



Corporation of the Municipality of Temagami

Memo No.
2020-M-110

Memorandum to Council

Subject: Letter from Mr. MacLachlan

Agenda Date: August 27, 2020

Attachments:

RECOMMENDATION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct Staff to prepare a reply letter for the Mayor's signature based on the contents of this report.

INFORMATION

We received a letter dated July 22, 2020 from Mr, Ian MacLachlan. We also received a copy of a letter sent to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau by Mr. MacLachlan and Ms. Judy Gouin. These letters are attached to and form part of this report.

The letter addressed to the Prime Minister is provided to Council for their information.

On the letter addressed to Mayor and Council, there are a few topics of conversation.

The first topic deals with our forest industry. While it is more commonplace today for harvesting practices to include selective cutting and planting areas where logging operations occur, we are nearing the end of the process that would see the Temagami Forest Tenure being managed by an independent corporation that is a cooperative effort between industry, First Nations and municipal communities. We are scheduling John Kenrick to be a delegation at a future Council meeting to review the progress made in this regard and the structure that will be in place to ensure proper management of our forest resource.

The third topic (the second topic will end this report) is urging the municipality to take advantage of any and all programs that will result in the reduction of fossil fuel use. We presently do take these under consideration. The latest example of this is the LED streetlight retrofit program. This will see our use of electric energy reduce.

For the other topics (the second topic is next), we are taking a few steps. We are working on a report concerning electric vehicle charging stations which should be on the next agenda. We have plans for enhancements and maintenance of the trails although this does take time and money.

We will be putting our microfit project on pause for the moment. The revenue generated does not quite pay for the additional maintenance cost required with the roof installation.

As for the second topic, the declaration of Temagami as a Blue Community. Also attached to this report is information for Council's consideration on what this entails. According to this document there are three parts to the water commons framework that is the foundation of being a Blue Community. These are recognizing water and sanitation as human rights, banning or phasing out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events, and promoting publically financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater services.

On the first point, the majority of our water and wastewater charges are levied through the tax bill process. As such we have not created a practice to shut off water for non-payment. Apart from that, establishing human rights in Canada is out of Council's domain. The draft resolution on page 9 of the attachment

appears to recognize this but Council would need to be clear that any resolution considered and passed is within our area of influence.

On the second point, while we do not have many events where refreshments are sold, presently water is offered as an option to carbonated beverages or juices. We could include public water fountains in future capital plans and this should probably be the first step towards any potential ban of the sale of water in plastic bottles. This would allow people to have an option as noted above. It should also be noted that at Council meetings etc., we typically use water from jugs, not plastic bottles.

The third point may cause some concern. While our water and wastewater systems are publically finance and owned, there may be some question whether they are publically operated. The Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) is a Provincial Crown Corporation. Whether this is considered to be publically operates could be debated. We have an operating agreement with OCWA until 2028 and even then, should the definition be translated to mean that municipal staff would operate the water and wastewater facilities in house, the number of qualified people (provincial requirement) that are needed to operate water and waste water systems would have the effect of increasing our workforce. While this could be done, Council should ensure that any resolution considered and passed today do not force a certain course of action, where there are few options, if any, in the future.

I think we can agree that the area of water and wastewater, as well as practically every other infrastructure area municipalities have, have been severely underfunded since the mid 1990's and the gap between available funding and funding required is widening and is beyond the ability of the property tax base to finance.

Staff could draft a reply for the Mayor to consider and sign replying to this letter using the points outlined above.

As a final consideration, at the beginning of this term of Council, terms of reference were developed for climate change committee. We did advertise for possible membership but received no additional names interested to be part of this committee. This could be part of the discussion next month as we discuss the implementation priorities of the Strategic Plan.

Respectfully Submitted
Craig Davidson
Treasurer/Administrator