THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHWOLD

- A G E N D A -
Thursday April 2, 2020

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL
1:00 pm Council Chambers, Fingal

For the purpose of an update on COVID-19, Absent Policy, Working from Home Procedure, Southwold Scholarship and Closed Session

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

3. REPORTS;
   (b) Report from the CAO/Clerk RE: Absences Related to COVID-19 Policy
   (c) Report from the CAO/Clerk RE: Working from Home Procedures
   (d) Report from the Deputy Mayor RE: Southwold Scholarship

4. CLOSED SESSION:
   (a) A position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board (section 239 (2) (k)) – Subdivision Agreement

5. ADJOURNMENT: NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL
   TUESDAY APRIL 14, 2020 @ 7:00 P.M.
   Council Chambers, Fingal
DATE: April 2, 2020

PREPARED BY: Katherine Thompson, CAO/Clerk

REPORT NO.: CAO 2020-19

SUBJECT MATTER: COVID-19 Update April 2, 2020

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive this report for information; and;

THAT in accordance with O. Reg 73/20 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, Council suspend all statutes, regulations, rules, by-laws or orders establishing any limitation period or establishing any period of time within which any step must be taken in any proceeding in Ontario, including any intended proceeding, for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.

Purpose:
To provide Council with up to date information about the COVID-19 Pandemic including the impact on Southwold Township operations.

Background:

As of April 1, at 3:00 p.m. there were 1,966 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ontario with 1,399 still active and 534 resolved. Currently there have been 15 cases of COVID-19 in the SWPH Region. One of these cases has been resolved and one has passed away. Up to date information is available on the SWPH website at https://www.swpublichealth.ca/partners-and-professionals-update-novel-coronavirus-covid-19

Comment:

Provincial Orders/Notices

The Provincial government announced on March 31st that students would not return to school until May 4th. This will be subject to further extension based on provincial circumstances.

Planning

O. Reg 73/20 under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (see below) has suspended any statutes, regulations, by-laws etc. that establish any limitation period, or that establish any period of time within which any step in any proceeding in Ontario must be taken. This applies to planning applications including zoning by-law amendments, minor variances, official plan amendments, plans of subdivision and plans of condominiums that require processing and public meetings. These must be
suspended for the duration of the emergency. Site plan approval can still proceed as they do not require a public meeting and are not appealable.

Elgin County Land Division Committee has suspended all severance applications for the duration of the emergency. Mr. Evans (County Planner) has also stated that all plans of subdivision and plans of condominiums are also on hold.

Township Planner is still responding to planning inquiries, assisting the public in filling out and reviewing planning applications and any other planning services she can provide (for instance preparing letters for Land Division Committee when severance conditions are met as the County is still stamping deeds for severances). The Planner is also working to complete an upcoming Site Plan Agreement and working with the Consultants on the Official Plan Update.

**Drainage**

Meetings to consider a report under Section 42 of the Drainage Act and subsequently the Court of Revision are affected by this regulation as well. The Drainage Superintendent does not believe that this will impact current Drainage activity at the Township.

ONTARIO REGULATION 73/20

made under the

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND CIVIL PROTECTION ACT

Made: March 20, 2020 (5:30 pm)

ORDER UNDER SUBSECTION 7.1 (2) OF THE ACT

Whereas an emergency has been declared pursuant to Order in Council 518/2020 (Ontario Regulation 50/20) on March 17, 2020 at 7:30 a.m. Toronto time pursuant to section 7.0.1 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (the “Act”);

And Whereas the criteria set out in subsection 7.1 (2) of the Act have been satisfied;

Now Therefore, an Order is made pursuant to subsection 7.1 (2) of the Act, the terms of which Order are the following:

1. Any provision of any statute, regulation, rule, by-law or order of the Government of Ontario establishing any limitation period shall be suspended for the duration of the emergency, and the suspension shall be retroactive to Monday, March 16, 2020.

2. Any provision of any statute, regulation, rule, by-law or order of the Government of Ontario establishing any period of time within which any step must be taken in any proceeding in Ontario, including any intended proceeding, shall, subject to the discretion of the court, tribunal or other decision-maker responsible for the proceeding, be suspended for the duration of the emergency, and the suspension shall be retroactive to Monday, March 16, 2020.

