



Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

Email: info@newmarket.ca | Website: newmarket.ca | Phone: 905-895-5193

Youth Engagement, Diversity and Inclusivity, and Consultation on the Environment Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2019-63

Department(s): Legislative Services, Recreation & Culture

Author(s): Andrew Walkom, Legislative Coordinator
Colin Service, Director, Recreation & Culture

Meeting Date: June 17, 2019

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Youth Engagement, Diversity and Inclusivity, and Consultation on the Environment dated June 17, 2019 be received; and,
2. That staff be directed to continue the initiatives related to Youth Engagement and Diversity and Inclusivity that are outlined in this report; and,
3. That staff be directed to plan a Climate Change Open House for Fall 2019 and a Spring 2020 e-Waste Collection event as part of a one-year pilot environmental consultation program and report back in 2020 with a review of this program; and,
4. That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Executive Summary

This report outlines staff's ongoing community engagement efforts with regards to youth and diversity and inclusivity. The report outlines the existing youth engagement events such as the annual youth summit. It also provides information on the current strategies of the culture department in relation to diversity and inclusivity.

Finally, the report outlines staff's proposed environmental consultation strategy which consists of two annual events. One event would take place in the fall and consist of an open house format on a specific green theme. The second event would take place in the

spring and consist of a specific Town activity, such as an e-waste collection day. This program is proposed as a one-year pilot so that staff may review the success of the events before planning for the remainder of the 2018-2022 term. These proposed events are in addition to the ongoing community engagement strategies employed for Town projects.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with Staff's proposed next steps in community engagement with regards to Youth, Diversity and Inclusivity and the environment.

Background

Committee Structure Review

Council adopted a best practice of reviewing the Committee structure after each term to ensure that Advisory Committees reflect the current term of Council and its strategic priorities. Staff reviewed the existing Committee structure, best practices of other municipalities and conducted a satisfaction survey of Committee and Board Members. As a result of this review, staff found that a shift in volunteerism has continued and that trends suggest new strategies on community engagement would prove effective. The Committee Member survey found strong support for alternate engagement strategies such as forums or open houses, with over seventy percent of respondents saying these would be effective, somewhat effective or very effective.

The Committee structure review continued with a February 25, 2019 Council Workshop to solicit Council's feedback on the existing structure and provide direction to review potential changes or additional committees. As a result of this Workshop, staff examined potential Committee structure changes to address youth engagement and diversity and inclusivity. Additionally, staff reviewed the existing Newmarket Environmental Advisory Committee (NEAC). The staff report summarizing the [committee structure review](#) was presented at the April 29, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting. At the May 6, 2019 Council Meeting, the Committee structure review for the term was completed. As a result of this review, Council dissolved NEAC and directed staff to present options to Council related to further community engagement for the environment. Council also directed staff to present options for community engagement related to Youth as well as Diversity and Inclusivity.

Discussion

Youth Engagement

Engaging youth in meaningful dialogue is important, but also can be challenging to find appropriate methods and opportunities for engagement. Staff have found that there are two pathways that have proven most successful in youth engagement: partnerships and Youth Engagement, Diversity and Inclusivity, and Consultation on the Environment

collaboration with school boards, and opportunities to connect in the context of larger youth oriented activities.

There are currently a number of ways in which the Town partners with local school boards. Each year we hold an annual youth summit where all schools are invited to send a delegation to attend. Students are presented with information about the Town and the challenges we face. They then have an opportunity to brainstorm solutions on the challenges they identified and the Town has identified. This is a day long event – we have found it difficult for school boards to allocate more time than this to a single event. In addition to our annual youth summit, we run programs that tie into grades 5 and 10 curriculum. These programs include mock council meetings where participants are making recommendations on real issues that Council may have considered or be considering. Lastly, we have partnered with the school board in their innovation and design thinking programs where we present real challenges for students to consider and provide solutions utilizing innovation thinking frameworks.

