

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED AT TOWN COUNCIL

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There was plenty on the agenda at Monday's Town Council meeting.

Here's a look at what took place.

1. BACKYARD CHICKENS – YAY OR NAY?

It's been in the works for over a year, but council moved to continue gathering information on whether or not to allow residents to keep chickens in their backyard.

Results of a survey conducted through Let's Talk Halton Hills showed mixed feelings from respondents. A total of 725 residents participated with 465 in favour of allowing backyard fowl. However, 254 residents cried foul, citing concerns ranging from noise and waste to odours. The biggest concern among re-

spondents was that the birds could attract vermin.

Residents who were in favour of allowing the by-law felt that four to six chickens was the appropriate maximum amount of bird to a backyard. The second most popular amount was: none.

2. MUNICIPAL MODERNIZATION – PAY YOUR TAXES ONLINE COMING

Residents may soon be able to pay their property taxes online, as well as book transit via mobile or online in the future.

Town staff have applied for grant funding from the province for two projects related to municipal modernization.

The town would be eligible for 65 per cent funding from the province with the town covering the remaining expense.

The online tax system would allow residents to access self-serve options online for tax services. Implementing this project is anticipated to have a maximum cost of \$130,000.

The transit grant would allow the town to implement an online/mobile app for self-serve bookings. It would also include the installation of a minimum of four kiosks at municipal locations to allow customers to book trips. The cost of the program is estimated at \$91,300.

3. SCATTERING OF CREMATED REMAINS IN THE CREDIT RIVER

A 2019 complaint from a resident regarding the scattering of cremated remains in the Credit River at McNab Park has sparked further investigation.

Part of a traditional Hindu end-of-life ritual, ashes

are scattered into water ways like the Credit River.

From June to October 2020, the town received increased reports and complaints regarding the frequency of ceremonies at McNab Park.

Staff have consulted with several agencies and municipal partners regarding best practices. Provincial police permits scattering of cremated remains on Crown land or water, but has no official regulations for the scattering of cremated remains.

Staff will continue to monitor the situation and take an educational approach.

Scattering of cremated remains will be permitted, though river offerings will be prohibited.

4. PORTABLE TOILET RENTAL

Of seven companies that

received a notification of a bid opportunity regarding the rental of portable toilets, only three showed interest, but ultimately only one company submitted a bid.

When town staff reached out to understand the lack of interest, bidders cited their present workload as the main reason.

As per the town's purchasing policy, if only one bid is received in the process, a report to council is required.

Chantler's Environmental Services Limited, already a current service provider for the town, was awarded to bid.

5. COVID-19 TAX DEFERRAL 2021

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the town took several measures regarding property tax collection, including relief from penalties, interest and fees

for a designated period.

Council also approved the deferral of final tax due dates, introducing a pre-authorized payment plan.

A one-time COVID-19 pre-authorized monthly repayment plan is available to property owners, consisting of seven monthly withdrawals beginning June 28 and ending Dec. 29, 2021.

Proof of hardship may be required to qualify.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, the town has collected all but 2.8 per cent of taxes from 2020. By comparison, there are 2.27 per cent of property taxes outstanding from 2019, and 2.57 per cent outstanding from 2018.

6. TRAFFIC ENGINEERING WORK PLAN

Carry-over projects from 2020, along with new 2021 initiatives, are part of the 2021 Traffic Engineering Work Plan. The plan includes dozens of projects, from speed and safety reviews to traffic calming and traffic signals.



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