

Town of Amherst

Public Participation Opportunity

Summary

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, May 1, 2019
Location: Boardroom, Town Hall

Public Present: Larry Pardy
Ronald Wilson
Councillor Darrell Jones
Leslie Childs
Mikhial Mansour
Adrian Bligh

Mayor David Kogon

Staff Present: Manager of Planning and Strategic Initiatives,
Andrew Fisher
Municipal Clerk, Kimberlee Jones
Unsightly Premises and Building Administrator,
Marc Buske
Administrative Assistant, Emily Wainwright

Andrew Fisher opened the Public Participation at 4:34p.m.

1. Public Participation Opportunity

Mr. Fisher provided an explanation of the new process of the Public Participation Opportunity.

1.1. Amendments to the Land Use Bylaw – Offsite Signage

1.1.1 Staff Report

Mr. Fisher reviewed his report as distributed in the agenda package.

1.1.2 Public Questions / Comments

Adrian Bligh, 1 Ratchford Street.

I wrote to Council requesting the sign in package you see here to be permitted on the side of the law office on Havelock Street. When my business opened in September 2017, the bylaw had changed a couple months after I bought and designed the sign. We have attracted 68% of guests from outside of Amherst and have been given national recognition. One of the issues we have is that we are on Ratchford Street, and not main street. People get frustrated because they are not quite sure where we are. One issue we fixed was that our address was changed to Ratchford Street from Havelock, so when you look it up online it is easier to find. What I would like to do is put the 3-foot by 6-foot sign I have on the law office on Havelock Street, at top part of building, and they have given us permission to put the sign there. As visitors come up LaPlanche Street they would be able to see the sign pointing toward Ratchford Street. I agree that you don't want advertising everywhere from everyone. Simple signs with permission from the owners are what I would like to see done. Maybe an option of limiting electronic signage might be a way around it. We don't want people coming into Amherst being frustrated because they can't find something. A few businesses already go against this bylaw; Breakfast at Brittney's advertises for Bella's on its side building, but it is several streets away.

Leslie Childs
Lamy St.

I am here for the Heritage Trust. I fully support ways to do business. But I think there is oversight on how this may make our downtown look. If there were guidelines to follow, it would allow future signs to be consistent and respectful, and there should be a process where they would have to submit an application of the sign for approval. I like it when there are signs that tell you where you to go. When I am confused on where to go, I may walk for a few minutes, but then I just get frustrated and go somewhere else. I think it's a good idea and I am in favor of this. This is something that other people, like Victoria Faire, has similar concerns. I think any one in that position should have that option.

Mr. Bligh

There has to be structure to it.

Mrs. Childs

There needs to be enforcement. If there is a sign that should not be there, within hours, if not days, it should be addressed. There are two signs for the Art of Eating Deli, at its currently location and one is on the old one. That in itself is against the current bylaws.

Mikhial Mansour
Church Street

I came here today to firstly thank everyone for all of their hard work, I think the Town is looking better. I am in favour of offsite signage. I think they are scared people are going to put up ugly signs, whereas I would like to put ads on my sign for 30 Church, the women's store across the road. But as the bylaw currently prohibits, I am not allowed. I think that's a good way to promote our businesses and products. I don't plan on selling the advertising spots. But ultimately, I think it promotes the downtown. Signage is the oldest part of advertising; I think signage is a good idea. I would like to see allowing off site signage. Maybe you could regulate it, like one sign per side of a building. One Councillor expressed that someone wanted to put up 10-12 electronic signs, it would be so expensive, and I don't think it is smart. you're better off to rent one sign at a time.

Mrs. Childs

I think we are looking at larger issues going down the road. I would be in favour of having some sort of theme that would fit in with our built heritage. Make the signs look the same, be the same size, I don't know how that would work, but to make the signage to fit in with the existing buildings.

Mr. Mansour

I think that electronic signage could help preserve heritage. A building that isn't doing so well, if you could rent out that sign on the building, they would have more money coming in to fix that building. A lot of buildings you can't use as offices, etc. so this would provide income. When you drive through downtown and see an empty lot and signifies that there isn't much going on here. When you see a LED sign on it, you might think there's stuff going on here, and that the downtown is a good place to do business.

Mr. Bligh

Electronic signage does have a place, but I think with the heritage aspect of it is something that the Town is trying to promote. The heritage is a draw to Amherst. We had people dressed up last year giving heritage tours and offering carriage rides. These things are a way to promote the Town. There needs to be restriction on electric signage, and I don't think a vacant lot is a place for an electronic sign. If it is to be done, I would like to see strict control, like the amount or kind of sign. People have complained about Laplanche Street; signs are a contentious issue. There

is nothing wrong with electronic signage, it doesn't matter, as long as there are guidelines. Let's get people here. Have people come to the Town and spend their money here. You can make sensible decision and enforce it.

As there being no further questions or comments, Mr. Fisher closed the Public Participation Opportunity at 5:07p.m.

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