



## The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Corporate Services & Clerk

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Laura Moy, Director Corporate Services & Clerk

**Date to Council:** July 28, 2020

**Report Number:** CS-2020-20

**Subject:** Holding of Electronic Public Meetings

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### Recommendations

It is recommended:

**That** CS-2020-20, Holding of Electronic Public Meetings, **be received;**

**And that** the Live Streaming Policy attached as Attachment 3 to CS-2020-20 **be approved;**

**And that** By-law No. 2020-52 Amending Schedule A of By-law No. 2020-13 being a by-law governing the proceedings of meetings of Council and Committees **be adopted.**

### Background

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing legislative and regulatory changes made by the Province (see [Attachment 1](#)), the Town of Tecumseh moved to an electronic platform for Regular Council meetings. In-person public meetings, open houses (public information centres (PICs)) and special meetings on matters such as capital projects and master plans have been deferred.

Statutory public meetings for planning applications submitted under the *Planning Act* and drainage reports prepared under the *Drainage Act* have been suspended. The exception to the preceding is for minor variance and severance applications under the *Planning Act*, which have recommenced being considered by the Committee of Adjustment through electronic public meetings, the first of which was held on June 29, 2020. This was the subject of Report PBS-2020-20 entitled "Public Consultation Process for Committee of Adjustment Applications During COVID-19" on June 9, 2020, which was given favourable consideration by Council.

While Administration has been able to continue receiving and processing of applications under both the *Planning Act* and *Drainage Act* (see **Attachment 2**), it is time to reinstate statutory public meetings to complete these applications.

As a corollary to adopting an electronic meeting platform, livestreaming of Council meetings was fast-tracked this year. In accordance with earlier direction from Council, Administration was in the process of implementing live streaming prior the pandemic with an anticipated start date of the first streamed meeting in August 2020 when the Town Hall renovations were planned to have been completed. Due the need to meet electronically as a result of the pandemic, Council Meetings first began live streaming on March 24, 2020.

While municipalities are not required to video record or live stream meetings, the Town recognizes that offering a live webcast and video recording can make Council and other meetings more accessible to interested residents. The intent is to now extend livestreaming to include statutory public meetings.

The purpose of this report is to propose a process for Council to conduct electronic meetings for:

- Statutory public meetings under the *Planning Act*
- Statutory meetings for reports prepared under the *Drainage Act*
- Other matters which Council deems it necessary and appropriate to seek public input
- Public information centres (PICs) for capital projects, master plans and special projects.

Changes to the Town's Procedure By-law are proposed to facilitate electronic meetings for these purposes.

Additionally, electronic meetings held to fulfill statutory responsibilities will be livestreamed to allow access to interested parties. A new livestreaming policy will facilitate permissions required from participating members of the public to publish their images and input to the internet.

The processes established in this report will facilitate normal business operations of the Town as they relate to public engagement and statutory responsibilities during the current period of public gathering limitations associated with the pandemic. In-person meeting attendance by Council or the public is subject to the Provincial regulatory environment, as it evolves.

## **Comments**

### **Electronic Meetings**

At present, the method for holding meetings is via electronic format using Zoom and video streaming for Regular Council meetings. To date, only the Committee of Adjustment has held a meeting where matters subject to public notice have been addressed using these methods. The Police Services Board Members also held their first electronic meeting on June 11, 2020. The proposal is to extend the use of this technology to statutory public meetings and PICs.

By way of the June 29, 2020 Committee of Adjustment meeting along with on-going research, Administration has confirmed that the Town has the capabilities to conduct statutory public meetings or hearings required under the *Planning Act* and *Drainage Act*, electronically, via the online Zoom platform and live streaming. These platforms will also support holding special meetings and PICs. With this technology, meetings can be conducted online with high-quality video, audio and screen sharing options and Zoom can host up to 300 participants with the Town's current licence. This capacity is greater than the current capacity of the Council Chamber.

