

**Region of Queens Municipality Regular Council
Tuesday, November 22, 2022, 6:04 p.m.**

Minutes

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

1.0 Call to Order

Mayor Norman called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2.0 Changes / Approval of Agenda

Add Item 8.5 – Shrub Removal, Councillor Muise

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

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

3.0 Presentations

3.1 Accessibility Committee Update

Mayor Norman welcomed Elise Johnston, Accessibility Coordinator, to Council. Some highlights included:

Ms. Johnston noted that two members of the committee, Tyler Roy and MacKenzie Colp, were present.

Nova Scotia has 1 in 3 people with some form of disability, which may be mobility, hearing, sight, dexterity, etc. that may be temporary, periodic or permanent.

Accessible equals Barrier-Free. Barriers may be physical, digital, and attitudinal.

Nova Scotia Accessibility Act was passed April 27, 2017 under Bill 59 of the Department of Justice – Human Rights Issue with a timeline of 2030 to make Nova Scotia accessible.

The Region created an Accessibility Advisory Committee with a plan approved in April 2021. The committee identifies, removes and prevent barriers; assess effect of actions

Nova Scotia focusses on 6 categories to improve.

Built Environment:

- All municipal properties assessed with priority recommendations.
- Council approved an annual budget allocation.
- Grant applications are ongoing with four brought in to date for \$72,257.
- Having building permits capture accessibility-related requests.
- All municipal projects are reviewed with an accessibility lens.
- Accessibility grants are promoted to the community within businesses and residents.

Education/Community Outreach:

- Create awareness campaigns through podcasts, in-person sessions, webinar, flyers, articles and social media.
- Engage with more people with disabilities, designers and builders and businesses through various sources, i.e. Home Support, VON, etc.

Employment:

- The Region ensures an accessible workplace and accommodations at all levels of job opportunities.
- An accommodation fund and staff resource person is in place to support the people.
- Provide disability awareness training to staff and track the number of employees with disabilities.

Information and Communication:

- The Region's digital documents are screen readable and the use of alt text in social media, captions on videos and ASL is available upon request.
- Working on improved audio in Council Chambers and QR codes on public interpretive panels.

Goods and Services:

- The Region's service counters to have lowered sections.
- Service dogs and or support personnel welcomed.
- Promote existing and build inventory of accessible recreational equipment (in the gym and MOBI mat) and recognize vulnerable persons in EMO planning.

Transportation:

- Queens Country Transport is supported both in budget and promotions.
- Detail a parking and sidewalk remediation plan i.e. curb cut access, upright signage and access aisles.
- Prioritize snow removal areas to maintain barrier-free paths.
- Ensure crosswalks are well marked.
- Use of tactile indicators.

Highlights of Accessibility Improvements:

- QPEC – Toilet seats in accessible stalls have back supports, sensor buttons to entry doors, new operators for arena and community room doors, signage for washrooms and elevator, 30 rail posts at bleachers. A proposal issued for universal washroom.
- THAAC (Astor) – Stage lift installed. Assistive devices are installed. Ramped entry forthcoming. A proposal issued for lift to second floor.
- Beach Meadows Beach – A MOBI mat purchased and installed. Sand Walkers in coming. A new facility will be fully accessible with adult change table.

Tyler Roy, member of the Accessibility Committee, commented that he would like to be able to enter places like A1 and Liverpool Pizzeria independently. Ms. Johnston stated she is working with businesses.

Mackenzie Colp, member of the Accessibility Committee, commented that she would like to have an ASL official interpreter from the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Society. Ms. Johnston stated the

the demand for ASL is high, and have to go through the Halifax office. Tonight's interpreter is a stand in from Bridgewater. They are expensive and hard to get, and may be able to have through Zoom.

Mayor Norman and Councillors thanked Ms. Johnston for her work.

3.2 Diversity & Inclusion Action Team Update

Mayor Norman welcomed Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk & Diversity Coordinator to Council. Some highlights included:

There are now 10 members to the Team; Lynda Earle is Team Lead.

Reviewed Staff Changes:

- Elise Johnston, Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator, will focus on community aspect of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk and Diversity Coordinator, will focus on the Region's internal Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- These changes show that the Region sees Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion as long term, ever changing work and is not short term. There is new legislation from the Province of Nova Scotia that will reiterate the long term nature of this work.

Benefits to these Changes:

- Increased capacity with specific focus on Community Development and Internal Processes.
- Diversity and Inclusion become a permanent part of Region work for better advancement.