In addition to the current partnerships with the school board, we always try to capitalize on opportunities for youth engagement at events that draw a significant youth presence. This has been accomplished through surveying and focus groups at these events.

Diversity and Inclusivity

The Town continues to make strides in the areas of diversity and inclusivity, particularly as cultural programming has become stronger and more integrated within the community. The Town has formed significant partnerships with various cultural groups that have facilitated improved events. For example, the Town has been instrumental in helping the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association to develop – this included the launch of extremely successful Black History Month celebrations in February. Similarly the Town is partnering with local indigenous community members in the delivery of a youth program and the delivery of events in June for National Indigenous month celebrations.

At the staff level, we continue to meet with existing and emerging groups to find ways to help them develop and improve local awareness around diversity and inclusivity. This has included use of the community grants program for seed funding, as well as partnerships in space provision and program delivery.

Moving forward, there are opportunities to further foster an inclusive environment through the York Region Inclusivity Charter and continued dialogue with advocates and leaders in the community. There have been preliminary discussions towards the formation of a Mayor's Roundtable on Diversity and Inclusivity which will be supported by staff.

Environmental Engagement

In setting its Strategic Priorities for the 2018-2022 term, Council identified Environmental Stewardship as one of its Strategic Pillars. Specifically this pillar relates to leading proactive planning and action related to climate change and other environmental initiatives. Staff have identified opportunities for community engagement and consultation with regards to the implementation of Council's strategic vision.

Broad Community Consultation

The need for broad-based community consultation is particularly strong with respect to environmental issues. In general, community engagement allows Council to measure community support for particular issues and prioritize its actions in response. It allows for a dialogue between the community and Council on these issues, so that decision-making is more closely tied to the community. Not only does this engagement allow for Council to hear from the community, but it also communicates Council's decisions and processes so that the public is aware, engaged and can understand the decision-making process.

There are several reasons why environmental issues are best served by a broader community engagement strategy than other municipal issues. Due to the scope of environmental issues, Council is able to take advantage of the passion and knowledge of the community as a whole, and can seek advice and ideas from a wide-range of voices. Public education on these issues is essential, as it is important that the community knows of the Town's efforts to reduce its impact on the environment and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Likely the most important aspect of broad community engagement is the Town's ability to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to make an impact on our environment. Since environmental issues transcend levels of government and affect all aspects of society, it is critical that actions to protect the environment take place at the individual level. The Town has the ability to educate the public, provide tools and strategies, and work hand-in-hand with the citizens of Newmarket to address the effects of climate change and reduce impact on the environment. It is clear that the Town will be able to reach its goals only through broad-based collaboration with individuals and key stakeholders in the community.

These ideas inform the goals of the Town's community engagement strategy on the environment. Community engagement on the environment needs to create a dialogue between Council and the community, educate the public on environmental issues and the Town's strategies, and empower individuals to take action.

Environmental Events

Staff propose that two environmental events be held annually, with one in the spring and one in the fall. The fall event would consist of an open-house format which will be focused on a particular environmental or 'green' theme. The spring event would consist Youth Engagement, Diversity and Inclusivity, and Consultation on the Environment

of an environmental action day, also focused on a particular theme or activity. These themes would be chosen by staff based on current initiatives or upcoming projects.

For the first open house, to be held in Fall 2019, staff propose a climate change theme. This event format allows for a number of community engagement strategies to be employed. Various booths and displays will provide information about current and upcoming Town projects related to climate change. There are numerous opportunities for public input, as residents can provide their feedback and ideas throughout the event. Collaboration with other organizations, levels of government and agencies are also possible. Depending on the location chosen for the event, it may be possible to provide tours of Town facilities which illustrate the Town's efforts to reduce environmental impact and mitigate the effects of Climate Change, such as the LEED Silver Robert N Shelton Operations Centre. This event would be similar in style and tone to the Community Open House hosted earlier in the year.

