



Subject: *Public Information Meeting Policy*
To: CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, June 20, 2023
Date Prepared: June 1, 2023
Related Motions:
Prepared by: John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development
Approved by: John Woodford, Director

Summary

Following a public information meeting (PIM) in March 2023, Council directed staff to prepare a Public Information Meeting Policy. The policy is intended to provide greater clarity for councillors, public members of PAC, staff, applicants and the general public regarding the role of each and expected behaviour at PIMs.

Financial Impact Statement

There is no direct cost associated with the adoption of this report.

Recommendation

That PAC recommend that Council approve the Public Information Meeting Policy

Recommended Motion

Regular Meeting of Council (Policy & In-Camera) - June 20, 2023

The Planning Advisory Committee recommends to Council that Council give notice of intent to approve the 'Public Information Meeting Policy' as attached to the Executive Committee agenda dated June 20, 2023.

Regular Meeting of Council - June 28, 2023

The Planning Advisory Committee recommends to Council that Council approve the 'Public Information Meeting Policy' as attached to the Executive Committee agenda dated June 20, 2023.

Background

Following a public information meeting (PIM) in March 2023 which generated significant public interest, Council directed staff to prepare a Public Information Meeting Policy. The policy is intended to provide greater clarity for councillors, public members of PAC, staff, applicants and the public regarding the role of each and expected behaviour at PIMs.

Discussion

Roles

The draft policy defines participants roles as follows:

Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) Members

- 1.1. Members of PAC are not required to attend PIMs. Should they attend, the primary role of members of PAC at a PIM is to observe the proceedings.*
- 1.2. Members of PAC may only ask or answer questions for the purposes of clarification.*
- 1.3. Members of PAC may not indicate any bias concerning a proposal at a PIM.*

Municipal Staff

- 2.1 The role of Municipal staff is to facilitate the PIM and present information to the public.*
- 2.2 Whenever possible, three (3) Municipal staff members will attend a PIM. The three (3) roles of staff members at the PIM are:*
 - 2.2.1 Chair;*
 - 2.2.2 Presenter; and*
 - 2.2.3 Note Taker.*

Applicant

- 3.1 Applicants will be permitted to present their proposed development at the PIM and answer any questions directed to them from the chair.*
- 3.2 Applicants may only present information at a PIM that has been previously made available to Municipal Council. Application details that are presented must be in keeping with the proposal presented to PAC. Any presentation made by applicants must be submitted to the Planning & Development Department at least one (1) week prior to the PIM.*

Members of the Public

- 4.1 Members of the public may ask questions directed to the chair. The chair will direct questions to Municipal Staff or the Applicant as deemed appropriate.*

PIM Administration

This policy would formalize the current practice of holding PIMs for the corridor area (Enfield-Shubenacadie) at the Lloyd E. Matheson Centre and holding other PIMs in a venue closer to the application site.

The policy also enables live-streaming and recording meetings whenever possible. Council may also authorize staff to host a virtual PIM.

Conduct is also mentioned requiring that: *All attendees of a PIM must communicate civilly and respectfully with all attendees of the PIM. Failure to communicate or behave appropriately may result in an attendee being asked to leave the PIM.*

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This proposed policy aligns with the Municipality's Key Strategy of Corporate Excellence, and Strong Community.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Additional staff time will be required to administer PIM's but the increase is not expected to be material.

Alternatives

There are two (2) Alternatives to the Policy as proposed:

Not Proceed with the PIM Policy

Committee may choose to recommend that the policy not be adopted.

Amend Draft Policy

Committee may choose to recommend amendments to the draft policy.

Conclusion

A PIM Policy has been drafted that would:

- Define the roles for Council, public members of PAC, staff, applicants and members of the public.
- Direct PIMs to appropriate venues
- Enable live-streaming and recording of PIM's

Recommendation

That PAC recommend that Council approve the Public Information Meeting Policy.