

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT 10-2004

The Municipal Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara met in the Council Chamber, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on Thursday, December 16, 2004, commencing at 4:05 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council: Regional Chair Partington; Councillors Almas; Angelone; Bailey; Baty; Bentley; Bodner; Brock; Burroughs; Casselman; Collins; Eke; Gabriel; Goulbourne; Harry; Heit; Hildreth; Hodgson; Katzman; Leavens; Marshall; Martin; Redekop; Rigby; Salci; Saracino; Smeaton; Timms; Trombetta; Zimmerman.

Staff: Messrs. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Bacchus, Commissioner, Corporate Services; Cambray, Commissioner, Planning & Development; Ms. Gilroy, Regional Clerk/Associate Director of Corporate Strategy; Messrs. Neville, Commissioner, Public Works; Nicol, Commissioner, Human Resources; Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner, Community Services; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff
(Part-time): Mr. Bowles, Executive Assistant; Ms. Crowley, Current Budget Analyst; Mr. Jones, Director, Administrative Services, P.H.; Mr. Lockyer, Treasurer/Director, Financial & Accounting Services; Ms. Murphy, Manager, Current and Capital Budgets; Mr. Payne, Director, Waste Management Services; Mr. Roach, Manager, Financial Services, P.W.; Mr. Roberts, Senior Manager, NEMS; Mr. Robson, Director, Corporate Strategy.

Others: Mr. Burt, General Manager, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Mr. Gedge, CEO, NETCorp.; Mr. Brickell, Smart Growth-Brownfields, NETCorp.

CALL TO ORDER

54. Regional Chair Partington called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

55. Moved by Councillor Harry
Seconded by Councillor Bodner

That this Council do now resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Carried.

PRESENTATIONS

56. Niagara Region Children's Safety Village

Bob Kennedy, Chair, Children's Safety Village, attended to apprise Council of the Niagara Region Children's Safety Village. The NRCSV was established to provide safety education to all children from JK to Grade 6 in the Niagara region. It is a non-profit charity led by a Board of Directors representing the three emergency services, 4 school boards, Niagara College, businesses and interested citizens. In the first year of operation 19,197 students from 81 schools attended classes provided by Police Officers, Paramedics and Fire Services. It is expected the NRCSV will accommodate 30,000 students in 2004-2005. Mr. Kennedy outlined the curriculum offered by the Police and Fire that includes: road, rail, school bus and bike safety, fire hazard recognition and prevention education with appliance safety, fire escape plans, smoke and carbon dioxide detector utilization. The paramedics presented a curriculum to orient young children to the EMS System to help alleviate their fears if injured or seriously ill and in need of paramedical care. Seasonal safety including water hazards and pool safety, electrical safety, playground safety and safety around dogs is also provided to children.

An opportunity for the Region of Niagara and its Public Health unit to participate as full partners was presented and Committee was requested to support an investment of \$150,000 for the provision of health promotion and injury prevention programs for the children of Niagara at the NRCSV. This grant would also allow the NRCSV to concentrate fundraising efforts towards the retirement of the \$1.2 million mortgage.

57. Rob Janssen
Jordan Station, Town of Lincoln

Rob Janssen, resident, Town of Lincoln, attended to express his concerns related to the Niagara Region's proposed increase in taxes and subsequent increase in debt level. Mr. Janssen opposed the proposed new building for Regional Headquarters and new Police facilities, as well as the heavy budget increases for Police Services, as seen over the last several years. Mr. Janssen also spoke to property assessment and tax matters and their impact and burden on middle class and fixed income families.

58. Jack Lowrey, Queenston

Jack Lowrey, resident, Queenston, Niagara-on-the-Lake, attended to speak to the Region's Current Operating Budget, commenting that the Niagara Regional taxpayers cannot go on absorbing rate increases year after year. He also commented on Standard and Poor's caution with respect to the Region's increasing debt load. In summary, Mr. Lowrey made the following suggestions:

- Review the Police Services Board budget.
- If bids for building a new Regional facility come in over \$17 million, this action should be deferred.
- Consider deferring some projects to reduce the current debt servicing costs
- Engage the public in the Core Services Review and explain mandated and non-mandated services, justifying each.
- The local taxpayer should not be required to provide the services for the tourist industry.
- Examine duplication of services
- Avoid hiring excessive consultants

59. Niagara Residential Energy Efficiency Project (REEP)

Mr. Stuart Lord of the Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence provided Council with the details of their revised proposal, which would require financial support from the Niagara Region for the establishment of a Niagara Residential Energy Efficiency Project (REEP), in order to make houses more energy efficient, healthier and more comfortable while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The revised request is for \$10,000 plus \$35.00 per home evaluated. A cap could be recommended for subsidizing the first 500 homes for energy evaluation in 2005. The total Regional contribution would then be a maximum of \$27,500. The Ontario Ministry of Energy will match those funds.

