WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Council Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.
Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS
And virtually via Zoom (also YouTube Livestreamed)

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1. **As Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Attendance**

Council:

Abraham Zebian, Mayor	Debbie Francis, Deputy Mayor, Dist. 5
Rupert Jannasch, Councillor, District 1	Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor, District 7
Scott McLean, Councillor, District 2	Paul Morton, Councillor, District 8
Chrystal Remme, Councillor, District 3	John Smith, Councillor, District 9
Paul Wheadon, Councillor, District 4	Bonnie Smith, Councillor, District 10
Bob Morton, Councillor, District 6	Jim Ivey, Councillor, District 11

Staff:

Todd Richard, Dir. Public Works Acting CAO	Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk
Kari Fougere, Acting Dir. Planning & Development	Carlee Rochon, Dir. Finance
Alex Dunphy, Senior Planner	Will Hong, Planner

Regrets:

Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer	Kathy Kehoe, Dir. Community Dev.

Presenter and Gallery:
33 members of the public
Chrystal Fuller, Brighter Community Planning and Consulting
2 representatives from JD Irving

3. **Announcements** (6:01 p.m.)

West Hants Regional Municipality is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This land is governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. West Hants Regional Municipality recognizes we are all treaty people and have responsibilities to this land and each other. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose history, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Council and I as Chair are committed to ensuring this meeting and its participants conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner as outlined in the municipality's Municipal Code of Conduct. Meeting presenters, staff and the public are expected to conduct themselves in an equally respectful manner at all times the meeting is being conducted. I thank you all in advance for your commitment to these important meeting principles.

Prior to the meeting beginning, safety and fire alarm protocols were reviewed.

Attendees were reminded not to record the meeting out of respect for individuals in the gallery, as the proceedings were already being livestreamed on YouTube and publicly accessible.

Emergency/safety protocols were reviewed.

4. **Approval of the Agenda including additions or deletions** (6:04 p.m.)
As no changes/additions were proposed, the agenda was approved as presented.

5. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest** (6:04 p.m.)
Councillor B. Smith declared conflict on Item 16 (b)(ii) as she sits on the Board of Directors.

6. **Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes** (6:04 p.m.)
a) 2025-12-09 Council Meeting Minutes
The minutes were approved as presented.

7. **Public Hearings** (6:05 p.m.)
Public Hearings and Second Readings (Second reading was held immediately following Public Hearing)
a) Rezoning: PIDs 45055282, 45439098 and 45190386, Wentworth Rd, Windsor and Development Agreement - Planner Hong and Planner Dunphy (6:05 pm)
The meeting moved into Public Hearing at 6:05 pm. Further information on the Public Hearing was available in the 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS THAT COUNCIL MOVE INTO PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:05 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

At 6:35 p.m. the Public Hearing concluded, and the regular Council meeting resumed.

