



Town of Newmarket
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Mobile Signs Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2020-45

Department(s): Legislative Services

Author(s): Flynn Scott, Manager of Regulatory Services

Meeting Date: June 22, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Mobile Signs dated June 22, 2020 be received; and,
2. That Council directs staff to waive all fees associated to mobile signs for 2020 to financially support local business owners and,
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present Council with an option to waive all fees associated to mobile signs for the 2020 budget year in an effort to financially support businesses impacted by COVID-19.

Background

The Town of Newmarket Sign By-law 2017-73 (Sign By-law) currently requires businesses to apply for and obtain a mobile sign permit. As part of the application process, the applicant is required to pay a nonrefundable fee of \$118 per mobile sign proposed. In addition to the applicable fees, each applicant must comply with the following regulations:

- Each business may obtain a maximum of four (4) mobile sign permits per calendar year;
- Each mobile sign permit is valid for a maximum of thirty (30) days;

- All applicants must obtain the property owner's permission to place a mobile sign on the property;
- All applicants must comply with the maximum sign size restrictions; and
- All applicants must physically locate the sign pursuant to specific setback requirements to ensure no sightline obstructions or safety impacts take place.

Finally, based on the dimensional size of the frontage of a property's lot, there are restrictions on the number of mobile signs permitted to be placed at one time. For example, plazas or property lots with a dimensional frontage size of:

- 1ft – 200ft are permitted up to six (6) mobile signs at one time;
- 201ft – 500ft are permitted up to nine (9) mobile signs at one time;
- 501ft – 1000ft are permitted up to twelve (12) mobile signs at one time; and
- 1001+ft are permitted up to fifteen (15) mobile signs at one time.

Discussion

Throughout March and April of this year, businesses that have previously applied for a mobile sign permit have requested and been granted refunds due to being non-operational as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As businesses begin to reopen pursuant to provincial direction, Town staff has received inquiries requesting consideration to waive mobile sign fees in an effort to offer financial relief to businesses significantly impacted by COVID-19.

Town staff are recommending that all fees associated to mobile sign permits be waived for the duration of 2020. However, staff are also proposing to maintain all other application processes pertaining to mobile signs (as identified above under Background) to ensure all businesses are offered an equitable opportunity to obtain a mobile sign while maintaining all levels of safety mitigation.

For example, if Council were to waive or extend the 30 day permit approval in conjunction with fees, due to limitations on the number of signs permitted per property, some businesses within a plaza might not have an opportunity to obtain a mobile sign permit. Similarly, if Council was to waive the number of mobile signs permitted to be placed on a plaza or property lot at any one time, there may be safety or sightline implications as a result. For this rationale, staff are recommending that applications continue to be made to the Regulatory Services Division and appropriate approvals be granted prior to the placement of a mobile sign. Once approved, no fees will be required to be paid pursuant to the mobile sign permit fees identified within the Town's Fees and Charges By-law.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant financial hardship on local businesses throughout 2020. In an effort to offer financial relief to businesses within Newmarket,

Town staff are proposing to waive the \$118 mobile sign permit fee for any businesses seeking to reopen and advertise through a mobile sign on their respective properties.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

This report aligns with the Town of Newmarket's vision of *Being Well Beyond the Ordinary*.

Consultation

In consultation with other municipalities, the Town of Aurora has waived all fees associated to mobile signs throughout COVID-19.

Additional feedback from local business owners has been received, requesting the Town's consideration on waiving mobile sign fees for the remainder of 2020.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

In 2019, a total revenue of \$32,139 was received for sign permits within the Town. It is relevant to note that this amount was for all sign permits, which includes mobile signs. In consultation with the Town's Finance Department, a specific revenue amount for mobile signs was not able to be determined. For this rationale, staff anticipate the overall budget impact for 2020 to be lower than \$32,139.

Attachments

None.

Approval

Lisa Lyons, Director, Legislative Services

Esther Armchuk, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Contact

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