

Region of Queens Municipality Regular Council

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2020

9:00 A.M.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair
Deputy Mayor Kevin Muise
Councillor Ralph Gidney
Councillor Maddie Charlton
Councillor Vicki Amirault
Councillor Jack Fancy
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Carl Hawkes
Chris McNeill, CAO
Christine Watson, Admin. Assistant – Planning & Development

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Norman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Years of Service Awards

20 employees were recognized for their years of service:

5-Year Service Award

Steve Kennedy
John Nickerson
Christine Watson

10-Year Service Award

Samatha Frail
Rachel Joudrey
KayLee Oickle
James Rhyno
Eugene Wamboldt
Phillip Whynot
Larry D. Whynot

15-Year Service Award

Tracy Baker
Melvin Carter
Jeff Cunningham
Fred Murphy
Steven Parnell
Randy Rapp

20-Year Service Award

David Henderson
Scott LeBlanc
Paulette Smith

30-Year Service Award

Jane Lawson

2.0 CHANGES/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Add Item 14.2 Fire Department Path Forward – Councillor Gidney.

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Gidney that the Agenda be approved as amended.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 South Queens Junior High School – Report on Mersey River Water Quality Testing – Olivia and Garfield Gallant-Zwicker

Mayor Norman welcomed Olivia and Garfield Gallant-Zwicker to Council (copy of presentation attached to original set of Minutes).

Some highlights included:

What did we do? – Grade 7 students learning about empowerment. Empowerment is when people have the power to push for change. A great example is Stella Bowles, who is trying to help clear the LaHave River of straight pipes and clean up the high amounts of fecal bacteria in it.

How did we start? – By learning about Stella Bowles and what she did to help clean up the LaHave River which inspired us to look into the Mersey River. Ms. Bowles reached out and provided the water testing equipment and taught our teacher, Ms. Leuschner how to use it.

What/Where did we test? – 6 test areas were done on October 30 and December 10 for enterococci bacteria, which is a type of bacteria found commonly in fecal matter.

What do our results from October 30th mean? – As per Health Canada, 70 enterococci/100 mL – you should not swim, 170 enterococci/100mL – water should not touch your skin. All areas other than Site 1, which was uncountable (too many to count), were all significantly over the Health Canada limits.

Some questions raised were:

1. Why are there such high levels of enterococci bacteria in the river?
2. How did our river get so dirty?
3. Is this fixable? What has been done and what can be done about it?
4. RQM applied for a grant from the federal and provincial governments to remove sewer discharge from Liverpool Harbour. Did the region get the grant? Why or why not?
5. What locations have had straight pipes removed?
6. How common are combined sewer and septic pipes?

Mayor Norman stated she had met with Adam Grant, Acting Director of Engineering & Public Works to attain answers to the questions brought forward.

1. Enterococci bacteria is most commonly found in fecal matters of warm bodied animals and sediments of a non-fecal matter. The river system contains a huge amount of sediment due to the many sawmills that were once present along it.

The amount of enterococci bacteria would be dependent upon the amounts of sediments, if there are any onsite septic systems not working, sewer overflows and weather conditions at the time of testing. Waterloo Street is a direct site for an outfall and has not yet been hooked into the sewer system.

2. The amount of bacteria matter doesn't necessarily indicate the whole river is dirty. Many rivers have high levels of enterococci bacteria and might include animal waste, sediments, birds, etc.
3. Everything is fixable, except the sediment which is currently present. Sewer is fixable with a price tag.

The former Town of Liverpool when starting the system many years ago, had pipes in the ground with many overflows. RQM has been extending sewage and waste water collection for the past two decades.

Waterloo Street still has an outflow as well as King Street.

4. Yes, the RQM did apply for a grant for sewer upgrades on Waterloo in the amount of \$4.2 million, but the grant was refused. No reasoning was given.
5. The locations/types of systems were not investigated, and is assumed that some of the older places would have had straight pipes.
6. Combined sewer and septic pipes are the same thing. Waste water is collected through the grated holes along the sidewalks and roads and is processed through the sewer processing plant on Hank Snow Drive. RQM has been moving away from this process in recent years as we do not want all the storm water going through the system.

