

COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 18, 2010 – 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor David Corkum, Deputy Mayor Bill Boyd, Councilor Bernie Cooper, Councilor Nola Folker-Hill, Councilor Mark Pearl, Councilor Eric Bolland, Councilor Tony Bentley, CAO Keith Robicheau, Solicitor Geoff Muttart and Town Clerk Carol Harmes

Director Debra Crowell, Director Greg Kehoe, Director Mark Phillips, Director Bev Gentleman, Police Chief Mark Mander

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor David Corkum called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and CAO Keith Robicheau reported that all Council members were present.

NOTE

“Points from Discussion” below show various comments made by individual councilors during debate. They do not necessarily represent the opinion of the group, nor do they always reflect accurate information.

STAFF COMMENTS/COUNCIL QUESTIONS

Introduction by Chief Administrative Officer – CAO
Keith Robicheau pointed out that he had presented options for consideration by Council some time ago, and reiterated these, which were (1) maintain the status quo, (2) Incorporate a True Council/CAC arrangement or (3) Create Council/Citizen Panels to address specific issues.

Police Chief Mark Mander – Chief Mander reiterated that the Police Act dictates the need for a Police Commission and the number of participants. However, he felt that on the Kentville Board some diversity is needed, with age, gender and ethnicity, and further that the business community is not being fairly represented. He felt that recruitment (to ensure this diversity) should be done directly by approaching various groups and organizations.

Points from Council

- An Ad Hoc Committee could work with the Police Board on specific issues and could provide that diversity.
- To add an Ad Hoc Committee adds another level of bureaucracy and more meetings.

- The citizen appointees consisting of retired police officers adds good, sound input on policing matters.
- When advertising for citizens, it would be a good idea to encourage diversity.
- The best applicant for every committee must be considered first, as to what experience or knowledge that person can bring to the table.
- Diversity should be sought for the police staff more than the board.

Finance Director Debra Crowell – Director Crowell noted that the Investment Advisory Committee was developed by the Special Perpetual Reserve Fund Investment Policy. Three citizen appointments are required and although the members are recruited, there are no terms of service, as continuity is very important. Her recommendation was to continue with the committee as legislated.

Points from Council

- Although continuity is important, long term appointments can have a negative impact.
- The criteria of skill requirements, but no vested interest can be a difficult combination when recruiting.
- Qualified people are very important on this committee, even with the Council representation.
- The Committee is always prepared to accept staff's recommendation.
- As this is an advisory committee, Council will ultimately decide what to do with the funds, within the scope designated.

Director Crowell also reported that the Audit Committee is legislated by statute, and added that Council is kept informed on a monthly basis as to the finances of the Town. She recommended that Council continue the Audit Committee, although, Council may wish to incorporate citizens. She added that this citizen involvement would mean 1 meeting a year, and therefore, it would appear more feasible to keep the status quo.

Planning and Development Director Bev Gentleman – Director Gentleman reported that the Planning Advisory Committee is permitted under the MGA, however, if a committee is struck, there is a limit on what this committee can do.

In her research she noted that several other municipalities have opted not to have a PAC, as citizen participation is offered through Public Hearings on specific issues.

Points from Council

- Perhaps KCDC could be combined with PAC, as there are common issues.
- During Public Participation, KCDC members could be invited to attend.
- When the LUB and MPS are reviewed, citizen involvement would be required, however, this could be done on an ad hoc basis.
- Council members are at a disadvantage if they do not sit on the PAC.
- PAC is more redundant than relevant in its current format.

Current Chairman of PAC, Mark Pearl recommended that this committee be eliminated and that the public be engaged only on significant issues. He felt that planning matters could be handled efficiently by CAC.

Public Works Director and Town Engineer Greg Kehoe – Director Kehoe suggested that for the most part, those issues that find themselves on the Transportation Services agenda, are day-to-day operational issues of the department or traffic authority. He noted that Council has the authority to strike a committee for specific items like traffic reviews and perhaps citizen involvement could be limited to areas like that.

Points from Council

- Ad Hoc Committees would be more effective to deal with specific items.
- Often meetings are scheduled but there is nothing of substance to discuss.
- The change of CAC times (earlier in the day) with the directors in attendance, gives good information to Council.
- Perhaps a trial period to eliminate the Transportation Services Committee would prove beneficial.

Councilor Mark Pearl recommended that Transportation Services be discontinued.

Parks and Recreation Director Mark Phillips – Director Phillips reviewed some of the committees he serves, pointing out that with many of these meetings, there is redundancy of discussion, and in fact, some meet for the sake of meeting, with nothing to discuss. He added that although policy and governance issues should be the work of committees, citizens seem more inclined to deal with the day-to-day operations. In spite of the large number of meetings held, many citizens question their effectiveness, as the issue moves on to CAC and then Council.

He noted, however, that committees allow for greater transparency and a higher profile for the Town. Citizens want to be engaged in recreation issues, as the programs and events offered affect their quality of life. However, he added that other perspectives are made available through senior staff meetings and that this group also serves as a good sounding board to all department heads.

The options he proposed for Council's consideration were:

- (1) Maintain the status quo but change all meetings to quarterly meetings by a Policy of Council.
- (2) Create a common “umbrella” structure – Community Services Advisory Committee, consisting of issues from Parks and Recreation, the Environmental Advisory Committee, Community Development, EMO and Planning, etc. The agenda would be restricted to governance issues and would operate on an Ad Hoc or Steering Committee basis.
- (3) Create a Town Services Advisory Committee (to deal with all services). The committee may need to be larger to encompass interests from the public in various issues.

Points from Council

- Recreation is a core feature of Kentville.
- The Community Services Advisory Committee would be one committee but would deal with a number of issues.
- Option 2 necessitates that an agenda would be on a higher level.
- Steering committees would be used for goal setting.
- Many of the specifics of these types of new committees, would have to be worked out.

Councilor Mark Pearl recommended that Option 2 be

pursued.

Town Clerk Carol Harmes – Clerk Harmes noted that in addition to those committees of Council that relate to specific departmental business, other committees also exist. Some of these require a heavy workload of both Council and Staff, and to streamline these, Council should identify those committees which may have some redundancy or irrelevance.

She noted that in trying to categorize these meetings, some are inter-municipal in nature (Kings Transit, Valley Waste, Kings Partnership, etc.), others have been established on an Ad Hoc basis but continue on with no termination date, and others are important, as they provide Council with an opportunity for financial or political input into the decision-making of the committee. Several serve more than one purpose.

As the situation now stands, Council's wish had been to have all citizen appointments terminate in November of 2009 to allow for this review.

She suggested 3 options:

- Advertise and appoint all 16 citizen members to the committees that currently remain vacant, and maintain the same involvement from Council and staff;
- Join committees that share common issues, thus reducing the number of citizens required, and the time required of Council and staff;
- Eliminate as many committees as possible, but engage citizens in other ways – (1) have public input on the meeting agenda of CAC. *(To allow for public feedback prior to any recommendation being sent to Council.)* (2) Apply the \$4,000 paid yearly in citizen honorarium to offset costs for public meetings and open houses. *(These forums might encourage a wider involvement from the public on a wider range of issues.)*

RECOMMENDATION

It was the consensus of Council that staff incorporates those new ideas, as discussed, into a draft policy, and return it to a future CAC for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

9:00 p.m..

