



Meeting Date: June 5, 2024

Prepared By: Megan Kamermans – Deputy Clerk

Submitted by: Megan Kamermans – Deputy Clerk

Report No: CLK-04-2024

Subject: Ontario Land Tribunal E-File Portal Implementation

Recommendation:

THAT Report CLK-04-2024, re: Ontario Land Tribunal E-File Portal Implementation be received for information.

Purpose:

In March of 2023, the municipality responded to a call for participants to assist with the implementation of a new Ontario Land Tribunal E-file Portal for the submission and remittance of appeals. Through this portal, appellants will be able to submit and manage their appeals online, including all supporting documentation and fee payments.

Municipalities and other approval authorities will be able to receive appeals online, and manage and forward them to the Tribunal in a more efficient and streamlined digital process.

Background:

The first consultation session on this initiative took place in March of 2023, and included staff from the municipalities of Middlesex Centre, Hamilton, Mississauga, and Toronto. Middlesex Centre's participation along with other large urban centres in Ontario speaks to our organizations continued commitment to embracing new technologies and efficient ways of doing business.

In February of 2024 staff participated in a second consultation session where they received a demo of an early prototype of the new e-files appeal service and were given the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement and additions. After this session, a limited group of municipalities and approval authorities were given the opportunity to then register for the e-file portal and begin implementation. To date, Middlesex Centre along with the City of Hamilton are the first municipalities in Ontario to adopt this new system. This implementation required modifications to our Notices of

Decision so that they would refer to the e-file portal option while continuing to provide the option for appellants to submit their documents physically to the Clerk.

Prior to the introduction of the e-file portal, the Clerks Division was responsible for receiving, processing and submitting all appeals from the appellant. With this new process, the appellant will now be able to complete these steps directly within the portal, reducing the amount of staff time required for the submission of an appeal package. In addition to this, the Clerks Division was also responsible for manually compiling, and submitting all of the required municipal documents both in electronic format as well as in physical format to the tribunal. With this new portal, staff are now able to submit these required documents electronically and take advantage of the auto-population features and built-in logic making this process much more efficient.

Analysis:

Becoming a registered e-file service provider is not a legislative requirement, but it does offer significant benefits over the current manual process:

Better public service:

- e-file is fast and secure
- appellants/applicants can pay online or send cheques directly to the Tribunal

Simplifies staff's processes, improves accuracy, and saves time:

- built-in logic minimizes data entry through auto-population features and dropdown menus
- reduces time scanning documents or using mail/couriers to forward appeal packages to the OLT on paper
- group related appeals together at the click of a button
- smart form logic ensures the accurate completion of mandatory information
- decreases the management of cheques

The e-file portal is accessed through a link on the Tribunal website. The portal replicates the legislated manual appeal filing process in use today, but with the automation and functional improvements that digitization offers including:

• **Smart Form technology:** allows the development of a digital version of the A1 and M1 forms. Business logic, based on the appeal types, will keep the form simple and focused, and data pre-population will enable users (appellants and approval authorities) to submit accurate information and minimize the time to complete and submit the forms, preserving the ability to upload related documentation.

- **CCPay Online Payment Service:** facilitates real-time, secure payments via credit cards and debit-credit cards, which will reduce the handling of cheques.

- **User-friendly dashboard:** allows users to manage appeals (review appeals and group them, if applicable, to create case appeal packages) and forward them automatically to the Tribunal.

Financial Implications:

There is no additional cost to the public or to the municipality to adopt an e-file approach to managing appeals.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Responsive Municipal Government

Objective 5.3 – Foster a culture of innovation, continuous improvement, and cost-effective service delivery

Attachments:

N/A