8. **Second Readings** (as it pertains to Public Hearings)
a) Rezoning: PIDs 45055282, 45439098 and 45190386, Wentworth Rd, Windsor and Development Agreement - Planner Hong and Planner Dunphy (6:39 pm)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL GIVES SECOND READING AND APPROVES AMENDING THE GENERALIZED FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF THE WINDSOR MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY TO INCLUDE PIDS 45439098 AND 45190386 IN THE COMMERCIAL DESIGNATION AS SHOWN IN THE REPORT #25-11/12 TO THE PLANNING AND HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2025. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR WHEADON THAT COUNCIL GIVES SECOND READING AND APPROVES AMENDING THE ZONING MAP OF THE WINDSOR LAND USE BY-LAW TO REZONE PID 45439098 FROM A SPLIT ZONE OF WENTWORTH ROAD COMMERCIAL (WR-C) AND AGRICULTURE (AG) TO WENTWORTH ROAD COMMERCIAL (WR-C) ENTIRELY, AND REZONING PID 45190386 FROM AGRICULTURE (AG) TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-2) AND AMENDING THE SCHEDULE B OF THE WINDSOR LAND USE BY-LAW TO ADJUST THE WENTWORTH ROAD GATEWAY DISTRICT BOUNDARY AS SHOWN IN THE REPORT #25-11/12 TO THE PLANNING AND HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2025. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL GIVES SECOND READING AND APPROVES ENTERING INTO A DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT TO ALLOW A LARGE-FORMAT RETAIL STORE AND SEVERAL SMALLER RETAIL STORES ON COLE DRIVE (PIDS 45439098, 45190386 & 45055282) IN WINDSOR BY DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT, WHICH IS SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS THE DRAFT SET OUT IN ATTACHMENT B OF THE REPORT FILE #25-07 TO THE PLANNING AND HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2025. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL REQUIRES THAT THE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH J. D. IRVING, LIMITED WHICH PERMITS A LARGE-FORMAT RETAIL STORE AND SEVERAL SMALLER RETAIL STORES ON COLE DRIVE (PIDS 45439098, 45190386 & 45055282) IN WINDSOR BE SIGNED WITHIN 120 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF FINAL APPROVAL BY COUNCIL OR THE DATE THAT ANY APPEALS HAVE BEEN DISPOSED OF; OTHERWISE THIS APPROVAL WILL BE VOID AND OBLIGATIONS ARISING HEREUNDER SHALL BE AT AN END. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE NECESSARY LAND TRANSFER OF A PORTION OF PID 45055282 TO THE OWNER AND A PORTION OF PID 45439098 TO THE MUNICIPALITY, AS WELL AS AN EASEMENT ACROSS A PORTION OF PID 45055282 IN FAVOUR OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND TWO EASEMENTS ACROSS PID 45439098 IN FAVOUR OF THE MUNICIPALITY, AS PART OF THIS DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT. MOTION CARRIED

7. **Public Hearings** (6:49 p.m.)

Public Hearings and Second Readings (Second reading was held immediately following Public Hearing)

b) Rezoning PID 45038510, Highway 14, Windsor Forks (6:49 p.m.)

The meeting moved into Public Hearing at 6:49 pm. Further information on the Public Hearing was available in the 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS IVEY AND J. SMITH THAT COUNCIL MOVE INTO PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:49 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

At 6:56 p.m. the Public Hearing concluded, and the regular Council meeting resumed.

8. **Second Readings** (as it pertains to Public Hearings)

b) Rezoning PID 45038510, Highway 14, Windsor Forks (6:56 pm)

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS WHEADON AND LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL GIVES SECOND READING AND APPROVES AMENDING SCHEDULE A OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW TO REZONE PID 45038510 ON HIGHWAY 14 IN WINDSOR FORKS FROM THE RURAL COMMERCIAL (RC) ZONE TO THE GENERAL RESOURCE (GR) ZONE AS SHOWN IN THE

REPORT #25-21 TO THE PLANNING AND HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2025. MOTION CARRIED

7. **Public Hearings** (6:58 p.m.)

Public Hearings and Second Readings (Second reading was held immediately following Public Hearing)

c) Rezoning 5988 Highway 215, Kempt Shore (6:58 pm)

The meeting moved into Public Hearing at 6:58 pm. Further information on the Public Hearing was available in the 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND J. SMITH THAT COUNCIL MOVE INTO PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:58 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

At 7:03 p.m. the Public Hearing concluded, and the regular Council meeting resumed.