### **How the Public Can Participate**

Going forward, there will be two ways to participate in public meetings:

1. Residents may make written submissions, before a scheduled public meeting, and provide their submission to the Clerk's Office for inclusion on the meeting agenda.
2. Anyone can view or join a meeting from their mobile devices, desktops and laptops, or by telephone for those who do not have a good comfort level with using other technology. **In order to participate as a delegate at an electronic public meeting, residents will need to register using the [Online Delegation Request Form](#), or by contacting the Clerk's Office.** Participation electronically would follow the similar rules and regulations for in-person attendance set out in the Procedure By-law.

Registered delegations will have to sign in at the scheduled time and will be able to provide comments and ask questions during the public meeting in the same manner as in-person public meetings. After registration, Administration will provide instructions to registered delegates on how to dial-in and connect to Zoom, ahead of time, so they can make sure the technology works for them; do a test run and leave time to adjust and come up with a back-up plan, if needed. With Zoom, the Town as host is always in control which includes interactive capabilities for participants.

### **Notices**

Notices of public meetings would be circulated as per the *Planning Act* and *Drainage Act* requirements. In order to enhance public participation, the notices would clearly establish the two means by which input can be provided, as noted above.

### **Livestreaming Policy**

As previously stated, live streaming provides opportunities to expand the availability of all types of Council meetings, as well as Committee and Board meetings, to residents. The Town has taken measures to ensure that the live streaming process complies with internal policies, regulations and legislation including the Municipality's Procedure By-law, Records Retention Policy and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. In that regard and to facilitate live streaming of public meetings that include input by members of the public, a Live Streaming Policy is attached as **Attachment 3** making it known that by attending a meeting, attendees are consenting to their image, voice, comments, and presentations being recorded and published.

## **Public Information Centres**

For PICs (i.e. draft drainage reports, major capital design projects, master plans, significant Planning Act applications), the Zoom platform is proposed for electronic participation, in addition to email, telephone, mail and web site for feedback from the public. The login details to the Zoom meeting for a PIC would be provided in the notice for residents wishing to participate electronically. PICs would not be live streamed as they would not normally be recorded.

## **Procedure By-law Electronic Participation of Delegations**

The Procedure By-law currently requires persons desiring to verbally present information on matters of fact or make a request of Council to give written notice to the Clerk seven (7) days in advance of the meeting at which they wish to appear. It also allows for persons to be heard upon approval of Council, by resolution stated at the meeting.

As electronic participation in a meeting will require persons to register in advance of the meeting in order to be given the login details, amendments to the Procedure By-law are required to Schedule A to set out the procedures for electronic meetings during a declared emergency. For persons not wanting to consent to their image, voice, comments, and presentations being recorded, they are able to provide their comments in writing. The timelines for requesting to be a delegate or submit written comments would be extended to noon on the day the Agenda is published. Supplementary delegation requests or written submissions would be accepted until noon of the day of the meeting.

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, the speaking time for delegations is ten minutes (10), except that a deputation consisting of more than five persons (5) shall be limited to two (2) speakers, each limited to speaking not more than ten (10) minutes in total time.

The recommended changes to Schedule A of the Procedure By-law, as shown on [Attachment 4](#) allows the Mayor or Chair to further limit or reduce the 10-minute speaking time of a delegation, or extend the speaking time limit, as set out in the Procedure By-law at his/her discretion during the meeting.

Participation shall otherwise be in accordance with Section 14 E of the Procedure By-law and the Live Streaming Policy.

## **Consultations**

Information & Communication Services  
Planning & Building Services  
Public Works & Environmental Services

## **Financial Implications**

None. This process will be implemented using existing Town resources.

## Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
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- Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
- Ensure that Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
- Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
- Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
- Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

## Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

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Reviewed by:

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Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer

<b>Attachment Number</b>	<b>Attachment Name</b>
1	Legislative & Regulatory Background
2	Status of Town <i>Planning Act</i> & <i>Drainage Act</i> matters
3	Live Steaming Policy
4	Procedure By-law Amendment to Schedule A