

Special Committee of the Whole Report

DATE: Tuesday, March 17, 2020

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY DURING COUNCIL HIATUS

FROM:

Mary Reali, Acting City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

This report provides Council with Staff's suggested changes to the City's Delegation of Authority By-laws, which are required in order to allow Staff to maintain business continuity and make decisions in the event that Council cannot meet as a result of the effects of the Novel Coronavirus disease ("COVID-19") pandemic within the City of Vaughan.

Report Highlights

- The COVID-19 pandemic is changing rapidly and will require City decisions to be made faster than the typical Council-cycle allows. In addition, the Government of Canada is recommending that all citizens practice "social distancing" meaning hosting Council or Committee meetings may not be in the best interests of Vaughan citizens at this time.
- For these reasons, Staff recommend that the Delegation of Authority By-laws, By-law 332-98, as amended, and By-law 144-2018, as amended, extend their definition of Council Hiatus to include a period of time in which Council is unable to meet due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations

1. That Delegation of Authority By-laws, By-law 332-98, as amended, and By-law 144-2018, as amended, be amended as set out in this report.

Background

COVID-19 is a novel disease that is spreading throughout the world, including the Greater Toronto Area. In order to be as responsive as possible to the disease, and to ensure the safety of the City's residents, decisions will need to be made faster than Council may be able to meet. In addition, the Government of Canada is recommending that all citizens practice "social distancing" meaning hosting Council or Committee meetings may not be in the best interests of Vaughan citizens at this time. While section 238(3.1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* does allow Councillors to participate in meetings electronically, the Act is clear that such Councillors must not be counted for the purpose of establishing quorum. Accordingly, full scale electronic meetings are not a feasible option to address the above-mentioned issues.

Previous Reports/Authority

N/A

Analysis and Options

The recommendations in this report are proposed to provide business continuity in the event that regular Council and Committee meetings are cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, senior Staff are monitoring the situation and some of the April Council and Committee meetings are not cancelled or rescheduled. However, should the situation develop such that the April or any future Council/Committee cycle is cancelled, it is important for business continuity purposes that Staff have certain delegation powers from Council, similar to the delegation of authority currently delegated during regular summer and election hiatus.

Such delegation of authority includes:

- City Clerk, CFO & City Treasurer, or City Manager are authorized to approve grant applications and execution of grant agreements for grant sources that stipulate that Council approval is required for such applications or agreements.
- City Manager is authorized to approve execution of agreements for the acquisition of temporary and permanent easements as required for approved capital projects or other municipal purposes, together with such other documents as may be required in connection with such acquisitions, provided the value of consideration does not exceed \$100,000.
- Senior Manager, Real Estate or City Solicitor are authorized to approve execution of agreements for the amendment, extension, renewal, and/or revival of leases and licenses on substantially the same terms and conditions of the original agreements.

Staff recommends that the authority granted to staff for Council summer hiatus and election period be expanded to include the period of time when Council is unable to meet due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Impact

N/A

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

N/A

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic will have significant impact on the City's ability to hold regular Council and Committee meetings. At this time, although most of the meetings for April have not been cancelled, in the event that they are, or if there is an extended Council hiatus resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that the powers that are normally delegated to staff during the summer and election hiatus be also delegated to staff to ensure business continuity.

For more information, please contact: Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager, Administrative Services & City Solicitor, ext. 8700.

Attachments

N/A

Prepared by

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