The spring event would focus on a particular environmental activity. Staff propose a spring 2020 day to focus around an e-waste collection, pending potential e-waste legislation. This type of collection has occurred successfully in the past through Councillors' Ward activities and the former NEAC. The spring date allows for coordination with other environmental events in the community such as Canadian Environment Week or Earth Day. Collaboration with other organizations or levels of government will also be possible with this type of event. Further, volunteers from the community can be directly engaged in the event through assisting in its operation.

The format of both these events allows for flexibility and growth over time. Additional coordination with other events or organizations is possible. These types of events also provide the opportunity for a direct connection between Councillors and the public, to hear public concerns and participate in environmental events. A central location for an event such as the spring activity event also could facilitate additional activities or information centres at this location to take advantage of the residents who come to attend the main event.

Project-focused Working Groups

In addition to two annual environmental events, staff will continue to monitor for opportunities to engage the project-focused working group model. Staff have identified the Newmarket Energy Efficiency Retrofit (NEER) Stakeholder Advisory Group as a successful example of this model of community engagement. While no additional projects involving this community engagement model are currently planned, staff will seek to identify projects which would benefit from this type of engagement.

Other Community Engagement

Staff are constantly engaging the public on specific projects. New tools are available to staff such as Hey Newmarket. Recent examples of 'green' projects (i.e. Projects that impact Newmarket's adaptation or mitigation of climate change) included the Low

Impact Development (LID) Policy, Site Alteration By-Law, Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan, Stormwater Fee Manual, Urban Forestry Management Plan and Community Energy Plan.

Staff will also continue to monitor additional opportunities for community engagement on environmental issues. One current example is the Town's participation in the Innovate My Future Project. This project brings together youth from the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area to address climate issues in their communities. It is lead by [Youth Challenge International](#) and [Evergreen Brickworks](#). The Town has agreed to provide meeting space, local expertise, and assistance with recruitment and advertising.

Continuity with Newmarket Environmental Advisory Committee

As discussed previously in this report, the proposed activities and events will continue the efforts of the former NEAC, particularly the proposed 2020 spring e-Waste collection event which had previously been organized by the Committee. Staff will organize a consultation meeting with previous NEAC members to gather their feedback on priorities for these upcoming events. As the Town will be seeking volunteers for the operation of the spring event, former members will also be able to participate directly in the event. A list of interested volunteers can be created to assist in recruitment for this annual event.

The Environmental Advisory Committee Exchange Forum is a biannual event hosted by York Region. It is attended by representatives from either staff or committee members to exchange ideas and updates on environmental initiatives. Town staff will attend the forums to represent Newmarket.

NEAC also administered the Ian Gray Environmental Award which provided financial support for school projects that target environmental issues in Newmarket with an award of \$500. The award has not been given out for a number of years. Staff propose the reintroduction of this award, with the program administered by Planning Staff, subject to a 2020 budget request. This award is a useful community engagement tool and a connection to local schools.

Conclusion

Staff will continue to engage youth through the strategies outlined in this report. Staff will support the creation and planning of the Mayor's Roundtable on Diversity and Inclusivity. Finally, staff will begin preparations for the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 environmental events which have been described in this report. These events will form a one-year pilot, with staff reporting back on their success and the continued plans for the rest of the 2018-2022 term.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

This report relates to the Well-equipped and Managed link of the Town's Community vision – implementing policy and processes that reflect sound and accountable governance.

Consultation

Staff consulted with the Development & Infrastructure Commission, including Engineering Services, Public Works Services and Planning & Building Services.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

Staff will request \$500.00 for the 2020 budget as an amount to be awarded to local school programs as part of the Ian Gray Environmental Award.

Attachments

None.

Approval

Kiran Saini
Deputy Town Clerk

Lisa Lyons
Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk

Esther Armchuk
Commissioner of Corporate Services

Ian McDougall
Commissioner of Community Services

Peter Noehammer
Commissioner of Development & Infrastructure Services

Contact

For more information please contact Andrew Walkom at awalkom@newmarket.ca or Colin Service at cservice@newmarket.ca