. Anstey, Councillor; T. Pollett, Deputy Mayor; B. Hefford, Town Clerk; K. Hiscock, Director of Finance (A).

The following items were discussed:

Pentecostal Church – Tax Exemption 2021

The Committee reviewed correspondence from the Evangel Pentecostal Church requesting an exemption of taxes for their properties located at 55 & 57 Elizabeth Drive.

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that the request met the conditions of the Town's Policy F026- Affordable Housing Tax Exemption and are therefore exempt from property and water & sewer taxation.

Motion #21-022

Pentecostal Church – Tax Exemption 2021

Moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Woodford the Evangel Pentecostal Church properties located at 55 & 57 Elizabeth Drive be exempt from property and water/sewer taxation for 2021.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

Multi Year Capital Works – Revised Schedule A

After completing all approved Multi Year Capital Works projects for the period ending December 31, 2020, a surplus of funds remains unspent.

To avail of the surplus, Council is required to approve the final cost of the Multi Year Capital Works projects completed. The surplus remaining of the provincial share is \$101,181 from the 2012-14 MYCW program, and \$137,578 from the 2017-2020 MYCW program.

The Town’s share is dependent on the type of project requested with water & sewer work cost shared at 70/30 and road work at 50/50.

Motion #21-023

Multi Year Capital Works – Revised Schedule A

Moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Anstey the final project costs funded by the 2012-2014 and 2017-2020 MYCW programs be approved as per the attached.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

Federal Gas Tax

During the 2020 construction season, several of the Town’s capital projects were funded 100% through the Federal Gas Tax program.

The final cost was significantly lower than the original cost estimates by \$616,809. To reallocate these savings to other capital projects, Council is required to approve the final project costs.

Motion #21-024

Federal Gas Tax

Moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Anstey the final costs for projects # 89-2020-7005 and #89-2020-7038 funded by the Federal Gas Tax program be approved as per attached.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

2021 Capital Schedule

The Committee discussed the 2021 Capital Works Schedule and the impacts the ongoing Provincial election, and associated “Caretaker Convention”, will have on the Town of Gander’s priorities. The most significant impact includes the new Track and Field / Soccer Complex, which is approved, designed, and ready for tender. However, as this is a cost shared project, Provincial approval is required to proceed.

Under the current interpretation, municipal cost shared project approvals are being withheld. This potentially has major impacts on the timelines of the project schedule to begin construction this spring.

Council will continue to seek advocacy from the local candidates and Municipalities NL, as this issue impacts all municipalities throughout the Province. NL has a very short construction season and additional barriers to completing projects in a timely manner is concerning.

Furthermore, this is a multi-million-dollar capital project to be undertaken in our community. Council shares the business community’s worry about the economic impacts of COVID-19. Large meaningful projects such as these will become increasingly important to stimulate the local economy. Again, barriers to allow this pre-approved project to proceed must be eliminated, ensuring the work begins as soon as possible.

G. Other Reports:

None

7. ADMINISTRATION

None

8. CORRESPONDENCE

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion #21-025

Adjournment

There being no further business, it was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollett that the meeting be adjourned.

In Favour: 5 Opposing: 0

Decision: Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

P. Farwell, Mayor

B. Hefford, Town Clerk