

Engage and Inform Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 6th, 2024

Members Present: Councillor Valerie Durston, Mayor David Mayberry, Councillor Paul Buchner, Deb Riley, Jen Thomson, Marg Johnson and Tabitha Kosmal.

Staff Present: Clerk's Assistant, Records Management Co-ordinator Nicole Chambers

Regrets Clerk Julie Middleton and Catherine White.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Valerie Durston, and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

Resolution No. 1 Moved by Paul Buchner
Seconded by Jen Thomson

RESOLVED that the agenda for the March 6th, 2024 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Approval of the Minutes

Resolution No. 2 Moved by Deb Riley
Seconded by Marg Johnson

RESOLVED that the regular minutes of the February 7th, 2024 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved, as amended.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

Winter Walk for Warmth Debrief

The Committee noted the success of this year's event, and expressed appreciation to Marg and Tabitha for organizing the scavenger hunt. A total of \$310.10 was raised for Operation Sharing – a receipt will be provided for the donation. Approximately 150-200lbs of food

donations were received, which was shared between Operation Sharing and the Brownsville Sharing Cupboard. David Mayberry expressed his appreciation to JTK Meats in Verschoyle for collecting the majority of food donations received at their store. Valerie Durston thanked JTK staff in-person and brought them a card.

A suggestion was made to have laminated signage created and posted the week leading up to the Winter Walk for Warmth next year. The signs can be generic so they can be re-used (e.g., “Winter Walk for Warmth this Saturday” with an arrow to the location). A smaller laminated page can be attached with the event details for that year (time/location). The Committee decided that next year’s event will take place on Saturday, February 22nd from 2-4 p.m. at Trillium Woods in Sweaburg. It was noted to place signs at the corner of Sweaburg Road and Trillium Line. Jen Thomson may be able to bring some extra a-frame signs to display the laminated posters.

Community Service Clubs and Family Fun Day

Councillor Peter Ypma provided a written update regarding the status of the community service club/family fun day event that the Mount Elgin Hall Board expressed interest in organizing this spring/summer. He noted that they have tentatively set May 31st as the date for this event, but very little has been done as of yet.

This was discussed at the recent Mount Elgin Parks and Rec Committee meeting – they are thinking of holding the event from approximately 4-7 p.m. Local community groups such as service clubs (Lions, 4H, Engage and Inform, hall/park boards) and local businesses will be invited to attend to advertise their goods/services (e.g., farm businesses). Hot dogs will be served at 7 p.m. After the vendors take down their tables, the hall board will host a movie in the large room. Mount Elgin Parks and Rec will be supplying the hot dogs and popcorn for the movie.

Staff will prepare signage and advertising for the Committee’s table – this will be reviewed at the April Meeting. The display will include photos of activities the Committee is involved in, a newsletter sign-up sheet and information regarding how to join/participate.

Community Engagement Survey

The Committee discussed research undertaken by staff to explore options for a community engagement survey, and survey results from other Ontario municipalities who have recently embarked on a similar survey process.

It was noted that common challenges include a lack of time that individuals have to process the amount of information they are given, and that communication depends on the recipient (some want high level information, others prefer details).

Round table discussion took place regarding how members prefer to receive communication:

- David and Marg prefer hard (paper) copies.
- Tabitha finds both paper and electronic communication useful in different ways.
- Jen prefers to receive information in-person or via social media.
- Valerie enjoys hard copies – turning pages of material.
- Deb prefers both paper and electronic.

- Paul prefers in-person – online lacks context/leaves information open to interpretation (which can cause issues).

Further discussion took place regarding how individuals can feel involved and included in the decision-making process, and challenges which may arise due to setting expectations that residents' opinions will hold weight in the decision-making process. Ultimately, Council makes what they feel are the best decisions for everyone and are not typically susceptible to public opinion.

The following suggestions were made:

- More communication about high ticket budget items.
- Road signs which state the cost of the project and that it is paid for by municipal property taxes – people taking advantage of the service (using the road) will see it.
- List of road construction projects in the Village Voice and SWOX Talks – which roads are being reconstructed this year, and the estimated cost.
- Communicate information about fire trucks including the cost to purchase and their service to the community.

The Committee reviewed the survey questions asked by the Town of Innisfil. A survey with options (likely/unlikely, agree/disagree, yes/no etc.) makes it easier for individuals to complete, and for staff to interpret the data. Discussion took place regarding the most important questions the survey should ask; the following suggestions were presented:

- Do you feel like Council values your opinion?
- What is the most important information you want from South-West Oxford: Taxes/Budget, Council Meetings, By-laws, Permits (Building, Fire), other?
- How would you like to receive this information: website, social media, monthly newsletter, short weekly e-blast, village voice, magazine, other?
- How frequently would you like to receive communication from the Township: semi-annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly?
- Is there anything that prevents you from having access to information you want from the Township (barriers) e.g. internet access, language, accessibility?

Demographic questions would not be necessary for this particular survey. David suggested to include a random draw for all entries to win a \$100 gift certificate to a grocery store of your choice for the winner. Marg Johnson highlighted the importance of stating the survey's purpose.

Nicole will present a rough draft to the Committee at their next meeting. It was determined there will be no more than 5 questions. The survey will be edited, refined and presented to Council at an upcoming meeting.

Essay Contest Winners' Tour

Julie had received an email from Hilary Markus at the Oxford Reformed Christian School, they would like to schedule a date for the tour for the Essay Contest winners. David requested to leave this with him – he will work something out within the next week.

**Paul left the meeting at 2:14 p.m.*

Earth Day 2024

Nicole provided an update regarding this year's Earth Day event. The materials have been ordered, and will be stored in the empty bay at the Brownsville Fire Station. Public Works Department staff will pick up any unsold items after the event. The envelopes have been prepared for the pollinator garden seeds – they have been ordered and should ship soon. Nicole will continue to share information about this event on social media, newsletters, the website, village voice. She will also circulate the poster the libraries and post offices around the Township. Staff will include information about ActONLitter Day with the committee's poster board for the Earth Day Event.

Discussion Items

2023-2026 Strategic Plan – Committee's Strategic Priorities and Goals

Discussion took place regarding how the Committee can drive forward the Township's strategic plan:

- A Connected, Compassionate, and Engaged Community:
 - Community Engagement Survey
- A Healthy and Active Community:
 - Winter Walk for Warmth – encourage use of trails
- A Safe and Secure Community:
 - Investigate and make public more aware of incidents – Deb Riley highlighted the importance of individuals having a vested interest in their community.
 - Promote use and existence of sharing cupboard.
 - Increasing brightness of streetlights.
- A Thriving and Sustainable Community:
 - Earth Day

The Committee will continue this discussion at their next meeting.

Correspondence

SWOX Talks and Village Voice – March 2024

The Committee reviewed the monthly newsletters and Village Voice Ads.

Correspondence from Bryan Smith

It was noted that the Brownsville Sharing Cupboard does not currently accept fresh food donations, but it is the direction that Deb is hoping to move towards.

**David left the meeting at 2:48 p.m.*

Nicole will provide Deb with Bryan Smith's contact information.

New Business - None

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

Resolution No. 3 Moved by Marg Johnson
 Seconded by Deb Riley

RESOLVED that there being no further business, the Engage and Inform Committee adjourn at 2:51 p.m. to meet again on Wednesday, April 3rd, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

DISPOSITON: Motion Carried