



AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL

RFD# 2018149

Date: January 28, 2019

TO: Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Kimberlee Jones, Municipal Clerk

DATE: January 28, 2019

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Public Participation and Notification Policy

ORIGIN: Staff initiated review of internal processes.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA 204 (3) The content of a public participation program is at the discretion of the council, but it shall identify opportunities and establish ways and means of seeking the opinions of the public concerning the proposed planning documents.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve the following amendments to the Public Participation and Notification Policy, namely to remove the requirement to conduct public participation sessions at a Planning Advisory Committee meeting, and permit them to be scheduled independently.

BACKGROUND: We have been making some changes to our processes to improve our communications and transparency to citizens. To that end we have begun to “live stream” our Committee of the Whole, Council and Committee meetings on the internet. As well, the day following the meeting, the video is available to view in the archives.

So, further to the improved transparency issue – we want to ensure that when public participation is a component of a planning decision, that decision makers have some time for consideration before voting on the matter.

DISCUSSION: It is not a requirement in the Municipal Government Act to hold Public Participation Opportunities (PPO) at a formal meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee. The MGA 204(3) states “*The content of a public participation program is at the discretion of the council, but it shall identify opportunities and establish ways and means of seeking the opinions of the public concerning the proposed planning documents.*”

The proposed amendment to the policy will allow a PPO to be held in advance of the Planning Advisory Committee regular meeting. Staff would prepare a report on the PPO and distribute to members who were not in attendance. This will allow some time between the public participation and voting on the matter for consideration. And will eliminate the need for multiple committee meetings each month that require quorum.

A housekeeping change is also suggested by removing the words: “*The Deputy CAO, or designate is responsible for the administration of this policy*” from the policy”



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: None anticipated

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: None anticipated

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: Potentially allow more flexibility to conduct PPO's and have video available online.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Do not amend the policy
- 2) Direct staff to provide additional information to Council

ATTACHMENTS: Public Participation and Notification Policy

Report prepared by: Kimberlee Jones, Municipal Clerk

Report and Financial approved by: