



The Village of
PORT CLEMENTS
"Gateway to the Wilderness"

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7:00 PM, Monday, April 3, 2023
Committee of the Whole

AGENDA

1. ADOPT AGENDA

2. REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

D-1-Tourism and Beautification Infrastructure Improvement

Consideration: - *Role of the Vibrant Community Commission in tourism & beautification*



REPORT TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Author: Elizabeth Cumming, Deputy CAO
Date: April 3, 2023
RE: Vibrant Community Commission Role with Tourism & Beautification

BACKGROUND:

Prior to 2020, the Village of Port Clements had a Tourism Advisory Committee that was a standing committee that had the purpose, as set in its bylaw, to research and make recommendations to Council on all matters relating to tourism development as the Village was interested in promoting, expanding, and enhancing tourism development within the Village. The committee went effectively defunct by 2019, and though there were many factors, a particular point brought up in its dissolution was the struggle with the limitations of a committee as an advisory body to Council, compliance and misunderstanding with that limited function, and the view it should have expanded abilities and capacity to undertake initiatives. Council determined that a commission that could undertake activities and initiatives would be a better suited structure and means of capacity for realizing tourism-related ideas and projects. Early in 2020 Council passed a bylaw creating the Vibrant Community Commission, though it did not become assembled and active until the later half of 2020 due to the unfortunate coinciding of the COVID-19 pandemic and its significant impacts, especially on tourism.

DISCUSSION:

The fundamental purpose of the Vibrant Community Commission is supervisory responsibility to organize and oversee all matters which relate to tourism which will collaborate on economic development, and to promote, expand, enhance, and revitalize these opportunities and conditions in the Village of Port Clements. The caveat to the power they have been given to conduct any form of tourism in the Village on behalf of the Village, is that their activities must be included and approved by Council in their annual workplan, so they cannot undertake any activities that are not included in their approved annual workplan. Otherwise, however, Council has delegated that supervisory responsibility to the Commission.

As such, ideas or matters relating to tourism and economic development should go through the Vibrant Community Commission, especially if they relate to undertaking activities that relate to tourism as it was intended that the function of the Vibrant Community Commission would be the vehicle for these ideas and matters to go through on Council's behalf. Per its bylaw, the Vibrant Community Commission is required to hold a public commission meeting every two months, for a minimum of 6 meetings per year. If the Committee of the Whole meeting results in recommendations for tourism related activities, those recommendations should be made to Council (to go to their next regular council meeting), and then Council could recommend them to the Vibrant Community Commission to be discussed at their next commission meeting as that is the place that Council has delegated the supervisory responsibility for tourism related initiatives in the Village.

To a degree this applies to tourism-related infrastructure as well, though Council has not expressly delegated this function to the commission, so it retains its own direct authority on the topic of infrastructure, the same as with service provision (ex. operations of the campground). However, the Commission has had a strong role in this topic as the avenue that proposes tourism-related infrastructure projects and consulting, supporting and being involved with the realization of such projects. For example, the Vibrant Community Commission identified and supported the idea of a Swimming Hole to be developed at the beginning of Sunset Park, where residents had informally utilized for swimming activities (residents had brought it to their attention). The commission spearheaded conceptualizing the project, getting Council approval for said project (as part of two larger projects, the Sunset Park Revitalization and the Tourism Advocate projects), and then working with the grant writer and staff to develop the grant applications. After the grant was approved though, as a village infrastructure project and strategic priority, the undertaking of the project itself was involved staff and a contracted project manager (though it was initially intended that a hired tourist advocate position that would undertake this work), with the Commission remaining heavily involved in supporting, organizing, assisting, and consulting on said project and continued to have a level of responsibility for said projects.

Typically, beautification as a project topic for the municipality is often discussed and justified in relation to tourism and how it would improve tourism in the community and its marketability. Beautification should not be exclusively viewed as a tourism-related priority as this excludes the general effects on community well-being and how such improvements can benefit residents and tourists alike. As such, while beautification is interlinked with tourism, the Village does separate them out from one another, including in its budget. However, for beautification projects that are expressly tourist-related or focused, they are treated under the purview of the Vibrant Community Commission and recommendations should go to them for consideration. For beautification projects that are more focused on general community improvement and intended more for residents than tourists, (for example the annual Village Cleanup), would go to Council for consideration.

STRATEGIC

(Guiding Documents Relevancy – OCP, Vibrant Community Commission Bylaw)

Improving and encouraging tourism-related infrastructure and supporting the well-being of the community is a priority under the Official Community Plan. Per its bylaw, the Vibrant Community Commission has been delegated supervisory responsibility for tourism-related activities in the Village from Council, and such initiatives should be directed through them as that is their function.

FINANCIAL

(Corporate Budget Impact)

While there may be grants available for building tourism-related infrastructure and beautification projects, there is typically no external funding sources for the operational cost to maintain such structures once they have been built, and the Village would be responsible for ensuring that the revenues that it collects through property taxes and user fees (if applicable), are sufficient to for the ongoing support of its infrastructure, which would mean increasing them as infrastructure increases. If the Village pursues tourism-related infrastructure and beautification projects, it must consider and plan for how it will pay for them long-term and it should do so when considering whether to undertake them. The Village has been struggling to maintain existing tourism infrastructure and beautification projects due to insufficient capacity and budget.

The Vibrant Community Commission is provided an annual budget approved by Council for its projects. Council also sets and has separate budgets for beautification and tourism, though these are rather small budgets. All of these budgets are supplied from own-source funds, but larger projects seek grant funding.

ADMINISTRATIVE

(Workload Impact and Consequence)

Infrastructure and beautification projects normally result in a workload increase for staff, and depending on the size of the project, can be a significant increase and drain on capacity. The Vibrant Community Commission was established to increase the Village's capacity on the topic of tourism related initiatives and matters, but grant projects are reliant on staff capacity.

Respectfully submitted: Elizabeth Cumming, Deputy CAO.

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