8. **Second Readings** (as it pertains to Public Hearings)

c) Rezoning 5988 Highway 215, Kempt Shore (7:03 pm)

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL GIVES SECOND READING AND APPROVES AMENDING SCHEDULE A OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW TO REZONE PID 45179462 AT 5988 HIGHWAY 215 IN KEMPT SHORE FROM RURAL COMMERCIAL (RC) TO GENERAL RESOURCE (GR) ZONE AS SHOWN IN THE REPORT #25-22 TO THE PLANNING AND HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2025. MOTION CARRIED

9. **Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee Excerpts** (First Reading) (7:05 p.m.)

a) LUB Amendments: 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112)

Planner Hong presented the report outlining an application was received on November 7, 2025, to rezone 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112) from General Commercial to Highway Commercial and amend the West Hants Land Use By-law to allow the relocation and expansion of Big Fur Grooming to include pet boarding, despite not meeting the required 300-foot separation distance from dwellings. The Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed the proposal on January 8, 2025, and discussed regulatory constraints, policy limitations, public concerns, and interpretation of key by-law terms, including “adjacent” dwellings. While PAC/HAC supported a site-specific amendment allowing the separation distance to be waived with written permission from all dwellings within 300 feet, staff recommended a more refined site-specific approach requiring permission only from the directly abutting dwelling to better reflect the original intent and minimize broader municipal impacts.

Discussion Points:

- The Development Officer and Manager of Development Control did a case review and further analysis of how the definition of adjacent was historically applied to in the West Hants Land Use Bylaw and it was determined that adjacent actually applied to all nearby dwellings instead of the one dwelling abutting the property or sharing the property boundary line.

- Rezoning itself was not the issue**;** concerns focused on the use of the kennel and compliance with development standards, specifically the setback and separation distances.
- Although kennels require a 50-ft side yard setback in both Agricultural and Highway Commercial zones; it was concluded the proposal could meet setback requirements through the permitting and variance process, as no new buildings are proposed (only fencing).
- A letter of support from an abutting property owner was received to waive the required 300-ft separation distance; this letter is required at permitting, not rezoning.
- Once granted, the permission would be grandfathered and remain valid even if adjacent properties change ownership.
- Concerns about precedent were addressed; all applications are reviewed case by case, and this would not set a binding precedent.
- Two approaches were considered: the staff recommendation (letter required from one abutting property owner only) and the PACHAC recommendation (letters required from all six adjacent property owners, consistent with the broader definition of adjacent).
- All nearby property owners were notified and had the opportunity to comment; with only one letter received, which was in support of the application.
- The site was within a commercially active, high-noise corridor (highways and existing businesses), and the proposed use aligned with the historical animal-related use of the property.
- Concerns were raised about compatibility with a nearby dental office, and the suitability of the structure relate to permitting and site design, not the rezoning decision.
- The noticed provided to the public identified that a kennel was proposed.
- It was noted this was the first part (First Reading) of a two-part process (Public Hearing and Second Reading). There would be another opportunity to provide further input during the Public Hearing.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND B. MORTON THAT COUNCIL GIVES FIRST READING AND HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE MAPS OF SCHEDULE A OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW TO REZONE THE LOT AS IDENTIFIED AS PID 45242112 FROM GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GC) TO HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL (HC) ZONE AND AMENDING SECTION 5.20 OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW IN A MANNER SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS THE DRAFT SET OUT IN APPENDIX A OF THE COUNCIL REPORT #25-24A DATED JANUARY 27, 2026. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch and Ivey

10. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions - None

11. Mayor's Report (7:44 p.m.)
A written report was included in the agenda package.

12. Committee(s) of Council Excerpts/Recommendations
a) Committee of the Whole Excerpts (January 13, 2026)

i. 2024-25 HMCC Financial Statements (7:45 p.m.)

Discussion Points:

- The majority of payments have already been received, with the final quarter typically representing a minor amount.
- Holdbacks were already accounted for in prior years' financials.
- There was no connection between the reported surplus and the holdback amounts

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL ACCEPTS THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PROVIDED BY HANTSPORT MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE (HMCC) AND THAT ANY 2024-25 HOLDBACKS AND ELIGIBLE 2024-25 AREA RATE PAYMENTS BE RELEASED TO HMCC FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING SERVICES DEFINED IN THE 2025-26 BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED.

ii. Appointment of Development Officers (7:47 p.m.)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR J. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPOINT WILLIAM OVERHOLT AND DEREK ROBERTSON AS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 28TH, 2026 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 243 OF THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT. MOTION CARRIED.

iii. Mill Lakes Diversion Pipe Tender Award (7:48 p.m.)