Ms. Leuschner, explained that they understood that combined pipes are sewer overflow and that the storm pipes and sewage pipes are the same pipe. If it were to rain hard the sewage pipes from homes would overflow into the river. It should be noted that samples were taken at low tide and it had rained a couple days prior. Upon speaking to Stella Bowles, she and her scientific mentors wouldn't consider the high numbers related to natural sediments in the river from ducks, etc. Straight pipes would be something we'd think RQM would explore and the reasons why there is such a high fecal matter in our rivers.

Mayor Norman explained that not every home has a functioning sewer system but RQM is attempting to fix this, and is an ongoing issue. RQM has been cleaning up the river over the last 25 years since amalgamation.

She suggested that the students submit their concerns in writing to our MLA, Kim Masland and well as the Federal MP Bernadette Jordan.

Olivia and Garfield Gallant-Zwicker presented letters prepared for Mayor Norman, the Councillors and MP Bernadette Jordan.

Mayor Norman thanked them for their presentation.

4.0 TABLING OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions to come before this meeting.

5.0 PUBLIC QUESTION/COMMENT SESSION

Leon Robertson – College Street, Liverpool – Mr. Robertson stated he thought the presentation was great and Waterloo Street was one of RQM's worst areas and most likely still on the radar to be fixed when funding is available. He further stated he was glad to see the item respecting a new audio system on the agenda as this has been on the radar for quite a while.

He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

David Lewis, 219 Milford Street, Milton – Mr. Lewis stated he was here as a representative of the Milton Canoe & Camera Club located at 137 West Street. He offered his comments on the presentation made stating the findings were quite disturbing and concerning and understood in discussions that there wasn't anything on sewer upgrades on the 10-year plan and suggested there be a collaboration with the Ecology Action Group. Mayor Norman stated the present council has not met and examined the 10-year plan which shifts and changes with each Council.

Mr. Lewis further stated when the Milton Canoe & Camera Club moved to their new location in 2017, the sewage system was a straight pipe which they had upgraded to a holding tank and blocked off the straight pipe.

He wished everyone Happy Holidays.

6.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6.1 Regular Council – December 8, 2020

It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:

THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held December 8, 2020 be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

- 6.2 Public Hearing – December 7, 2020 – Establishment of a Recycling Depot and Processing Operation, Brooklyn

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Amirault:

THAT the minutes of the Public Hearing held December 7, 2020 – Establishment of a Recycling Depot and Processing Operation, Brooklyn be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

- 6.3 Public Hearing – December 7, 2020 – Establishment of a Beverage Formulation, Testing and Small-Scale Production Operation, East Berlin

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:

THAT the minutes of the Public Hearing held December 7, 2020 – Establishment of a Beverage Formulation, Testing and Small-Scale Production Operation, East Berlin be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.0 DANGEROUS OR UNSIGHTLY PREMISES

There were no items to come before this meeting.

8.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There were no items to come before this meeting.

9.0 CORPORATE SERVICES

- 9.1 Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator Revised Job Description

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Amirault:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve the revised Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator job description.

Mayor Norman stated following the first meeting of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Team, the Team wishes to make some changes to

the job description in terms of simplifying some of the language, combining items that are similar, categorizing roles and responsibilities.

Chris McNeill, CAO, stated the current and previous job descriptions are basically identical, but separated by categories. Some language terms were changed to more appropriate wording.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

10.0 ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS

There were no items to come before this meeting.

11.0 FINANCE

There were no items to come before this meeting.

12.0 RECREATION AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

There were no items to come before this meeting.

13.0 PLANNING

13.1 Self-Storage Operations by Development Agreement

It was moved by Councillor Amirault and seconded by Councillor Charlton:

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality give notice of its intention to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw to include policy and regulations which would permit self-storage uses in certain residential zones through a development agreement process;

AND THAT a public hearing be scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2021 in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 249 White Point Road in Liverpool, NS at 6:00 p.m.

Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning and Development, stated an application has been received to rezone property located at 85 Hillside Road in Brooklyn from General Residential (R2) to Mixed Use Rural Residential (R5) to open a self-storage business in the existing building on the property which is not permitted under the R2 Zone.