Recent Accomplishments:

- The Human Resource Policies were approved and are currently in a roll-out phase. These new policies update our practices and language. Mr. Levy and Joanne Veinotte, Director of Corporate Services, along with Angela Green, Administrative Assistant, are in the process of holding information sessions on these policies to give a brief presentation of changes and allow staff to ask questions and give feedback about the policies.
- Increased Visibility with painting on VIC and picnic tables and presence in parades.

- Continued Community Support achieved through small grants program and working with other municipalities of what is being worked on and sharing of ideas.

Challenges:

It has been challenging to achieve a full membership but the turnover has slowed.

Uptake in community initiatives has been slow. There was an attempt to start some community groups and make partnerships with some other organizations with little or no success. Also, grant applications have been slow again this year. We have a similar number of grants distributed this year as we did last year, but we'd like to see more applications.

Current Projects:

- There have been discussions about starting a Local Immigration Partnership, which is a group of public, business, government, non-profits, that work together to help new Canadians get set up and feel welcome in a community. There have been discussions about this type of project and other iterations of other similar groups.
- The Diversity budget allowed for an internship. We have identified an Oral Histories Project to be a good project for an internship. This project would collect stories of Diversity and Inclusion in Queens County.
- There is a constant policy and bylaw review going on. Each review is done with EDI considerations.

Upcoming Projects:

- Oral Histories Project is the sharing of stories and histories of Queens County.
- In April 2022, Bill No. 96 was passed. This act states, "All prescribed public bodies shall create a plan to address systemic hate, inequity and racism with the form and content and by the date prescribed." The Region's plan has been in the works for quite some time. It is estimated that this plan will be in place by the end of 2023.

- Continue education opportunities for staff and Council, as well as incorporation of Diversity and Inclusion training for new council orientation.

Major Success:

- Diversity and Inclusion work is becoming more collaborative and throughout the entire organization. No longer just one person's job and everyone is becoming a contributor.
- Requirements from An Act to Dismantle Racism and Hate will help further guide our work. There are plans to further the collaborative nature of the Diversity and Inclusion work internally and in the community and explore the option of increased programming and funding.

Mayor Norman thanked Mr. Levy for his update on what the committee has been working on.

4.0 Tabling of Petitions

There were no petitions to come before this meeting.

5.0 Public Question / Comment Session

There were no member of the public who wished to come before this meeting.

6.0 Approval of Minutes

6.1 Regular Council – November 8, 2022

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

THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held November 8, 2022 be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Sale of Municipal Property

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

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality enter into a purchase and sale agreement with Queens Neighbourhood Co-operative Housing Ltd. for properties identified as 70027982, 70040423, 70017983 and 70028477 for the price of \$1.00.

Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning & Development, stated if Council approves the recommendation, staff will prepare a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Queens Neighbourhood Co-operative Housing Ltd. with a closing date subject to discussions with them.

Deputy Mayor Fancy declared a Conflict of Interest at 6:45 p.m. while this item was being discussed.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.2 Community Investment Fund – Queens County Track Society

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

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality provide grant funding approval, from its Community Investment Fund reserve account, to Queens County Track Society in the amount of up to \$250,000;

AND THAT funding not be released until Queens County Track Society provides satisfactory proof of its financial resources to complete the full size (300' x 190') turf soccer field and 400m, 8 lane gravel running track portion of the project as outlined in the application.

AND FURTHER THAT total eligible costs as received under the project tender for the full size (300' x 190') turf soccer field and 400m, 8 lane gravel running track portion of the new capital project are more than \$1,000,000 before HST.

AND FURTHER THAT a fully executed long term land use agreement is in effect prior to funding being released.

Deputy Mayor Fancy Declared a Conflict of Interest at 6:50 while this item was being discussed.

Meaghan Roberts, Director of Recreation and Healthy Communities, stated the Queens County Track Society will be constructing a full size turf soccer field and 400m 8 lane gravel running track for community use at Liverpool Regional High School. In addition, the total overall project will have added features of fencing, lighting and some physical activity and sport enhancements. The funds being requested under the Community Investment Fund are for the full size turf field and 400m 8 lane track portion of the overall project. It is a proposed ten year tri-party Land Use Agreement for community use of schools which is currently in the process of being executed by those involved.

