



Meeting Date: October 13, 2021

Submitted by: James Hutson, Municipal Clerk

Report No: CLK-015-2021

Subject: 2022 Council Meeting Schedule

Recommendation:

THAT Report CLK-015-2021 re: 2022 Council Meeting Schedule be received;

AND THAT the 2022 Middlesex Centre Council meeting schedule attached as Appendix 'A' be approved.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the proposed Council meeting dates which have been identified for the upcoming 2022 calendar year and to seek approval of these meeting dates.

Background:

In accordance with the provisions of the Middlesex Centre Procedural By-law #2017-206, Council traditionally reviews and approves an annual schedule of Council meetings for the forthcoming year each fall. Confirming the meeting schedule ahead of the end of the calendar year will enable staff, Council and the public to prepare for the 2022 Council meeting dates. This process assists with prioritizing initiatives while ensuring deadlines are met by having a set date in place. For the 2022 year, consideration is being given to how the 2022 Municipal and School Board Elections will impact the schedule of meetings in the latter half of the year.

Analysis:

A schedule of annual meetings must be established by Council prior to the first meeting of the calendar year. In keeping with the format of meetings held in previous years, staff are proposing that meetings continue to be held on Wednesdays adhering to a 2-week rotating basis. The first meeting of the month will be scheduled at 9:30 a.m., and the second meeting of the month (the Planning/Public Meeting) will be scheduled for a start time of 6:00 p.m.

All Council meetings are live-streamed and are available for viewing on the Middlesex Centre municipal website and YouTube channel. At this time, Council is continuing with a hybrid meeting format whereby members of Council participate in-person, with members of staff and the public participating electronically. This format is anticipated to continue into 2022, and will be reviewed by staff in accordance with Public Health recommendations.

2022 Municipal and School Board Elections

As the 2022 Municipal and School Board Elections are scheduled for the upcoming year, this will have an impact on the latter half of the yearly meeting schedule. There are some key dates to be mindful of, including the nomination period, which will open on May 2, 2022 and close on August 25, 2022. The voting period for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Elections will open on October 17th and close on October 24th.

The above nomination period dates are important when considering the possibility of what is known as a 'lame duck' Council to be in effect during the latter portion of 2022. Section 275 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* states that if less than 75% of incumbent councillors seek re-election, the Council for a municipality is restricted from passing any bylaw that allocates spending of more than \$50,000.00 or creates a liability for the municipality greater than \$50,000.00.

Accordingly, the Municipality of Middlesex Centre may potentially face this scenario beginning with the September 7th meeting, and through to the swearing in of the new Council, should less than 5 incumbent members of Council seek re-election.

Bill 68 Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, 2016 implemented a change to the term of office of Council which impacts when members take office. The amendment sets out a start date for a new term of Council from December 1st following the regular election, to a new date of November 15th.

Bearing the above impacts in mind, the calendar of meeting dates has been proposed to account for the potential lame duck period, as well as to allow for the swearing in of the new Council at the inaugural meeting to be held on Wednesday, November 16, 2021. As a result, the meeting schedule for October has been reduced to 1 meeting.

Monday, November 21, 2022 and Monday, November 28, 2022 have been reserved for Council Orientation sessions.

Based on the above, the following are the recommended dates for Council meetings to be held in 2022:

January 5, 2022 | January 19, 2022

February 2, 2021 | February 16, 2022

March 2, 2021 | March 16, 2022

April 6, 2022 | April 20, 2022

May 4, 2022 | May 18, 2022

June 1, 2022 | June 15, 2022

July 6, 2021 | July 13, 2021

August 3, 2021

Potential Lame Duck Begins (August 25 – November 14, 2022)

September 7, 2022 | September 21, 2022

October 12, 2022

November 2, 2022 (Recognition of 2018-2022 Council)

November 16, 2022 (Inaugural Council)

November 21, 2022 | November 28, 2022 (Council Orientation Dates)

December 7, 2022

The calendar will be updated to reflect changes that occur throughout the year, such as adding additional meeting dates. In addition, based on the volume of planning applications received, the start time for Planning Public meetings may be altered to allow for the hearing of additional applications. In these cases, proper notice of the meeting date, time and location will be provided to the public.

Staff have received feedback in 2021 noting that the start times and the ability for electronic participation was received positively by members of the public. This is further evidenced by an increase in viewership for live-streamed meetings from approximately 25 in early 2021 to upwards of 75 for meetings held in the fall of 2021. The May 12, 2021 meeting of Council received in excess 200 views.

Based on the above, it is recommended that the timing for Council meetings in 2022 be set as 9:30 a.m. for the first meeting of each month, and at 6:00 p.m. for the second meeting of the month. Recognizing that there is flexibility based on the quantity of agenda matters, the meetings will be arranged with this model but could change from time-to-time. There are a number of benefits to continuing with this model, as it allows greater flexibility for members of the public to attend either an evening or a morning session of Council which coincides with other commitments. Further, there are financial savings to be realized by the organization in terms of potential overtime staffing costs by scheduling one meeting each month to occur during the day. Finally, the overall increase in live stream viewership of Middlesex Centre council meetings helps to mitigate the impact of meeting timing.

Financial Implications:

The financial costs to facilitate and conduct municipal Council meetings are covered through the annual operating budget.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Engaged Community

Establishing an annual meeting schedule in advance of the calendar year helps to foster community engagement by publicizing opportunities to participate in the municipal decision making process.

Attachments:

A1 – 2022 Council Meeting Schedule