This application was initially discussed at the Planning Advisory Committee held on October 15, 2020. The Committee felt an R5 zoning was not appropriate for this area but would like to see the owners continue to operate within the community and referred the application back to staff.

The property owners currently operate a small manufacturing business in the existing building which was permitted through a development agreement in 1999 and was in compliance with the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) at that time. Staff have reviewed the development agreement and have determined that an amendment cannot be permitted under the current MPS and Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

The Planning Advisory Committee met again on December 14, 2020 to discuss the application and potential options:

- Maintain status quo (deny amendment request).
- Amend MPS and LUB to consider self-storage business in the General Residential (R2) Zone.
- Amend MPS and LUB to create a new zoning classification which allows for the self-storage use.
- Amend the MPS and LUB to include policy which would permit self-storage uses in certain residential zones through a development agreement process.
- Incorporate provision with the MPS and LUB review project to consider a wider range of uses including self-storage in residentially designate areas.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

14.0 REPORTS

14.1 RFP for a New Audio System

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Muise and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality issue an RFP for a new audio system for its Council Chambers as soon as possible with purchase and installation taking place upon approval of the 2021-2022 budget.

Deputy Mayor Muise stated he felt it was time to investigate the cost for a new audio system and have an RFP issued. Discussions for costs could take place during budget deliberations. He has had several people complain of not being able to hear the audios on our website.

Councillor Amirault concurred with Deputy Mayor Muise but enquired to the final design of Council Chambers.

Mr. McNeill stated if the motion passes today, we will reconfigure the Council Chambers to a post Covid situation, which will then mean Council meetings will all be on Zoom for the next 6 – 9 months. All staff or public presentations functions would be through Zoom or some other function as there will not be enough room here for Council members and staff.

In order to do the RFP, we need to set the new council layout up now so when we do the RFP design they will need to measure everything exactly as its going to be.

Our system is set up for 8 mics, which is the maximum. If we want to go beyond that, all new equipment will need to be purchased. The speakers are in spots around the room, and if we want to increase the volume, they will need to be replaced. Even with wireless, they will need to be replaced, as well as all the wiring.

If the long term intention is to do audio and video, it is recommended that everything be done at once so everything works in conjunction with the right technology.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Muise and seconded by Councillor Charlton:

THAT the motion be amended to include “and video”.

Mr. McNeill stated that he will need to know the design today, i.e. screens on the desk, individual microphones on the desk, if screens are placed around the chamber, etc., to be included in the RFP. We have to plan for what the future looks like. This will give us a design and costs for discussion at budget time. Once the cost is known for an RFP, it will come back to Council.

Mayor Norman stated it is a lot to consider today and feels that there is a need to consult with staff as well as the involvement of Elise Johnston, Accessibility Coordinator.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Fancy:

THAT the recommendation be tabled to February in order to get more information in order to make an informed decision on what is required.

MOTION DEFEATED with 3 in favour, 5 against.

Mr. McNeill clarified if the motion is agreed to today, an RFP would be issued in mid-January, reviewed in early February and brought back at the second meeting of Council in February. A company would then be hired and have a design tendered which will be another 6 weeks, which is after budget deliberations, so we need a preliminary design. The work would not be completed before the end of the summer.

Councillor Brown suggested that we investigate wireless mics and not be tied into a hard wired system, as it would offer more flexibility.

Deputy Mayor Muise took the Chair at 10:30 a.m.

Mayor Norman stated although she does not agree with using reserves other than for emergency purposes, and is not aware of the financial position for budget deliberations, and having listened to the timeline and the fact that we can keep the chairs the way they are now and not go into Zoom shutdown, she is in favour of the motion and recommended that staff be consulted prior to issuing the RFP.

Councillor Charlton stated that if there is a need to go to Zoom, which will open up the meetings to more people to join in and everyone will be able to hear, while the room is upgraded, she would be in agreement.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Muise and seconded by Councillor Charlton:

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality issue an RFP for a new audio and video system for its Council Chambers as soon as possible with purchase and installation taking place upon approval of the 2021-2022 budget.

