



CORPORATE SERVICES – LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
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November 7, 2016

CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT – LEGISLATIVE SERVICES – 2016-21

TO: Mayor Van Bynen and Members of Council
SUBJECT: 2017 Schedule of Meetings
ORIGIN: Legislative Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) THAT Corporate Services Report – Legislative Services – 2016-21 dated November 7, 2016 regarding “2017 Schedule of Meetings” be received and the following recommendation be adopted:
- i) THAT Council adopt the 2017 Schedule of Meetings attached as Appendix ‘A’.

COMMENTS

2017 Schedule of Meetings

The schedule of regular meetings for Committee of the Whole, Committee of the Whole (Public Hearing) and Council has been prepared for Council’s consideration and is attached as Appendix ‘A’. Special Committee of the Whole and Council Workshop meetings will be included on the schedule for budget and other matters as the dates become available. There may be occasions when additional special meetings are required and the Procedure By-law does provide that special meetings may be called by the Mayor or upon receipt of a petition signed by a majority of the Members of Council.

Variations of the regular schedule include:

- There is an extra week between the April 10 Committee of the Whole meeting and the April 24 Council meeting due to the Easter break.
- There is a Council meeting scheduled on Tuesday, June 6 in order to provide for travel time from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference.
- There is an extra week between the August 28 Committee of the Whole meeting and the September 11 Council meeting due to Labour Day

Public Input Opportunities

At its June 27, 2016 Council meeting the following resolution was adopted:

“THAT staff be directed to explore various alternative methods of conducting Committee of the Whole and Council meetings in order to respond to community needs and ensure maximum public participation, by

providing greater access to Council's deliberations, and that a report be provided to Council by the end of Q4 (2016)".

Staff can advise on the following initiatives which support the direction to enhance public participation with regard to Council matters:

- Scheduling Special Committee of the Whole and Council meetings in the evening or on days which best accommodate the majority of residents who take interest in a matter.
- Public Planning Sessions are scheduled in the evening in order to accommodate residents. Typically, meetings are concluded by 9:00 p.m. which allows residents to attend to personal and family commitments.
- Availability of addressing Council at its Open Forum, and through a deputation at either Committee of the Whole or Council, which is scheduled by the Clerk within 60 days of receipt of the request. Typically, deputations are scheduled at the convenience of the individual making the request.
- Public participation around Council matters is not limited to Council and Committee of the Whole meetings and often, public prefer interactive and informal forms of input. Public engagement opportunities include Public Information Centres (PICs), Council Member Ward meetings and interactive consultations (e.g., Community Open Houses, a Facebook Live session to inform about land use planning, a Youth Congress and a citizen jury engagement on the Recreation Playbook). Staff are planning community congresses for the balance of the term of Council on specific matters (e.g. Economic Development, traffic and active transportation).
- Town committees regular hold meetings and undertake work plans and objectives aligned with Council's Strategic Priorities.
- Often, residents wish to stay informed about Council decisions and a variety of communication channels are available to do so including further notice provided on specific matters of interest to residents, Council Highlights distributed through Newmarket Now, an electronic newsletter with a wide distribution, social media and Town Page notices in the local newspaper.
- Staff continue to evolve new technology enhancements improving public access to Council meeting deliberations and documents. In 2017, the meeting management suite will be replaced and it is expected that the quality of web streamed images will be greatly improved and number of available browsers which can access web streaming will be expanded.

With regard to scheduling regular Committee of the Whole meetings in the evening, the following impacts have been identified. For a summary of other York Region and comparable GTA municipalities meeting schedule, please refer to Appendix 'B'.

- Potential conflicts with existing commitments for Members of Council, which may include family, work and Town business.
- Administrative impacts would be experienced, including additional accumulation of overtime, in particular from non-management staff in Legislative Services and Information Technology. The 2017 draft budget has not identified additional overtime budget. Additionally, there may be service levels impacts during the day as a result of overtime (i.e., staff taking lieu time and flex hours).

- Regular Committee of the Whole meetings are typically a minimum of 3 hours in length and often 4 hours should the agenda be particularly lengthy or include closed session items. Staff are concerned about scheduling substantive items late into the evening when Council, staff and the public have worked a full day. Committee of the Whole is where items are initially discussed by Council, so additional discussion and attention to detail is required.
- Meaningful public participation is questionable after 9 p.m., where individuals likely have personal or family commitments or where they may be too tired to be properly engaged.
- Currently, Public Planning Sessions (usually up to 3 applications) are scheduled in the evening. Should regular Committee of the Whole be scheduled in the evening, an additional meeting date would likely be required to accommodate all Council business. This would have additional administrative and scheduling impacts.
- With a few exceptions, other municipalities with evening Committee of the Whole meetings typically resolve into Council and ratify decisions the same evening. While this provides an evening forum which may be more accessible to the public, it would remove a further opportunity for public input and Council Member consideration of matters.

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

The Schedule of Meetings calendar, once adopted by Council, will be placed on the Town's website and is regularly updated throughout the year. Also, a notice will be placed on the Town Page advising the public that the full calendar is available for review on the Town's website (weekly editions of the Town Page will provide for a notice of upcoming meetings). A similar procedure will follow should Council amend their schedule in the future.

HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS


Human Resource considerations are noted above should Council consider scheduling all Council and Committee of the Whole meetings in the evening.

BUDGET IMPACT

Budget impacts are noted above should Council consider scheduling all Council and Committee of the Whole meetings in the evening.

CONTACT

For more information on this report, contact Andrew Brouwer, Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk at 905 953-5300, extension 2211 or by email at abrouwer@newmarket.ca


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Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk


Esther Armchuk
Commissioner of Corporate Services

Attachments:

Appendix 'A' 2017 Schedule of Meetings
Appendix 'B' Summary of Meeting Schedules