

**Engage and Inform Committee
Meeting Minutes
for April 5, 2023**

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

Staff Present: Nicole Chambers

Regrets: Jen Thomson and Julie Middleton

Guests: Deb Riley

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: David Mayberry
Seconded by: Paul Buchner

RESOLVED that the agenda for the April 5th, 2023 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved, as amended (resignation of Dianne Deamone).

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

**Committee Member Catherine White introduced a potential new member, Deb Riley. Deb is a member of the Brownsville Hall Board and has been a resident of Brownsville for over 30 years. David Mayberry and Paul Buchner thanked Deb for attending the meeting, and David highlighted the purpose of the Committee which is to encourage residents to have a sense of belonging and to create deeper connections with each other.*

Approval of the Minutes

Resolution No. 2 Moved by: Catherine White
Seconded by: Paul Buchner

RESOLVED that the regular minutes of the February 8th, 2023 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes
Resignation of Dianne Deamone

The Committee acknowledged and accepted the resignation of Community Member Dianne Deamone who will be moving to Nova Scotia next month. Committee Chair, Valerie Durston noted that Dianne did appreciate her time serving on the Committee. The Committee requested that a letter of appreciation be sent to Dianne for her involvement and participation.

Winter Walk for Warmth

The Committee thought the weather and location were both beautiful, but the turnout was less than expected. David noted that \$226.00 was donated to Operation Sharing.

Catherine expressed some concerns with the attendance of the event. She suggested the Township should create an event on Facebook so we can gauge reach and attendance. The Committee discussed distributing a community calendar to be included in the interim tax bill mailing, which could list all events for 2024.

Catherine noted that when leaving the event, they passed a new homeless encampment near Ingersoll. She expressed that it was heartbreaking to see the individuals that we were raising awareness for.

The Committee discussed potential partnerships for the 2024 event: municipalities of Ingersoll and Tillsonburg, Salvation Army, Inter-Church groups, community groups, grocery stores, etc. They requested this event be added to the next meeting agenda to continue to flush out ideas.

Community Conversations Update

Council held three "Community Conversations" sessions on February 21, March 7 and March 21 in Mount Elgin, Beachville and Brownsville. The attendance improved over time, but Council is still looking for ideas and suggestions from other demographic groups such as young families, seniors and new residents.

David noted that the intent of Council is to have a clear message from the community as to what they expect over the next four years or longer through the strategic planning process. Council is concerned that the individuals who attended were/are not invested in the outcomes of South-West Oxford.

The Committee discussed misinformation on social media. Deb noted that if you do not have a rebuttal, and leave misinformation out there, it is accepted as truth.

At the regular Meeting of Council on April 4th, Council recommended that staff reach out to:

- Community youth: Grade 11 Class at the Oxford Reformed Christian School agreed to participate in a discussion on strategic planning;
- Community groups: 4H, the Women's Institute, Lions Clubs;
- Volunteers (via Breakfast with the Boards);
- Rural Oxford Café and the Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation.

The strategic plan online survey has been extended until April 17th, 2023. Dates and any other targeted outreach to be confirmed and scheduled by the end of April, 2023 with a summary report coming back to Council in May.

Local Art/Artists

Catherine will touch base with Trevor Pottelberg, and Valerie will reach out to Innika Rombouts. This will be added to the next meeting agenda for further discussion.

Catherine noted that she had a conversation with a small business owner in Burford (Betty, from Betty's Bed and Breakfast) and she advised Catherine that they have "Belonging Brant" which is organized by four people hired on a Trillium Grant which help pull the community together to support small businesses and community artists. They also have a collective where local businesses can donate space for local artists to display and sell their products (someone from the group mans the space to facilitate the sales). Catherine will reach out to Betty to see if she and/or other members of Belonging Brant are able to present to this Committee.

The Committee discussed hosting a local artisan market at the Mount Elgin Community Centre for South-West Oxford resident-owned businesses only in late summer/early fall. David noted that we would have room for 35, 10'x10' booths. This will be added to the next meeting agenda.

Earth Day Event

Trees have been ordered for Earth Day event at Sweaburg Park from Sommerville – it was approximately \$282 for 50 trees. Sweaburg Lions waived their \$100.00 rental fee for the pavilion. Nicole will create directional signs to be placed on the sandwich boards. The Committee reviewed the pollinator seed pricing. David will get back to Nicole regarding next steps on the pollinator seeds so they are ordered. Nicole and Valerie will bag and prepare the seeds.

Nicole meeting with Irene from Sweaburg Lions and Shawn Chambers from Public Works on Monday, April 17th at 9:30 a.m. to get further instructions, lock the structure with our padlock and key, and stock the pavilion with composters, recycling bins, etc. The Committee changed the hours of this event to start at 8:00 a.m. instead of 10:00 a.m. to align with Reuseapalooza. Nicole will give David the key and he will be present to unlock the pavilion for the 8:00 a.m. start.

The Committee discussed printing a banner for this event on the Building Department's large plotter printer. Nicole will provide Catherine with a mockup of the poster before printing.

Outdoor Movies/Licenses/Popcorn

David noted that the Oxford County Library Board has a package system now where they can book 10 movies and it works out to approximately \$180.00 each for outdoor viewings. The movie screen and popcorn maker is still available for all hall boards to rent.

Information Items and Correspondence

None.

Discussion Items

Revitalizing “Downtown Core” Areas – Article

The Committee reviewed an article that was submitted by Catherine. It touches on many cost-effective ways that communities can improve their “downtown core” areas so that they are more attractive to residents and local businesses. Valerie suggested that we put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

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

New Business

None.

Adjournment

The Engage and Inform Committee adjourned at 2:54 p.m. to meet again on Hawkins Road on Tuesday, May 9th at 1:00 p.m. for provincial Act on Litter Day.