Discussion Points:

- The project was not a workaround, but a risk-management solution designed to avoid disturbing the existing earth dam, where excavation could introduce structural and safety concerns. Rather than repairing the dam itself, the approach involved installing a new diversion pipe and control structure around the dam, with the intake positioned lower than the current one to allow increased water withdrawal and better control during low lake levels. While it did not fully resolve drought-related challenges, it improved short-term water reliability and was supported by contingency measures and longer-term planning, including the potential future raising of the earth dam and other perimeter dams to address growing water needs.
- Confidence was expressed by staff that the project would remain within the proposed budget. The contingency was in place in case it was needed.
- Questions were raised regarding in-house completion of the work. While WHRM has the capability, resource limitations, including equipment availability made this impractical due to a heavy project workload and delayed maintenance activities.
- Questions were raised regarding the use of local contractors (Windsor/West Hants) versus contractors from outside the area. For procurement purposes, "local" was defined as all of Nova Scotia in accordance with municipal and provincial trade agreements, which municipalities are required to follow. Consulting services were awarded through a competitive RFP process using weighted evaluation criteria, while construction tenders were awarded to the lowest compliant bidder to ensure fairness and objectivity.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE AWARD OF TENDER WHRMPW25-14 — MILL LAKES DIVERSION PIPE — TO GARY PARKER EXCAVATING LTD. FOR THE TENDERED PRICE OF $347,599.60 BEFORE APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION DEFEATED. Nays: McLean, Wheadon, Francis, B. Morton, Leary-Pinch, P. Morton, J. Smith and Zebian

The second motion was not made as the previous motion was defeated.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL REQUEST A REPORT FROM STAFF ON DOING THE MILL LAKES PIPE DIVERSION INHOUSE FOR FEBRUARY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Remme and Ivey

A break occurred at 8:00 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:17 p.m.

iv. Payzant Drive and King Street Upgrades Tender Award (8:17 p.m.)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE AWARD OF TENDER WHRMPW25-15 — PAYZANT DRIVE AND KING STREET UPGRADES — TO ITS CONSTRUCTION INC. FOR THE TENDERED PRICE OF $4,272,564.00 BEFORE APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch, Leary-Pinch, P. Morton and Zebian

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE ENGINEERING SERVICES TO DESIGNPOINT ENGINEERING & SURVEYING LTD. FOR THE TOTAL PRICE OF $91,524.00 BEFORE APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch and P. Morton

A request was made to improve project reporting by clearly indicating whether contingency funds were utilized. This level of transparency promotes accountability, and any unspent funds could be redirected to other projects or initiatives within the community.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVE A CONSTRUCTION CONTINGENCY AMOUNT OF $654,613.20 BEFORE APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch, McLean, P. Morton and Ivey

v. Region 6 2026-27 Budget Approval (8:25 p.m.)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR PAUL MORTON THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE REGION 6 INTERMUNICIPAL COMMITTEE BUDGET OF $834,248 WITH $147,885 DUE FROM THE REGION 6 MUNICIPAL UNITS AND THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY PORTION AS $31,258.41 DUE IN QUARTERLY PAYMENTS. MOTION CARRIED.

vi. Tendering Timeline — Rand Street Services and Street Renewal (8:25 p.m.)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE RAND STREET SERVICES AND STREET RENEWAL PROJECT BE TENDERED IN JANUARY 2026, WITH THE INTENT OF BRINGING A CONTRACT AWARD RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 24, 2026. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Ivey and McLean

vii. Valley Regional Enterprise Network (VREN) Marketing Levy (8:26 p.m.)