The Society has applied for provincial and federal infrastructure funding for other portions of the project costs. The additional gap in funding will be met through funding by private partners, fundraising, donations, corporate sponsorship, etc. which would be expected to be funded by the Society. The total eligible costs for the track and turf build are projected to be in excess of \$1,000,000 before HST, which allows the Society to access up to a maximum of \$250,000 under the Community Investment Fund based on the total eligible costs.

The projected start date of the project is April 2023, which is next budget year for us, so the recommendation is funding from the Community Investment Fund reserve account.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

8.0 Discussions

8.1 Region of Queens Pool Committee – Letter of Mandate

Councillor Brown thanked the Pool Committee for coming back with this Letter of Mandate that cleared up problems with the Terms of Reference and hope to move forward with the pool.

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

THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

8.2 Operational Policy 3 – Public Art

Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk and Diversity Coordinator, stated Council approved the Municipal Government for All Vision Framework, which a fund was earmarked for the purchase of a public art installation to celebrate the diversity in Queens County.

In order to purchase public art, it was determined that a policy setting out the parameters for purchases was necessary.

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

THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

8.3 Administrative Policy 23 – Respecting Regular Meetings of Council –
Councillor Hawkes

Councillor Hawkes stated he would like the evening meetings held in Council Chambers move back to day meetings, and continue with the community evening meetings. This would be a better representation of us and a better use of staff time. There is a lack of residents in the galley.

Councillor Gidney stated one evening a month gives the opportunity for residents to attend, which is important to have the opportunity.

Councillor Amirault agrees with Councillor Gidney, it gives people who work the opportunity to attend.

Councillor Brown agrees with Councillor Hawkes. This would free up staff time and many attend after working all day. There is a lot of travel time for some Councillors. The four meeting set up for evening meetings in other areas and two months, July and August, that we don't have evening meetings.

He further stated tonight is an exception but we rarely have people in the gallery and feel we get better reception from residents with day time meetings, there are more attendance and the regulars do not attend the evening meetings.

Councillor Charlton spoke of the Diversity and Inclusion initiative and stated people who work days are excluded from attending the meetings and is not being inclusive and giving them the opportunity to attend.

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

THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.

MOTION DEFEATED with 2 in favour and 6 against.

8.4 Ad Hoc Communications Strategy Review Committee

Mr. Levy stated the Communications Strategy and Operational Policy 83 – Social Media were approved by Council in 2017. The documents outline the Region's objectives, processes and regulations around communication including social media, website, and in-person communications.

Staff are currently doing a full review of policies, bylaws and practices. These documents were requested to be prioritized by a member of Council.

Staff are requesting that a small ad hoc committee of staff and Council be created to review these two documents.

Councillor Charlton and Councillor Brown indicated that they would be interested in being a part of this committee.

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

THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

8.5 Shrub Removal – Councillor Muise

Councillor Muise stated he has received a few complaints and has happened to himself that when driving by the Bank of Montreal/South Shore Opportunities and turn towards the fire hall, the median by the stop sign to go up Market Street or across the bridge has shrubs that are almost six feet high. When turning left, vehicles coming down Market Street and turning into the parking lot, you can't see them until they are past the median.

He further stated he observed and witnessed a number of near misses as you cannot see the smaller vehicles. You can see the pickups because of their height.

Mayor Norman enquired if this was an issue for the Traffic Authority. Chris McNeill, CAO, stated Council can either have them removed or replaced with low growing shrubs.

Councillor Muise further stated there are other areas what have obstructive issues that are not on Region property, i.e. Cameron's Corner and on Waterloo Street at the 4-way stop. Mayor Norman stated Council recently approved a policy to deal with these types of issues and he could submit information on these two locations.

Councillor Charlton enquired if the Region has any plans to look at specific areas. Mayor Norman stated the areas would be looked at when complaints are received.

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

THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

9.0 In-Camera Items

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Amirault that the proceedings go In-Camera at 7:15 p.m. to discuss the following:

- 9.1 Contract Negotiations
- 9.2 Sale of Municipal Property
- 9.3 Contract Negotiations

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

Mayor Norman announced a 5 minute break at 7:15 p.m.

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown that the proceedings exit In-Camera at 8:42 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

9.3 Contract Negotiations

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

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality enter into the proposed Land Use Agreement with South Shore Regional Centre for Education and Queens County Track Society for the future use of the new soccer field and running track.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.



Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair



Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk



Christine Watson, Administrative Assistant – Planning & Development

Date Approved: December 13, 2022