

GOVERNMENT: Towns look into Internet broadcasts

Town council considers bringing meetings into your living room

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You may eventually be able to watch council meetings from the comfort of your home.

An informational report on the pros and cons and potential costs of live streaming the meetings will come to council this fall.

The impetus for staff to look into the alternative way of hearing what is being said during council meetings was spurred on by residents and council, according to Maria Schembri, spokesperson for the town.

"Council is always looking for ways to engage the community," she said.

If live streaming council meetings becomes a reality, it won't start until the next term of council, according to Ms Schembri.

A new council gets elected Oct. 27, 2014.

The reason, she said, is because it will take that long to ensure all the technical aspects have been addressed.

Council holds two meetings a month, not including public meetings. The council meetings are on Tuesdays at 3 and 7 p.m.

The afternoon meetings have long come

under fire from residents, who at times, want to speak to items on the agenda but cannot because of work or other daytime obligations.

"It's too early. We're not going to take that route. It could be addressed in that report," Ms Schembri said of whether or not meeting times will be addressed.

'Council is always looking for ways to engage the community.'

Audio recordings for all open session meetings held in Richmond Hill's council chambers are now available online.

Council, council public as well as budget and audit committee meetings will also be recorded in Richmond Hill.

Other area governments also investigating Internet streaming of public meetings include Newmarket, Vaughan, King, East Gwillimbury and the region itself.

With files from Kim Zarzour

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