



TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

REPORT

Item No.

REPORT TO: Reeve Vincent and Members of Council
PREPARED BY: Sean McGhee, Director of Public Works
DATE: 17/09/2018
SUBJECT: Howson Dam Working Group
ATTACHMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby receive the report of the Director of Public Works, dated September 17th, 2018 regarding the establishment of a Howson Dam Working Group for information;

AND FURTHER THAT staff present this report to the next term of Council for consideration as soon as practicable in 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Howson Dam is a municipally owned asset which requires attention. Decisions related to the direction taken to address this asset will have significant financial and societal impact on the municipality, particularly the Town of Wingham.

Purpose

In order to navigate the complexities of this issue without bias, Council has deemed it advantageous to establish a working group. This group will consider the future of the water course through the Town of Wingham and relay options with recommendations to Council.

Working Group Composition

By design, the working group would be comprised of North Huron ratepayers representing a cross section of perspectives and opinions surrounding the Howson Dam. The Working Group should also be structured to ensure that all Wards are represented throughout the process. Staff prepared this report on the premise that the Howson Dam is non-area rated. Should the Howson Dam project be deemed by Council to be an area rated project, the composition of the Working Group would change dramatically.

It is suggested the composition of the committee be as follows:

- One (1) Wingham residential ratepayer;
- One (1) representative of the Wingham business or commercial community;
- One (1) Blyth residential property owner;
- One (1) Blyth commercial representative or business owner;
- One (1) East Wawanosh property owner;
- One (1) East Wawanosh Agricultural or Business Commercial representative;
- One (1) Chairperson selected from Council.

Preference of candidates during the selection process will be exercised to ensure that the Working Group would be composed equally by individuals interested in preservation of the headwaters and individuals in favour of naturalization of the river.

Note – Representatives from East Wawanosh Ward and Blyth Ward share equal participatory rights with all members of the Group unless the project is deemed as Area Rated, in which case, representatives from the two wards will lose standing within the working group. In this instance, two further candidates, one from each opinion group, would be drawn from the Wingham Ward.

Committee (Working Group) Mandate

It is proposed that this Working Group be established as a formal Committee of Council which would operate in a manner that meets all requirements of the Municipal Act. The mandate of the Working Group would be established utilizing a phased approach as follows:

Phase One – Fact Finding

- Full review of all existing documentation surrounding the existing Howson Dam;
- Search out and contact Dam advocacy groups;
- Consultation with other communities with similar situations;
- Meet with Resources to gather information such as:
 - Pro-Dam advocacy groups;
 - Ministry of Natural Resources Representatives;
 - BM Ross;
 - KGS Group;
 - GSS Engineering;
 - Maitland Valley Conservation Authority;
 - Ontario Rivers Alliance;

Phase Two – Plan Development

- Develop a preferred course of action based on all of the information gathered, to be presented to Council for consideration;
- Determine estimated costing model, including potential opportunities for funding and partnerships to align with recommended plan;
- Develop an Implementation Plan with associated timelines;
- Develop a Public Consultation Plan with recommendations surrounding methods for delivery of public meeting.

Phase Three – Council Report

Upon completion of all of the items identified in Phase One of the Working Group Mandate, a report to Council will be developed for presentation in open Council.

Phase Four – Project Work

If approved to proceed, staff will assist the Working Group with associated tasks by coordinating and facilitating the work. This can include, but is not necessarily limited to the following:

- I. Planning process for Public Engagement meetings;
- II. Assist in identifying potential funding sources and/or funding partners;
- III. Monitor approved implementation plan and timelines;
- IV. Provide status reports to Council as required.

DISCUSSION

Under the direction of a Member of Council acting in the capacity of Chair, the Working Group would commence by establishing a meeting schedule for meetings. Staff resources would be present at all meetings and would include a recording secretary for the purpose of taking minutes and the Director of Public Works as an operational resource.

In order to ensure a representative cross-section of North Huron residents, it is recommended that all individuals wishing to participate on the Working Group apply to the Township for standing within a specified timeline. It is suggested all applicants be asked to express their interest in writing by responding to the following pre-established questions:

- What information would you like to be brought to the table in order to understand the issues associated with this project?
- What do you see as a benefit in utilizing the Committee Structure to work through this project?
- Are there any direct monetary benefits to you or your immediate family that you are aware of that might preclude you from involvement in this Working Group?

Upon receipt of all applications, the submissions would be reviewed and recommended participants would be selected by an independent third-party engineering firm. Upon completion of the selection process, a report identifying the recommended Working Group members and the process associated with the selection would be presented to Council for final approval.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The financial impact of this process will be limited to fees and charges associated with meetings and presentations with various engineering firms. These costs would need to be considered during the 2019 budget process. The estimated budget for this work is approximately \$10,000.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

None at this time

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This project relates to **Goal No. 2** of the Strategic Plan in that our residents are engaged and well informed, **Goal No.3**, the Township is healthy and safe. **Goal No. 4**, the administration is fiscally responsible and strives for operational excellence, and **Goal No. 5** in that our natural environment is valued and protected.



Sean McGhee, Director of Public Works



Dwayne Evans, CAO