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KINGSTON VILLAGE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 2024

COMMISSION:

Wayne Fowler - Chair
Mike Bishop – Vice Chair
Maggie Travis
Neil Larder
Lauren Avery

Mike McCleave – Clerk/Treasurer
Janice Knickle – Absent

PRESENTER:

Julia Merritt, CEO, Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL)

OPENING

Chair Fowler called the Regular Session meeting to order at 7:00pm.

AVRL PRESENTATION – JULIA MERRITT

- AVRL serves 110,000 people with 11 branches, and one administrative office in Kings, Annapolis and West Hants counties.
- Bookmobile was cut in 2021; they now have a borrow-by-mail service.
- "Same Page" began in 2022 which allows all materials in the 8 rural regions to be transferred back and forth to all libraries under the same computer system.
- Circulation has risen and AVRL is the busiest of the 8 rural regions. (HRM is separate).
- They have 24,000 active members and have seen increases in program attendance, walk-in traffic, circulation and computer usage.
- Highlighted funding formula – the province contributes \$1.9 million annually and the other 9 municipalities and library board contribute for a total amount of \$2.7 million.
- AVRL Kingston library costs are close to \$200,000 a year, which does not include what the Village covers.
- Staff wages are low, there is a high turnover, and libraries across the province are struggling with recruitment and retention. Library staff unionized in 2022.
- Need a new funding formula keeping up with inflation.
- Libraries built a case for support and the report has been submitted to Dept. of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and are waiting for a response.
- AVRL has achieved greater efficiencies, got rid of supper-hour closures, had to gap a lot of positions to pay for wage increases and say no to more programming because of staffing issues.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Chair asked for a review of the October 10, 2024, Regular Session meeting minutes.

Correction: Under "County/Village Meeting"

Should read "Chair Fowler and Commissioners Bishop and Larder" ...

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER LARDER AND COMMISSIONER AVERY, THAT THE COMMISSION APPROVE THE REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 10, 2024, WITH CORRECTION. MOTION CARRIED.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No update on the hemlock trees.

CONSENT TO AGENDA ITEMS

Chair asked for any additions to the agenda. Possible meeting date change and the Christmas wreath decoration contest were added to the agenda.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER TRAVIS AND COMMISSIONER LARDER THAT THE COMMISSION APPROVE THE AGENDA, WITH ADDITIONS, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – See Full Report

Chain-link Compound

Chain-link compound will be for public works items, so they don't have to be stored at the sewer treatment plant.

PUBLIC WORKS – See Full Report

Village Sign Flower Beds

Commission thanked public works for adding fall decorations to the Village signs with hay bales, pumpkins and cornstalks.

Seasonal Employee

If seasonal employee/groundskeeper Curtis Alride retires this winter, Commission would like to show their appreciation for his work and give him something for his years of service.

RECREATION – See Full Report

Splash Pad

Recreation report shows that, for a basic 10' round pad, it would be \$140,000 at 102 litres per minute, using straight water, which would only be 3¾ hours of operation per day. It would have to be dumped somewhere with environmental approval. Recycled water would need to be chlorinated and dechlorinated, which greatly increases the cost.

And without central water, it becomes challenging. Commission agreed it does not seem feasible at this time to build, operate, and maintain a splash pad.

Tennis/Pickleball Court Expansion/Resurfacing

The Village office received a letter of request with many signatures to have the tennis courts resurfaced for pickleball. The tennis courts are old and do need resurfacing at some point. Tennis is not as popular anymore but pickleball has gained popularity. One option is to turn the existing two tennis courts into three pickleball courts and build one tennis court somewhere else.

The Village Commission would like to support this project but would like to see funding support from other entities such as the county, the province, and the service clubs. This project would also be part of a bigger vision the Commission has that will involve getting a professional recreation development study/plan for that entire area, including the Steer BBQ grounds. This will be discussed further at budget time.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – See Full Report

Haunted trail needs improving going forward.

Clerk will ask Recreation staff about continuing with the Christmas wreath decorating contest. Commissioner Avery will create a flyer to distribute. Businesses will let Village Office know when they're ready and submit a picture of the wreath entry. Commission agreed to have a plaque with the name of the winner added to it each year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

2024 Steer BBQ

Update in January.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC)

N/A

Kingston Area Advisory Committee (KAAC)

N/A

Audit Committee

N/A

Soldiers Memorial Hospital (SMH) Foundation – Dr. Recruitment Committee

N/A

Association of Nova Scotia Villages (ANSV)

There will be a meeting to talk about having a paid staff.

MEETING DATE CHANGE

Commission agreed to change the monthly meeting date from the second Thursday of the month to the second Wednesday of the month.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER LARDER AND COMMISSIONER BISHOP THAT THE VILLAGE COMMISSION'S MONTHLY REGULAR SESSION MEETINGS TAKE PLACE ON THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH. MOTION CARRIED.

CLERK REPORT – See Full Report

Anti-Racism Charter

Clerk will start working on the mandated Municipal Equity and Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate plan, to be in place by April 1st, 2025.

Code of Conduct

The province is requiring that all municipal units adopt the new Code of Conduct for elected officials, which involves appointing an investigator. The Association of Municipal Administrators is developing a pre-qualified list of investigators. The Village will now be following the code of conduct in the Municipal Government Act so there is no need to keep the existing Village policy.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER BISHOP AND COMMISSIONER LARDER THAT THE VILLAGE OF KINGSTON COMMISSION REPEAL POLICY VOK-018 VOK r1 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION:

Whereas the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the Province of Nova Scotia has made the Code of Conduct for Village Elected Officials Regulations, N.S. Reg. 220/2024 ("the Regulations"); and,

Whereas villages are required to adopt the model code of conduct prescribed by the Regulations on or before December 19, 2024, pursuant to section 4(1) of the Regulations and section 408AB of the Municipal Government Act.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Commissioners of the Village of Kingston hereby adopt the model code of conduct as set forth in Schedule "A" to the Regulations, which shall be titled the "Code of Conduct for Elected Officials of Kingston".

VICE Program Update

The Villages of Kingston, New Minas, Canning and Port Williams are waiting for a response from the letter sent to the County of Kings regarding the new funding formula replacing gas tax.

Capital Projects – See Full Report

STP – UV Room Flooding/E, V, M Project

No start date yet by Mid Valley Construction.

DNR Greenspace Purchase

Easement by Paragon was never registered by the previous lawyer but it is being done now.

FINANCE REPORT – See Full Report

RECREATION/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POSITION

Commission will take time to consider position responsibilities and report back to Clerk.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Pickleball Letter

Discussed under Recreation.

AMANS Finance Sessions

Those commissioners interested in taking the course can register online.

DISCUSSIONS:

Commissioner Avery asked if the tree near the medical centre could be decorated with ornaments again this Christmas.

Commissioners are welcome to join the Santa Drive Through Kingston and help with the foodbank donations.

Commission agreed to have more on social media about the Village Commission such as pictures of events and their profiles on the website.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business to discuss, Commissioner Avery moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30pm.

COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON

CLERK/TREASURER