

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

OPEN SESSION

COUNCIL BUSINESS PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT CL 2-2012

The Municipal Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara met in Open Session in the CE101 and CE102, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on Thursday, February 16, 2012 commencing at 6:35 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council: Regional Chair Burroughs; Councillors Augustyn; Badawey; Barrick; Baty; Bentley; Bylsma; D'Angela; Diodati; Greenwood; Grenier; Heit; Hodgson; Joyner; Katzman; Lepp; Luciani; Martin; Maves; McMullan; Petrowski; Rigby; Teal; Timms; Volpatti.

Staff: Messrs. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Robson, Commissioner, Integrated Community Planning; Hutchings, Commissioner, Corporate Services; Brothers, Commissioner, Public Works; Bain, Regional Clerk; Dr. Jaeger, Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Chislett, Commissioner, Community Services; Ms. Pilon, Deputy Regional Clerk.

Others: Messrs. Weir, Director, Administration; McQueen, Director, Organizational Performance, Responsive Region Improvement Team; Steele, Associate Director Strategic Business Management; Ms. Papaiz, Associate Director, Corporate Communications.

Regrets: Councillors Eke; Jeffs; Marshall; Zimmerman

OPENING REMARKS

4. Regional Chair Burroughs welcomed and thanked those in attendance at what promises to be a lively debate and certainly an interesting evening as Regional Council embarks on a debate that has long been thought of as 'off-limits' and something that has had its share of coverage over the years.

This Council, however, decided the issue was of significance and so much so, that it was included in our 2012-2014 Council Business Plan as a top priority, as to not avoid the tough issues. Regional Council has faced them head on and more importantly, found solutions.

When Regional Council wanted to deal with the Niagara Economic Development Corporation (NEDC), Regional Council did, with a new model being developed, with more to come.

When Regional Council wanted to deal with service delivery review, Regional Council did, with the establishment of the Responsive Region Improvement Team (RRIT), hoping to see the results from this team's work shortly.

Regional Council wants to deal with governance, and we're here at this session to do so, as Regional Council is not afraid to tackle the thorny issues, however, in doing so, Council must be cognizant of the reasons for which they are deliberating:

Niagara's residents expect us to govern; to be good stewards of their resources; to deliver the services they need with efficiency and effectiveness; to create and facilitate economic growth and be leaders in our Region, in our Province, and beyond and to provide them with the opportunity for a quality of life they value and appreciate and to do this with humility and respect for their interests and the communities we represent.

Regional Chair Burroughs thanked the twenty-four (24) Regional Councillors who completed the survey, as he has always maintained a commitment to Regional Council to have the tough discussions with Regional Council's input, which is vital to its success. Regional Council's feedback forms the basis of our discussion at this session and it is very important that we have input from each member in order to have representation from all corners of our Region.

Many of the initiatives this Council has already undertaken have underlying governance themes. Governance to some may in fact mean the composition of this Council, the number of colleagues sitting around the Council horseshoe. To others, it is the way in which we deliver services and the relationship we have with our other municipal partners. To others, it means the way in which we make decisions as a Council. Either way, there are diverging opinions as to what encompasses 'governance' and that must be the premise upon which we begin the debate.

Council will determine the scope and mandate of this review and staff will support the direction given to them by Council. Although a number of reports and consultations will undoubtedly emanate from Council's direction, it will be just that, Council's prerogative as to what is undertaken and ultimately how we move forward. It's understood that staff will provide the thorough, professional and balanced advice they do so well, to ensure we have all of the options available to us to make informed and knowledgeable decisions.

Governance is an important part of this Council's agenda. We have all agreed on that. It is featured prominently in our Business Plan. However, it is our job to ensure that we continue to deliver on the rest of our priorities as well. That is the effective governance that Niagara's residents expect and deserve from us. We were elected leaders in our communities and we must therefore lead by example.

INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION

5. Mr. Trojan introduced Dr. David Siegel, Professor of Political Science at Brock University and Mr. Wayne Hussey of Wayne Hussey Consulting Inc., the session's facilitator.

Dr. David Siegel, Professor of Political Science, Brock University advised the members of the Committee the process they would be required to follow should they want to pursue Council Structure Reform; Internal Governance Reform and Service Delivery Reform.

Council Structure Reform:

This could be in the form of a major change, such as amalgamation, as there is no formula for amalgamation, it would require legislation if Niagara Region was to undertake amalgamation. Changes to Council's composition is covered by the legislation, with the Minister issuing regulations to pass a by-law.

In the event Niagara Region was to go to the Minister, we would be required to follow a process: What's the business case for change; what citizen involvement have you had in order to gauge the public's feelings; what do others (i.e. area municipalities) feel about the change. The Minister would consult with the local MPPs for their view as well; however, it is extremely important to have the ground work done.

Internal Governance Reform:

This is a simple process, as we have the right to do what we want to do, such as in the form of Niagara Region's Procedural By-law; the Committee's reporting structure; these are all within our jurisdiction.

Service Delivery Reform:

If it's a Regional service now and we would like it to remain as a Regional service, this is acceptable as it is our service, and no change is required. Changes to a service currently under the jurisdiction of the area municipalities would be subject to Section 11 of the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001*, Chapter 25, as amended, requiring triple majority (majority of Councillors; majority of area municipalities and majority of population). Changes can be accommodated in other ways as well, through contractual arrangements or relationships.

Dr. Seigel noted that the members of the Committee should begin focusing on solutions and forget about the problem solving. He also noted that it's very difficult for a medium to large organization to make more than one or two significant changes at one time, so he asked that the members of the Committee think about one or two, maybe three top priorities, so that there is small number of priorities to focus on and they will be accomplished.

Mr. Hussey noted that in his role as facilitator for the process, he would be asking each of the members to tell the truth and be nice, emphasizing the words found on the corporate coat of arms, 'Unity, Responsibility and Loyalty'.

Mr. Hussey reviewed the Governance Review Councillor Survey results and noted that there are two words that are important in facilitation, "collective will", which he believes is present at these sessions.

GROUP FACILITATION AND DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

6. Mr. Hussey asked that the members of the Committee to complete the Workshop Worksheet and list their five Priority Actions that they believe would make a significant improvement in the area of governance and accomplished to some degree within the time left in this Council's term.

The Committee members following the completion of the above exercise were asked to stand and list their five Priority Actions for the group.

Mr. Hussey then asked the members of the Committee in their assigned groups to discuss their five Priority Actions with their group members and note which of their five Priority Actions have divergence or consensus.

NEXT STEPS

7. Mr. Hussey advised the Committee members that he would be summarizing the comments from the Workshop Worksheet and the Group Facilitation Session and that he would be providing the results to the Regional Chair early next week.

CLOSING REMARKS

9. Regional Chair Burroughs thanked those in attendance for participating in this stage of the process, noting that he is looking forward to the next stage in the process which is an important stage in the process.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council Business Planning Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Gary Burroughs
Regional Chair



Janet Pilon
Deputy Regional Clerk



Kevin Bain
Regional Clerk