

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Monday, December 12, 2022 **WARD(S):** ALL

TITLE: MOBILE SIGNS PERMITS

FROM:

Gus Michaels, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

The City has been providing a variety of post-COVID related support initiatives, including relief from certain Sign By-law provisions respecting mobile signs. Through this report, staff seek an extension of the post-COVID mobile signs program until staff can make a recommendation as to whether this program should become permanent.

This report was prepared in consultation with the Building Standards Department.

Report Highlights

- Since the start of the COVID-19 emergency, the City has provided a variety of relief initiatives for businesses, some of which were continued as post-COVID support for businesses.
- As these initiatives wind down, staff are considering whether some initiatives, such as the mobile sign support should be continued on a permanent basis.
- Since the support initiative was scheduled to come to an end of December 31, staff are recommending an amendment to the City's Sign By-law to establish the temporary relief provided on a more permanent basis.

Recommendations

1. THAT Council adopt an amendment of the City's Sign By-law, establishing the previously approved temporary relief program on a more permanent basis, in a manner acceptable to the City Solicitor.

Background

Since the COVID-19 emergency declaration in March of 2020, the City of Vaughan has introduced a number of initiatives to support businesses and individuals, while continuing to also ensure the health, safety and well-being of the public.

Prior to the pandemic-related declared state of emergency, mobile signs as regulated by the Sign By-law were issued by the Building Standards Department through its on-line portal. As part of the relief initiative, the issuance of the permits was migrated to the By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services Department.

Since the program's inception, the issuance of permits, despite being performed manually, has been expedited due to the streamlined process. Despite the regulatory relief offered through the program, the City did not experience a material increase in complaints relating to mobile signs, having received a total of 10 complaints in 2021 and 11 complaints in 2022, during which this initiative was in effect; thus, indicating that compliance issues have not been affected in any appreciable way.

Previous Reports/Authority

Sign By-law Relief for Businesses ([Report](#) approved by Council on March 22, 2022) Committee of the Whole Recommendation ([Extract](#) from March 08, 2022, meeting)

Analysis and Options

The proposed requirements would bring the City's mobile and portable sign regulations in line with the approach taken by most GTA municipalities. Given the negligible regulatory impact the program has had, the efficiencies gained, the lack of public concerns, and the continued support provided to the City's licensed sign providers and the small businesses who benefit from their services, staff are of the opinion that there is merit in continuing the program through an amendment of the City's Sign By-law; thereby establishing the relief on a more permanent basis.

In addition to staff's recommendation and in accordance with the City's By-law Strategy staff will be undertaking a more fulsome and comprehensive review of the City's Sign By-law, that will include further consultation with internal partners and external stakeholders, accordingly. In the interim, staff recommend that the program be extended to further support economic recovery of local business

Financial Impact

There are no significant financial impacts anticipated to the City as a result of the recommendations of this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no broader regional material impacts or considerations as a result of the recommendations of this report.

Conclusion

The Sign By-law relief program, intended as a post-COVID support initiative, has proven to be a better way to deliver the service. Businesses are able to obtain permits more expeditiously, without any significant regulatory compliance erosion. Staff's analysis of the program has demonstrated that making the program permanent is not anticipated to create an increase to non-compliance. Additionally, taking proactive steps such as establishing the current program on a more permanent basis provides a reasonable and measured approach to regulating mobile signs and will continue to provide economic support to the City's licensed sign providers and the related small businesses that utilize their services.

For more information, please contact: Susan Kelly, Director and Chief Licensing Officer, By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services, ext. 8952.

Attachments

None.

Prepared by

Rudi Czekalla-Martinez, Manager, Policy & Business Planning, ext. 8782.

Approved by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gus Michaels".

Gus Michaels,
Deputy City Manager,
Community Services

Reviewed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Spensieri".

Nick Spensieri,
City Manager