

Public Participation Program Policy Recommendation from PAC/HAC

Council

September 26, 2023

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Background

- March 9, 2023 PAC/HAC discussed:
 - the current process for notification of Public Information Meetings;
 - ways this could be improved
- March 28, 2023 Council directed staff to explore amending the Public Participation Program Policy to include strengthened public notice of information meetings
- May 11, 2023 Information report to PAC/HAC



May 11, 2023 PAC/HAC

- Requested changes to the notification practice and staff comments on the impact of those changes on cost to applicant, timelines for applications and staff resources.
- Proposed changes discussed:
 - Increased notification distance to 1,000 ft. (300 m.) for all areas of WHRM;
 - Increased notification lead time of 14-days for mail outs, advertisement in the newspaper and signage on site;
 - Increased sized signage; and
 - Hosting the PIMs on a separate night from PAC/HAC, preferably in the community where the application is located.



Increase Notification Distance

- Current practice: 300 ft. (91.44 m.) in Windsor and Hantsport, and 500 ft. (152.4 m.) outside of those areas for any PIM or Public Hearing
- Cost to applicant is currently \$0.92 per letter
- Committee request: increase to 1,000 ft. (300 m.)
- This proposed amendment has been added to the draft Policy
- Expected to increase the number of residents notified, cost to the applicant and staff time



Increase Notification Lead Time

- Current practice: notices for PIMs in the newspaper and sent to surrounding property owners at least seven (7) days prior to any PIM
- Committee request: increase to at least 14 days prior to the meeting
- This proposed amendment has been added to the draft Policy
- Expected to increase the lead time required to schedule a PIM by one week, meaning that meeting advertisements will have to be created and sent to the newspaper one month prior to the meeting date
- No additional cost to the applicant are anticipated



Increase Signage Size

- Current practice: approximately 22 in. x 17 in. sign created by staff and posted on site
- Committee request: increase in signage size, with the suggestion of creating a template that the applicants will use to print and post on the site themselves
- Expected to increase process and cost for applicant



Increase Signage Size Cont.

Signage Cost

- Following the May PAC/HAC meeting, staff requested quotes from three separate print shops regarding signage
 - 24 in. x 36 in. sign cost an average of \$67.92 per sign
 - 48 in. x 56 in. sign cost an average of \$214.60 per sign
 - Print shops typically need a few days lead time for a sign to be made



Increase Signage Size Cont.

- Minimum signage requirement of 24 in. x 36 in. has been included in the draft Policy
- Signage to include a minimum the property address, information about the proposal and contact information for the Municipal Planning and Development Department

Public Information Meetings

- Committee discussed:
 - hosting the PIM in the Community where the subject property is located; and
 - moving the PIM to a separate night from the PAC/HAC meeting



Public Information Meetings Cont.

In the Community

- Committee discussed recording and posting the meeting online following the meeting in the community
- IT Department: the Municipality does not currently have the mobile technology to be able to record both audio and video, at a quality that the public have come to expect, from each community meeting and then upload that to the Municipal public social media location
- This type of technology would be very costly and was not budgeted for
- The best option is to host the meeting in Council Chambers if recording the meeting is important



Public Information Meetings Cont.

In the Community

- Each PIM requires a minimum of two staff members
- Every month staff typically attend the evening PAC/HAC and Council meetings and other meetings as required
- With the current influx of applications each month, staff would need to work multiple additional nights per month to be able to keep up the current pace of work if the meetings were to be held in the community where the application is located
- The more evening meetings staff work, the less time they have to work on applications, inquiries and Council projects
- Not recommended that staff host meetings in the community at this time



Public Information Meetings Cont.

On a Separate Night

- Current Public Participation Program Policy states:
 - a public meeting shall be held for any application for development agreement, amendments to a development agreement, and adoption of revised documents or amendments to the West Hants, Hantsport and Windsor Planning Documents or Land Use By-laws. This meeting is usually held immediately prior to a PAC/HAC meeting.
- Committee request: move the PIM to a separate night from the PAC/HAC meeting



Public Information Meetings Cont.

On a Separate Night Cont.

- Staff held PIMs for five (5) applications on a separate night from the PAC/HAC meeting during the months of June and July on a trial basis
- Each PIM was approximately 30-45 minutes long and an average of 7 members of the public attended
- June PAC/HAC meeting was reduced to a 2-hour meeting



Public Information Meetings Cont.

On a Separate Night Cont.

- If the Committee and Council were to require PIMs to be held on a separate night from the PAC/HAC meeting, staff would allocate one night per month as a “PIM night” and host all PIMs on that night
- This creates consistency for staff, applicants and members of the public, and ensures staff do not get burnt out with an influx of evening meetings
- No changes have been proposed in the draft Policy in relation to PIM location and date



Policy Amendments

- The draft amendments to the Public Participation Program Policy:
 - increase the notification distance of mail letters to 1,000 ft. (300 m.);
 - increase the notification time to at least 14 days prior to the meeting; and
 - specify signage requirements.

Financial Implications

- The PPP Policy:
 - “Any fees related to any action required by the Public Participation Program Policy will be established by policy of Council.”
- WHRM Fees Policy Land Use By-law or development agreement application:
 - \$1,600 which includes a \$500.00 processing fee and \$1100.00 deposit for direct costs such as notice



Financial Implications Cont.

- Proposed changes to the PPP Policy have financial implications to the applicant and to the Municipality
 - Increasing the distance for notification by mail will increase the fees charged to the applicant and requiring the applicant to print and post the signage on site will be an additional cost
 - Moving PIMs to a separate night from PAC/HAC would increase the cost to the Municipality in relation to staff time for meetings and meal allowances



Process

Staff Review



PAC/HAC Review and Recommendation – Sept 14



Seven (7) days notice to Council by email – Sept 15



Council Consideration and Decision – Sept 26



Proposed Recommendation

...that Council approves the Public Participation Program Policy in a manner substantively the same as attachment A to the July 13, 2023 report File 23-08B “Public Participation Program Policy”.





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