<u>Discussion Points:</u>

- Comments from the Flying Apron were discussed with opposition to the marketing levy noted primarily from short-term rental owners. However, the Veldens' submission highlighted that the issue was broader. Based on their experience in tourism, they expressed concern that a 3% levy would negatively impact their business and be poorly received by customers. It was felt that targeting accommodation owners alone was unfair, as many other businesses benefit from tourism, and that alternative approaches should be explored. Concerns were also raised about the added cost and bureaucracy of the levy, unclear benefits to operators already contributing through taxes and fees, and the lack of clarity around accountability and oversight.
- Through conversations with short-term rental owners, West Hants STR's expressed they felt their voice was not included in the survey and they did not have an opportunity to provide feedback. As short-term rentals represent the largest accommodation sector in the region outside of the Super 8, it was felt to be important to gather their perspectives, address questions and concerns, and obtain more area-specific information to support informed decision-making.
- Similar concerns raised by the Velden's have also been expressed by other short-term rental (STR) owners. Key issues included the lack of clarity around performance tracking and the ability to demonstrate tangible results from marketing efforts, particularly for properties located in off-the-beaten-path areas that require more than standard promotional campaigns to attract visitors. There was uncertainty around the extent of STR owner consultation during the Valley REN process, and growing frustration that the STAR program has been in place for some time without clearly delivering measurable outcomes. While proposed fees for vacation rentals could reach up to 10%, comparisons were drawn to platforms like Airbnb, which charge higher fees but provide significantly more services and proven booking results contributing to their growth and subsequent regulation. Any marketing fee charged to accommodation providers must be justified by demonstrable increases in bookings. Ultimately, for the program to be viable, it must deliver clear, equitable, and measurable benefits to all participating STR owners.
- While there was initial support for the initiative based on the belief that a 3% levy would primarily affect corporate travel, it became clear that in West Hants the impact would fall mainly on short-term rental (STR) owners. Concerns were also raised about whether local marketing efforts could match the reach and effectiveness of major platforms like Airbnb and VRBO. As a result, it was suggested that the initiative be paused to allow for further consultation with STR owners, who would bear the majority of the levy's impact.

- Appreciation was expressed for the concerns and feedback received. It was clarified that the motion sought agreement in principle only and was conditional on participation from all municipalities. At this stage, it did not implement any levy but aimed to secure West Hants a seat at the table to ensure local concerns could be raised and addressed during regional discussions. The initiative was framed as benefiting broader regional tourism including museums and smaller attractions across West Hants not solely accommodation providers. Accepting the motion in principle was seen as a necessary step to participate meaningfully in ongoing discussions.
- Feedback from short-term rental owners indicated that the proposed initiative would create additional administrative burden and costs that they neither requested nor needed. As it would be imposed without their support, it was viewed as unfair.
- Tourism Nova Scotia's Davey and Sky campaign was seen as very effective, highlighting diverse locations across the Valley and reflecting strong provincial tourism leadership. Rather than increasing costs for tourists, there may be an opportunity to request provincial support or reinvestment from existing Short-Term Rental (STR) fees into local promotion. It was also emphasized that STRs are not the cause of the housing issue, which was characterized as an affordability crisis.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR REMME THAT COUNCIL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MARKETING LEVY IN PRINCIPLE, PENDING SUPPORT FROM OTHER MUNICIPAL UNITS. MOTION DEFEATED. Nays: Zebian, Francis, Ivey, B. Smith, J. Smith. P. Morton, Leary-Pinch, B. Morton, Wheadon and Jannasch

b) Diverse Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee Excerpt (January 8, 2026)

i. Request for Review and Proposed Amendments to the Peace and Good Order Bylaw RCOPG-001 (January 8, 2026)