AMENDED MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

Mayor Norman resumed the Chair at 10:34 a.m.

14.2 Fire Department Path Forward – Councillor Gidney

Councillor Gidney stated he has been advised that the Liverpool Fire Department ladder truck has been out of commission since the end of November and enquired how to proceed to assist them.

Mayor Norman stated this issue would first need to be discussed with the fire chiefs. RQM has a contract with them on truck purchases. Fire services is not one department working independently of other departments. They all need to work together for the betterment of Queens. She advised that it would not be best to discuss replacement of a truck with one department without consultation with the other departments.

Councillor Gidney stated that under Policy 82, Section 82.5 it states, If for any reason the schedule for vehicle replacement needs to be reconsidered, do to unforeseen circumstances not in the control of either party, it will be done through consultation of all Fire Chiefs and notice of consensus will be forwarded to the Region. He enquired if it would be up to the Fire Chiefs to get together and then forward the decision to RQM.

Mr. McNeill stated there is an agreement with all 5 fire departments about truck purchases as per policy which was renewed within the last 6 – 9 months, so they are well aware of who gets to purchase what truck and when, and what RQM's contribution is. The next purchase is Greenfield in 2021.

Mr. McNeill asked if the intention is to cancel Greenfield's purchase? The Liverpool ladder truck replacement is scheduled for 2025-2026. Councillor Gidney was asked if the other departments are willing to move their truck purchases back by several years in order to allow Liverpool to move to the front of the line? It has taken the departments a long time to come to an agreement on the schedule, so it would be incumbent upon us to ask them to decide how they want to amend the schedule.

Councillor Gidney further stated he did not know if the agreement was valid due to the wording of unanimous consent whereas 82.5 says notice of consensus, and feels that these are two separate things. He enquired how to proceed.

Mr. McNeill stated we have a standard process and suggest that Council not make a rash decision without understanding the background of the fire department agreement. Councillor Gidney is quoting Policy, but not all Councillors have a copy in front of them today and is difficult to discuss policy without having a copy. Unanimous consent and consensus of approval are essentially the same, as we are requiring all 5 to agree to it.

The request is for \$350,000 and therefore, are we going to change policy and allow all five departments to have \$350,000 going forward rather than \$275,000 which would require an increase in the tax rate, or is this a special request that would be a special area rate just for areas 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 which would be affected by Liverpool's fire department. There are lots of issues that need to be discussed before proceeding.

Councillors agreed to the need to have a meeting with all the Fire Chiefs as soon as possible.

Mayor Norman will arrange a meeting with the Fire Chiefs in the new year and copy Council.

15.0 IN-CAMERA ITEMS

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Muise and seconded by Councillor Amirault that the proceedings go In-Camera at 10:55 a.m. to discuss the following:

15.1 Personnel

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

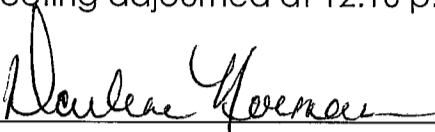
Mayor Norman announced a 5-minute recess at 10:55 a.m.

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown that the proceedings exit In-Camera at 12:16 p.m.


MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

16.0 ADJOURNMENT


The meeting adjourned at 12:16 p.m.



Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair



Chris McNeill, CAO

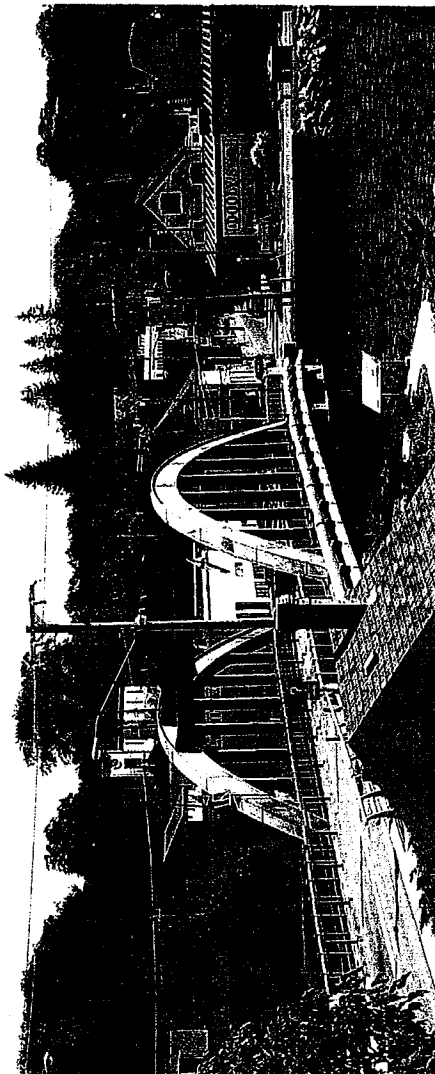


Christine Watson, Administrative Assistant – Planning & Development

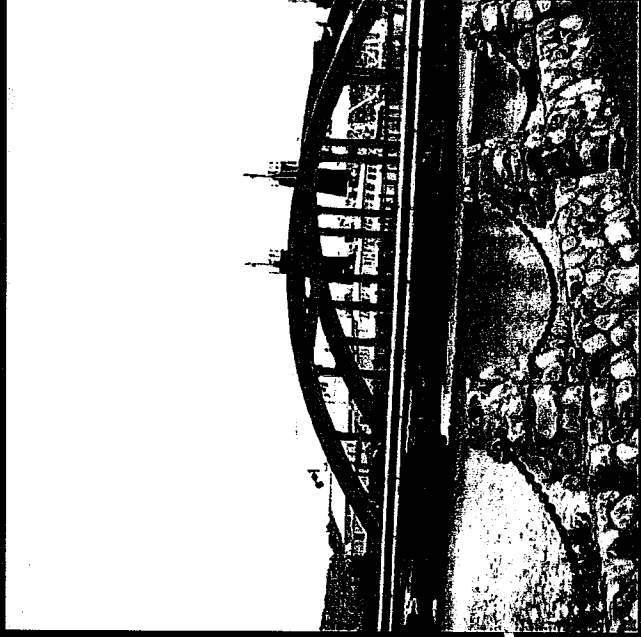
Date Approved: 

Mersey River Project

By Olivia and
Garfield Gallant-
Zwicker



What did we do?



The grade 7s at South Queens Middle School have been learning about empowerment and took our learning into the community.

Empowerment is when people have the power to push for change.

A great example of empowerment is Stella Bowles. Stella Bowles is trying to help clear the LaHave River of straight pipes and clean up the high amounts of fecal bacteria in it.

We have felt empowered when doing this project.

How did we start?



We had started by learning about Stella Bowles and what she did to help clean up the LaHave River from fecal bacteria.

This inspired us to look into the Mersey River.

Our teacher, Ms. Leuschner, reached out to Stella. She provided the water testing equipment and taught Ms. Leuschner how to use it.

What/Where did we test?

We tested for enterococci bacteria, a type of bacteria found commonly in fecal matter. We tested on October 30th and December 10th.

Both times we tested:

- Under the Henry Hensey Bridge
- The end of Waterloo Street
- Tupper Park
- The Canoe & Camera Club
- Pine Grove
- 476 Hwy 8, Milton

Our results were shocking!

What do our results
from October 30th
mean?



As per Health Canada:

70 enterococci/100mL = you should not swim

170 enterococci/100mL = water should not touch your skin

Site 1 (Waterloo Street): Uncountable

Site 2 (Henry Hensley Bridge): 340 ent./100mL

Site 3 (Pine Grove): 325 ent./100mL

Site 4 (476 Hwy 8, Milton): 335 ent./100mL

Site 5 (Canoe & Camera Club):
200 ent./100mL

Site 6 (Tupper Park): 230 ent./100mL

Some questions we have:



Why are there such high levels of enterococci bacteria in the river?

How did our river get so dirty?

Is this fixable? What has been done and what can be done about it?

On the Region of Queens website, it says that in 2018, the region applied to a grant from the federal and provincial governments to remove sewer discharge from Liverpool Harbour. Did the region get the grant? Why or why not?

What locations have had straight pipes removed?

How common are combined sewer and septic pipes?