

Engage and Inform Committee
Meeting Notes
Wednesday, November 1, 2023

Members Present: Councillor Valerie Durston, Mayor David Mayberry and Councillor Paul Buchner.

Staff Present: Nicole Chambers and Julie Middleton.

Regrets Catherine White, Deb Riley and Jen Thomson.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Chair Valerie Durston, and a quorum was not present.

Discussion Items

Committee Membership

Committee Chair, Councillor Valerie Durston mentioned the possibility of having two individuals from Beachville join the Committee. She will reach out to them to invite them to the next meeting on a trial basis to gauge their interest. The Committee will discuss membership and recruitment at the February, 2024 meeting.

2023 Local Government Week Essay Writing Contest

The Committee discussed the essays submitted by Oxford Reformed Christian School grade 5 teacher Ms. Lisa Schuit. The Committee awarded the grand prize to Peyton, Emily and Mike tied for second place. Julie Middleton will inform Ms. Schuit of the Committee's decision and invite the winners to a future Council meeting (tentatively scheduled for November 21st) to award the winners their prizes.

Mayor David Mayberry and Valerie will conduct a tour again for this year's contest winners – the date will depend on the students' schedules (likely the first week of January 2024 or on the PD Day on February 16th, 2024). Last year the students had a half day tour followed by lunch at the Skyway Café at the Tillsonburg Airport. The Committee revised the tour agenda to replace Thames River Trail with the Township's gravel pit. It was noted that if the tour takes place in January, the Beachville Museum may be closed – we may need Councillor Way or Councillor Gillis' assistance to open the doors. Julie will update the agenda and send it to Ms. Schuit.

2023 Christmas Lights Contest

The Committee discussed this year's Christmas Lights Contest. Information will be circulated in the December SWOX Talks and Village Voice, and posted on social media and

the Township's website after Remembrance Day. The entry deadline was changed from Sunday, December 10th at midnight to noon on Monday, December 11th.

Judging will take place on Thursday, December 14th starting at 5:30 p.m. Judges will not be travelling a loop of the entire Township this year, staff will split the area into a minimum of two sections (north and south) depending upon the entries received. This year's event will not have judging categories. Judges will assign each property a score from 1-10 (to one decimal point) to ensure no ties (e.g., 7.4). Councillor Paul Buchner recommended that the judges begin by ranking the first property a 5.0 to establish a benchmark, and each property after higher or lower based on personal judgement.

Staff will put together gift bags for each property's "door prize" again this year. We have nightlights, magnet clips and Township magnets. Julie will order some additional items from Rheo Thompson.

The Committee discussed the grand prizes, they will award a maximum of four (grand, second, third and fourth). Committee members will contact local businesses such as Red Dragon Dairy, Oxford Hills, JTK Meats and Coyle's to request gift card donations of \$30-40 each for the secondary prizes. For the grand prize, the Committee will award a Nest thermostat (value of \$150+). We also have a carbon monoxide detector and smoke alarm that can be used as prizes.

The Committee will have their December meeting after judging has concluded (during pizza supper).

Meeting Schedule and Frequency

The Committee will not meet in January, the next meeting will take place on February 7th, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. to finalize details of the Winter Walk for Warmth. At the February meeting it will be evaluated whether subsequent meeting will take place in March or April.

2024 Budget

The Committee discussed the motion passed at the previous meeting regarding the 2024 budget. Clarification was requested about the \$6,000 attributed to "miscellaneous" to purchase pollinator garden seeds for the 2024 Earth Day Event, advertising and event expenses (general) and the Brownsville sharing cupboard initiative. It was noted that \$2,000 of the \$6,000 was requested to set up the sharing cupboard. These funds would be combined with any grant monies received from Catherine White's insurance company. The Committee noted that Council will have questions about the expectation of the Township's participation in the sharing cupboard initiative. The Committee and Council will require further direction regarding what is required to set up this cupboard at the hall, provided the hall board chooses to go ahead with this project.

Brownsville Community Centre "Sharing Cupboard"

An update on the sharing cupboard including the grant application will be requested at the next meeting.

2024 Volunteer Appreciation Night Brainstorming

The Committee brainstormed ideas for the 2024 Volunteer Appreciation Night. This night celebrates all volunteers on hall boards and committees. The event is tentatively scheduled for the evening of Friday, April 19th, 2024. Last year's event was well received but it was expensive due to the food and entertainment – the theme was 50's/60's with a performance by Kiley Jo Masson. The Township's Social Committee is looking for direction regarding a theme and entertainment for next year's event. Committee members suggested a speaker or trivia night as entertainment options, and requested that staff contact the hall boards for further input.

Community Connect Event

This was brought forward from the October 18th Township Council Meeting. Blandford Blenheim hosted an event on October 25th where local services were invited to share what they offer and residents were able to ask questions and learn more. David will ask Blandford Blenheim Mayor, Mark Peterson how the event went, and what criteria they set out for vendor/booth participation.

The Committee brainstormed options for how we could conduct a similar event. What services or vendors could be showcased? It was suggested that due to the size of the hall and grounds/parking lot, an event could be held in the summer/warmer months at the Mount Elgin Community Centre. The Committee discussed inviting service organizations, local businesses, artisans and food trucks and branding it as a Township Family Fun Day. It was also suggested not to charge vendors if they are local. This will be added to the next meeting agenda for further brainstorming.

Standing Items

Review of SWOX 2030 Action Item List (minutes of August 12th, 2015 meeting)

1. Social Responsibility
2. Communication
3. Active Living
4. Safety & Security

Adjournment

The Meeting concluded at 2:38 p.m.