The duration of this Order is subject to any renewal required under subsection 7.1 (4) and, if applicable, subsection 7.1 (5) of the Act.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Katherine Thompson, CAO/Clerk
DATE: April 2, 2020

PREPARED BY: Katherine Thompson, CAO/Clerk

REPORT NO.: CAO 2020-20

SUBJECT MATTER: Absences Related to COVID-19 and Remote Working Procedures

Recommendation:
THAT Council adopt a policy to govern absences related to COVID-19; and,

THAT Council approve procedures for Remote Working Arrangements.

Purpose:
To provide Council a formalized policy to deal with absences related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and a formalized procedure for remote working arrangements.

Background:
The COVID-19 Pandemic has the potential to result in frequent employee absences due to illness and requirements to self-isolate. The Township of Southwold has been taking steps to ensure that core services continue throughout this pandemic and that staff remain healthy. The Township of Southwold has already taken steps to ensure that adequate physical distancing measures are practiced in the Public Works Department. Public Works Staff have been split into two shifts to reduce contact, work spaces including vehicles are regularly disinfected, only one employee is permitted in a vehicle at a time and contact with the public has been eliminated as much as possible. The Township office has been closed to the public and staff have been encouraged to physically distance themselves from coworkers; however, given the recommendations from the Province and SWPH, the CAO is recommending that Council consider moving Administrative Staff to remote working arrangements as proposed in the attached procedures.

It is also important to formalize the policy around absences related to COVID-19 for those who are not able to work remotely due to either illness or the nature of their job.

Comment:

Absences Related to COVID-19 Policy

This policy governs all absences related to COVID-19 whether they be illness related or related to required self-isolation.

If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing respiratory symptoms related to COVID-19 they will be required to self-isolate. The CAO is suggesting (consistent with Council’s previous direction) that employees who are unable to work from home due to illness or other self-isolation reasons be entitled to 10 paid
Personal Emergency Days. For those who are ill beyond these 10 days, sick time and then Short-Term Disability leave would apply.

Employees who are not ill may also be required to self-isolate for several other reasons including lack of childcare, exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, caring for an ill relative, recommendations from local or provincial health officials, or orders from provincial or federal governments. In some cases, these individuals will be able to work remotely which, with Council endorsement, will be governed by the Southwold Township Remote Working Procedures.

Those who are not able to work remotely but must self-isolate (due either to personal circumstances or the nature of their job) will also be entitled to 10 paid Personal Emergency Leave days. If they are required to self-isolate beyond this point, they may use vacation time, lieu time or banked time. They may also then take job-protected unpaid emergency leave as provided for in the Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020.

Remote Working Procedures

On March 30th the Provincial Medical Officer of Health recommended that all Ontarians move towards self-isolation and as a result of this recommendation SWPH strongly urged that all employees who could work from home should be doing so. Central Elgin has moved all Administrative employees to remote working arrangements and Aylmer, Malahide, Bayham, West Elgin and the County of Elgin have all moved to one or two staff in the office a day with the balance of staff working remotely. Dutton Dunwich will be considering similar arrangements at a Special Council meeting later this week.

After consultation with Southwold Administrative Staff the CAO is recommending that office staff work remotely and that a schedule be created where one staff member a day (on a rotation) attend the office to ensure a physical presence, answer the phone, check the mail etc. Staff are comfortable working independently as the office is closed to the public. The CAO is recommending that to ensure staff well-being, the in-office staff member check-in with the CAO three times a day. When it is the CAO’s turn in the rotation, she will check-in with the Mayor.

The rationale behind only one person in the office was that having two people in the office a day would require dedicated pairs (to prevent unnecessary spread of disease). If one member of the pair were to become ill, both would be required to self-isolate removing two people from the rotation at a time.

The attached procedures will govern remote working arrangements and will apply only during the state of emergency related to COVID-19. Provisions within act as checks and balances to ensure productivity and continuity of services.