60. Niagara College

Dan Patterson, President, Niagara College, attended to apprise Committee of an opportunity for the Region to renew an agreement to invest in Niagara College in support of its important infrastructure plans and future growth. Members of Committee were asked to consider an investment of \$95,000 per year for five years for a total of \$475,000 in support of the College's capital improvement requirements and technology plans. This amount represents a partial repayment of the payment Niagara College gives to the Region in lieu of taxes. Niagara College, he commented, is committed to supporting communities and industries by being enterprising, innovating and globally connected. An investment in the College will provide significant returns for both taxpayers and students, contributing to the economic vibrancy of the Region. Mr. Patterson thanked the Region for its past financial support and continued valued relationship.

61. Memo – Permissive Grants

Mr. Bacchus, Commissioner, Corporate Services, highlighted his memorandum providing further explanation of Council's policy regarding permissive grants and how they may wish to consider the requests submitted. He advised that it is not mandatory that grants be given, it is permissive on Council's part. Two basic criteria can be used to satisfy Council's existing position for the allocation of grants and requests before Council:

- First, there must be a clear and imminent need or:
- Second, the purpose must be related to a mandated service which is provided by Regional government

Therefore, Council can provide a grant when it considers it would be in the Region's interest to do so.

The Commissioner's memo provided an examination of the requests that indicate none would meet either of the two criteria and that it is solely within Council's discretion to approve any of the requests.

Permissive Grant Allocations

Conflict of Interest

Councillor Katzman declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to the Niagara Region Children's Safety Village, as it relates to the School Boards, as she is employed by the Niagara District School Board, and she therefore took no part in the discussion of, or voting on, this matter.

62. Niagara Region Children's Safety Village

Moved by Councillor Smeaton
Seconded by Councillor Burroughs

That the Niagara Region Children's Safety Village request for \$150,000 be denied; and

That the matter be referred to the Public Health and Community Services Departments to facilitate discussions with the area municipalities and relevant stakeholders, including educational agencies, to develop a means to allow the Niagara Region Children's Safety Village to continue to operate and achieve its goals.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page CW 42.)

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 6:10 p.m.

The Committee of the Whole resumed its meeting at 6:55 p.m.

63. Smart Growth Initiative

Moved by Councillor Martin
Seconded by Councillor Trombetta

That the Smart Growth Incentive request for \$250,000 be included in the Planning and Development Budget, as a one time request, for consideration with the overall 2005 Consolidated Budget.

Carried.

64. NETCorp Reserve for Advanced Visualization Services
and Promoting Niagara Agenda

Moved by Councillor Martin
Seconded by Councillor Trombetta

That the NETCorp Reserve for Advanced Visualization Services (\$100,000) and Promoting Niagara (\$95,000) requests be included into the Niagara Economic & Tourism Corporation Budget, as a one time request, for consideration with the overall 2005 Consolidated Budget.

Carried.

65. Niagara Residential Energy Efficiency Project (REEP)

Moved by Councillor Martin
Seconded by Councillor Eke

That the revised request for the Niagara Residential Energy Efficiency Project (REEP) be dealt with as a grant request with the recommendation that the revised request in the amount of \$27,000 be considered for approval during consideration of the overall 2005 Consolidated Budget.

Carried.

66. Niagara College

Moved by Councillor Brock
Seconded by Councillor Burroughs

That the Niagara College request for \$95,000 be approved for one year and the balance of the request be reviewed annually as outlined in the Commissioner's memorandum.

Carried.

67. Balance of the Committee of the Whole Agenda

Moved by Councillor Martin
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That budget deliberations for the 2005 Current Budget be referred to the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 20th, 2004.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page CW 42.)

RISE FROM COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

68. Moved by Councillor Martin
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That this Council do now rise from Committee of the Whole.

Carried.

STAFF DIRECTIONS

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Provide "Actual" budget figures to November and "estimates" to December 2004 for information. (Refer to minute 7.)
- (ii) Provide an analysis of how Regional departments are currently involved in the Safety Village (including Policing, E.M.S. and Public Health Mandatory Services). (Refer to minute 62.)

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee of the Whole adjourned at 7:10 p.m. to meet again on Thursday, December 16, 2004 at 4:00 p.m. in Committee of the Whole.

Peter Partington
Regional Chairman

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk/Associate Director
of Corporate Strategy