

Internal Committee Report

Amherst Youth Town Council

November 2018

Amherst Youth Town Council (AYTC) met twice during November, once on November 8th and once on November 22nd. At these meetings we focused our discussions on an upcoming Mental Health Week as well as the Smoke-Free Recreational Places By-Law (C-12).

In regards to the Mental Health Week, we are planning on having a week of awareness during January, the dates are to be decided. The goal of this week is to address issues that were raised during our survey last year, like a concern raised about access to mental health resources. This week will consist of information sessions as well as speakers with our focus being to bring awareness to mental health in Amherst and to reduce some of the stigma behind it.

Our conversations around the Smoke-Free Recreational Places By-Law was also sparked by the survey we conducted last year. In both of these meetings we looked at said by-law to see if there could be any improvements or changes. What we found was that the by-law was too vague and outdated on many of its terms. An example is how the by-law defines smoking, the by-law just includes lighting tobacco as smoking but we believe that cannabis, which we do know Council has considered, as well as e-cigarettes and vapes should be included in this by-law as well. We also had concerns about where smoking is not permitted. We do know that playgrounds are smoke-free but the by-law also says any outdoor properties maintained by the Town would be smoke-free which led us to question if sidewalks were included in that. By the end of the meeting we decided on three recommendations for Council. Including the extension of the definition of smoking the AYTC also would like to suggest to Council to extend the by-law to create a smoke-free area between the TD Canada Trust Bank and the Lawtons Drugs on Victoria Street, excluding all side streets. As well, we suggest that the Council should consider revisiting what is defined in the by-law as areas which are smoke-free in Amherst.

At our meetings this month we also discussed alternative penalties for anyone who violates by-laws which would include community service but the AYTC is still in discussions about exactly what we are looking to do with that.

Finally, the AYTC also participated in many of the holiday events this past month including the Christmas Parade, Light-Up and Boston Tree.