The proposed Peace and Good Order Bylaw has been extensively reviewed by the Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee, with ongoing concerns about its potential to disproportionately impact marginalized residents, particularly people experiencing homelessness or mental illness. Following Council direction, the Committee reviewed the draft bylaw in January 2026 and identified issues related to vague language, broad prohibitions, and enforcement practices that could lead to unintended or inequitable outcomes, including concerns about policing behaviour in private residences. The Committee recommended amendments to improve clarity, remove unnecessary or duplicative provisions, and align definitions with existing legal standards. Key recommendations included refining language around loitering, strengthening consistency in prohibitions and interpretations, and adopting a proportional, restorative approach to penalties and enforcement. The Committee also proposed clearer exemptions for legitimate agricultural activities and the addition of a guiding principle affirming that the bylaw is not intended to punish mental illness, homelessness, or lawful assembly. Overall, the recommended amendments aim to strengthen the bylaw by enhancing clarity, fairness, and consistency, while reducing the risk of disproportionate impacts. The changes are intended to build public trust, support equitable enforcement, complement existing legislation, and balance community safety with compassion, accountability, and respect for individual rights.

Discussion Points:

- Imprisonment was not considered a viable enforcement option, as it did not align with the RCMP's mandate; unpaid fines may proceed through the court system, which supported the inclusion of a restorative-justice-style approach in the proposed by-law.
- Appreciation was expressed for the group's work in reviewing and revising the by-law, including updating language through a DEI lens and consulting with the RCMP, resulting in a document suitable for meaningful public discussion.
- Concerns were raised regarding the by-law's purpose and enforceability, particularly the lack of clear definitions or measurable standards for excessive or unnecessary noise.
- It was clarified that the original Peace and Good Order By-law was not intended to target specific individuals, but to foster a welcoming community and promote good citizenship.
- Overall, the proposed revisions were viewed positively and seen as strengthening the by-law.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND J. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE PEACE AND GOOD ORDER BYLAW RCOPG-001 AS PRESENTED IN ATTACHMENT A OF THE REPORT PRESENTED AT THE JANUARY 27, 2026 COUNCIL MEETING AND DIRECT STAFF TO IMPLEMENT THE CHANGES TO THE DRAFT BYLAW FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 24, 2026. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Wheadon

13. Councillor(s) Municipal Business/Activity Reports

Written reports were included in the agenda package.

14. Councillor(s) Municipal Advisory Board Activity Reports – None

15. New Business

a) Rural Playground Request for Information and Consideration in the 2026/27 Budget Deliberations (8:58 p.m.)

Councillor Leary-Pinch reviewed the report noting that Vaughan was a growing rural community with a strong sense of identity and active community involvement; however, it lacks a centrally located, accessible playground for local families. Establishing a dedicated play space would address a clear service gap by supporting child development, outdoor activity, and social connection, while strengthening community cohesion. A centrally located playground, ideally co-located with an existing community facility such as the community hall, would maximize safety, visibility, and land-use efficiency, while reinforcing the site as a community gathering hub. Building on demonstrated demand for accessible recreation and leveraging partnership-based delivery models would ensure long-term sustainability, community ownership, and lasting benefits for Vaughan families.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF POTENTIAL PLAYGROUND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE VAUGHAN AREA AND REPORT BACK TO COUNCIL WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL LOCATIONS WITHIN VAUGHAN FOR THE INSTALLATION OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, AN OVERVIEW OF OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTNER WITH EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS, INCLUDING A COMMUNITY HALLS OR ADJACENT MUNICIPALLY OWNED OR COMMUNITY-MANAGED LANDS AND PRELIMINARY OPTIONS AND HIGH-LEVEL COST CONSIDERATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INSTALLATION OF NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES AND POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRANTS THROUGH RECREATION NOVA SCOTIA AND ACCESSIBILITY NOVA SCOTIA BY MAY 2026 TO COINCIDE WITH THE UPCOMING NEEDS ASSESSMENT. MOTION CARRIED

