

Engage and Inform Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024

Members Present: Councillor Valerie Durston, Mayor David Mayberry, Deb Riley, Tabitha Kosmal and Catherine White (virtual – via Zoom).

Staff Present: Clerk Julie Middleton and Clerk’s Assistant, Records Management Co-ordinator Nicole Chambers

Regrets Councillor Paul Buchner, Jen Thomson and Marg Johnson

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 Tabitha Kosmal

RESOLVED that the agenda for the October 2nd, 2024 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Approval of the Minutes

Resolution No. 2 Moved by Deb Riley
Seconded by Tabitha Kosmal

RESOLVED that the regular minutes of the June 5th, 2024 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

Local Government Week

Julie Middleton contacted Sarah Kenter from the Oxford Reformed Christian School; they will not be offering a civics course for the 2024/2025 school year. She will touch base with them again in the spring to assess interest.

The 2024 Essay Writing contest closes on Friday, October 18. Nicole Chambers distributed flyers to schools with South-West Oxford residents on September 10 and contacted the local homeschool association. So far, staff have only received essays from the Oxford Reformed Christian School. Acting Fire Chief Paul Groeneveld suggested that next year, the Fire Department could offer a prize of a ride to school in a fire truck (with a parent following).

Discussion focused on increasing participation and engaging more residents. Julie will speak with the County Clerks about co-sponsoring the contest next year, while David Mayberry will discuss it with the mayors of the area municipalities. If we had one or more municipality co-sponsor, we could shift the essay question to focus on improving local government or the community in general, rather than the Township specifically. Catherine White emphasized that the goal is to get students involved in local government. The Committee agreed that they were willing to give this a chance, knowing there may be a large influx of essays to go through if they proceeded this route.

Additional consideration was given to offering the fire truck ride as a prize. It was noted that students could be offered a ride in a fire truck from the Mount Elgin Fire Station to the Tillsonburg Airport – where they would then have lunch. Julie will connect with Acting Fire Chief Groeneveld to find out if there were any additional legal requirements (i.e., insurance). Valerie mentioned that we need to inform the Airport in advance.

Prizes were also discussed. The grand prize will be a \$100 Amazon gift card, with other suggestions including an Instax camera, wireless headphones, STEM solar robots/vehicles, and a mini basketball hoop. Staff will order prizes.

Christmas Lights Contest

Discussion took place regarding finalizing details for the 2024 Christmas Lights Contest. Staff presented examples of other municipalities' contests across Canada for consideration.

It was noted that different communities in the Township (e.g., Beachville, Sweaburg, Verschoyle) have been trying to organize their own street/village displays. Nicole will reach out to the organizers of these events to ask them to spread the word about our contest.

The following details were finalized for the 2024 contest:

- Modify entry form to request a picture with each submission.
- Committee will judge using pictures submitted.
- Staff will create a map of a tour around the Township to view the submissions (without names and addresses).
- Judging will take place on December 12th at 4:00 p.m.
- Contest closes on December 11th at 5:00 p.m.
- Committee members will drop off prizes on their way home.
- Staff will pick up pizza.

Committee members expressed support for returning to judging using categories. Category examples: traditional, “Griswold” and most original.

Township-Wide Community Event

The Committee discussed the organization of a township-wide community event with local vendors, service organizations, etc. The Mount Elgin Hall Board is pausing this event for 2025 but may re-consider for 2026.

Deb Riley suggested the event be marketed as a country market – which could encompass food, farm, artisan and locally-made products. Vendors would each receive a 10x10 space. This would be limited to local businesses within South-West Oxford. We could also host service providers who could provide resources for the community.

This event will take place on Saturday, May 31st at the Mount Elgin Community Centre from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – staff will tentatively book the hall. The event would have both indoor and outdoor space for vendors – inside will be first-come first-serve. Nicole will reach out to members of the Mount Elgin community regarding the date of their village-wide yard sale.

At the next meeting, all members are to bring a list of groups and businesses that we should reach out to.

Nicole will connect with Kim Grawburg to request a copy of her craft show site plan for the Mount Elgin and Brownsville Community Centres. Deb noted to make sure that vendors are aware if they are outdoors, they will need to provide their own power source/generator.

Township Community Consultation Survey

We have launched our 2024 Community Consultation Survey – closes October 31st. We have shared this across our communication channels. Staff will share this information in the local Facebook groups as well.

Correspondence

SWOX Talks and Village Voice

The Committee reviewed the monthly newsletters and Village Voice ads for July, August and September, 2024.

Act On Litter – Certificate of Participation (For Information)

David Mayberry requested that Committee Chair Valerie Durston send a letter to the province to request that they move this event up – as grass and other greenery has often grown too high in the ditches by May which makes collecting litter difficult.

A reminder was provided that spouses and other members of the public are unable to participate – we cannot advertise or promote this event. Appointed Committee Members (by-law) are covered under the Township’s insurance but anyone else is not. This event will