Respectfully Submitted by: Katherine Thompson, CAO/Clerk
ABSENCES RELATED TO COVID-19

1. INTENT:
   - To prevent the spread of COVID-19.
   - To provide a safe working environment for Township of Southwold staff.
   - To formalize absence policies related to COVID-19.

2. SCOPE:
   This policy applies to all Administrative and Public Works employees and applies only during the State of Emergency declared as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

3. POLICY:

3.1 Illness Related Absences

3.1.1 If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing respiratory symptoms associated with COVID-19 they will be required to remain off work and self-isolate for 14 days.

3.1.2 If an employee must self-isolate due to illness, they will be entitled to 10 Personal Emergency Leave days (PEL) paid based upon the individual’s usual rate of pay and typical daily working hours.

If the illness persists past these 10 PEL days or if the individual requires additional periods of self-isolation due to illness, the employee will be required to use sick time followed by short term disability leave.

3.1.3 The Township of Southwold does not require medical evidence during the COVID-19 outbreak in order to avoid placing more stress on employees who will have to attend a doctor’s office or a hospital.

3.1.4 Illnesses unrelated to COVID-19 will follow existing sick policies.

3.2 Required to Self-Isolate but not Ill

3.2.1 The Township of Southwold recognizes that there are various reasons that employees may be required to self-isolate even if they are not ill including:
   - childcare considerations,
   - caring for a sick relative,
   - direct exposure to someone infected with COVID-19,
   - recommendations by local and provincial public health officials, or
   - orders from Federal and Provincial governments.

3.2.2 If an employee is required to self-isolate for any of the above-mentioned reasons, they may be eligible to work from home if feasible. Employees must have meaningful work and compatible technology in place and must adhere to the Township of Southwold’s working from home procedures. Those who are working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic will be paid in accordance with existing arrangements.
Southwold Township Remote Working Procedures

The procedures that govern remote working arrangements during the COVID-19 Pandemic are listed here within:

**Rationale:**

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, both the Provincial government and Southwestern Public Health have strongly urged all Ontarians to self-isolate. This includes working from home if feasible. It has been deemed feasible for Southwold Township Administrative Staff to work from home.

**Applicability:**

- These procedures will apply exclusively during the State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Procedures only apply to Administrative employees who can reasonably complete meaningful work from home.
- Employees must have compatible technology.

**Procedures:**

All staff working remotely will be expected to perform their regular duties to the best of their abilities for the duration of the remote working arrangement.

1. All Administration Employees will meet no less than twice weekly (Monday and Wednesday) for a group teleconference with the CAO.

2. All Administration Employees working remotely will provide a weekly activity update to the CAO each Friday by noon. This update is to be received electronically.

3. The CAO will combine these weekly updates to provide Council with an update each Friday afternoon.

4. Administration Employees working remotely will be required to respond to inquiries in a similar time frame as they would be expected to do in-office.

5. Administration Employees will be required to be available for contact between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

6. All Administration Employees (excepting those given permission to opt-out due to childcare considerations) will participate in a daily rotational schedule providing for one staff member to attend the Administration Office on business days (Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm).

   - The Township telephone will be answered, and calls directed to the appropriate employee.
   - The mail will be checked and sorted appropriately.
   - All job related scanning, filing, printing and tasks requiring in-office amenities will be done during this in-office time. Staff will need to plan and organize their work to make efficient use of remote and in-office time.
   - For safety purposes the on-site employee will be required to check-in with the CAO thrice daily (morning, lunch, end of work day). The CAO will check-in with the Mayor.
3.2.3 If an employee is required to self-isolate for any of the reasons listed in Section 3.2.1 but is not able to work from home, they will be entitled to 10 Personal Emergency Leave (PEL) days. These days will be paid based upon the individual’s regular rate of pay and typical daily working hours. After these 10 PEL days if the individual is still unable to return to work for any of the above mentioned reasons they will be provided with the option to use vacation time, lieu time or banked time, after which they will be entitled to unpaid job-protected leave as per Bill 186 Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020.

3.3 Travel

Employees who have recently traveled outside of Canada are required to self-isolate for 14 days as per the Federal Quarantine Act.

If an employee’s travel began on or after March 25, 2020, they will be required to use sick time, vacation, overtime or lieu time to account for their absence.