16. Correspondence (9:03 p.m.)

a) General Correspondence Received Activity Log (as of January 23, 2026)
   i. Rick Smith Re Revisions to My Email Regarding the West Hants Water Updates
   ii. Tricia Slobogian-Sanford Re Marketing Levy Concerns Valley REN Presentation on 1.13.26

b) Requests (as of January 23, 2026)
   i. Matthew 25 & Windsor District Food Bank Re Request for Additional Funding – Operational Costs for Extended Term (April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027)
   ii. Leslie Porter - Caremongers Re Request to Extend Funding for Warming Center

As the Caremongers request to extend funding for Warming Center was time sensitive, the floor was opened up for discussion. Councillor B. Smith declared conflict and left the meeting at 9:04 p.m.

<u>Discussion Points:</u>

- Concerns were raised about whether the inability to obtain provincially required insurance would prevent the organization from applying for it in future years, potentially making provincial funding unavailable or place the organization in a position that limited its future eligibility for provincial funding. Provincial funding or insurance requirements, fall outside municipal jurisdiction.
- It was felt an update from staff was needed before further discussion could proceed. While it was understood that discussions regarding insurance were ongoing, clarification was required on the current status of insurance coverage, including who was presently providing coverage for Caremongers and where the insurance and application process stood. There was also a request for confirmation that the organization would continue to pursue provincial requirements to remain eligible for grant funding, with the goal of ensuring that future operation of the warming centre would not become a fully municipal responsibility. Confirmation was sought that work toward meeting these requirements was ongoing.

- It was understood that the CAO was engaged in detailed discussions with the province on this matter. While updates had been shared with the CAO and information was being exchanged, the volume and back-and-forth nature of the discussions made it unclear where matters currently stood. It was noted that compiling all relevant information into a formal report would provide clarity and support informed decision-making, given the potential implications. Additional information (accountability) was required before a decision could be made regarding the extension of this funding.
- The MLA had advised that the Province remains open to working with the organization.
- Since the matter involved correspondence and past practice has been to request a report, it was considered beneficial to have a report presented with an update to support an informed decision. Given the time-sensitive nature of the issue, a Special Council meeting could be scheduled to address it.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL DEFER THE MATTER UNTIL CAO RETURNS WITH AN UPDATE AND REPORT AND IF A SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING IS NEEDED, ONE CAN BE CALLED.

Discussion Points:

- It was understood that this was the same $20,000 in funding that had been approved prior to Christmas, and the organization was seeking permission to continue using the remaining funds. The request was considered reasonable, as no additional funding was being requested.
- Information was shared that the Province was eager to support this initiative and has been very cooperative. It was emphasized that clarity and accountability are essential to ensure an informed decision can be made.
- It was suggested that if the initiative was to continue receiving municipal funding without provincial support, a formal funding agreement, similar to those used with other not-for-profit organizations, should be established to ensure accountability.
- Discussions returned to the topic of insurance, focusing on the rationale for requiring coverage.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS REMME AND DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA AT 9:20 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS B. MORTON AND MCLEAN THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN-CAMERA AT 9:44 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

Discussion Points:

- It was felt that it was important to have a funding agreement in place to ensure accountability.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND JANNASCH THAT COUNCIL AMEND THE MOTION TO INCLUDE THAT THE FUNDING CAN BE USED UNTIL A SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING IS CALLED TO ALLOW A DECISION TO BE MADE. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Remme, Francis and Zebian

Full motion as amended:

> **MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL DEFER THE MATTER UNTIL CAO RETURNS WITH AN UPDATE AND REPORT AND THE FUNDING CAN BE USED UNTIL A SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING IS CALLED TO ALLOW A DECISION TO BE MADE. MOTION CARRIED.** Nays: Remme, Francis and Zebian

c) Outgoing Correspondence Log (as of January 23, 2026) – None

17. In-Camera – None

18. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m. The next meeting will be the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 10, 2026, at 6 p.m.

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Mayor Zebian (Chair) Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk