

REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Planning, Public Works and Transportation Committee

REPORT FROM: Ruth Conard, Planner - Development Review
Niloo Hodjati, Secretary-Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment

DATE: November 6, 2019

REPORT NO.: PLS-2019-0078

RE: Planning & Development Notification and Report Improvements

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report PLS-2019-0078, dated November 6, 2019, regarding “Planning & Development Notification and Report Improvements”, be received for information.

BACKGROUND:

In 2018 the Town adopted a Public Engagement Charter, which is intended to support the objective of providing a proactive, multifaceted public engagement strategy to foster the effective exchange of information between the municipality and its residents.

Consistent with these efforts Planning and Communications staff have updated and improved the Town’s notices and signage associated with development applications and also the Planning staff reports to the Committee of Adjustment. The intent of the improvements is to communicate proposed changes to a property or community in a more clear, concise and reader-friendly manner in the hopes of encouraging more residents to participate in the development review process.

To that end, a number of improvements have been made to the following documents:

1. Signage;
2. Notices of Received Application and Public Meeting/Hearing; and,
3. Committee of Adjustment Planning Reports.

COMMENTS:

Each year the Planning & Development Department processes dozens of *Planning Act* applications for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Draft Plan of Subdivisions, Minor Variances and Consents. The *Planning Act* requires the public to be notified of these applications and sets out certain statutory requirements for inclusion within the notification. However, as long as the statutory requirements have been satisfied a municipality has the authority to prepare the notices as they see fit.

Below is an overview of the improvements made to the previously listed documents:

1. Signage:

Upon filing a new Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment or Draft Plan of Subdivision application an applicant is required to post a sign on their property notifying the public of the intent of their application.

Staff modified the Town's current signage to include increased dimensions for better visibility, a bold heading in colour, images of the proposal, and clear language to make it more noticeable. See **SCHEDULE 1 – SIGNAGE** for a comparison of the original sign versus the new design. The Rockport Development at 224 Maple Avenue was used as an example to illustrate the difference.

2. Notices of Received Applications and Public Meetings/Hearings:

Upon receipt of applications for Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision, Minor Variance or Consent the Town is required to notify residents owning properties near the affected property of the submission.

For these applications the *Planning Act* also requires a municipality to notify residents when a statutory public meeting will be held before Council or when the Committee of Adjustment may consider an application at one of their hearings.

While these two notices serve different purposes, traditionally the design and content of the notices are similar. Staff have improved the notices through:

- The addition of illustrations such as location maps and renderings;
- The language has been condensed to remove repetitive information and clarified to be more reader-friendly;
- The Town logo has been updated to be more consistent with communications standards of the municipality; and,
- For the Public Meeting/Hearing Notices, they now contain a more prominent display of the date, time and location of the public meeting/hearing.

Given the similarity between the Notice of Received Application and the Public Meeting/Hearing Notice, staff have only appended examples of the changes made to the Public Meeting/Hearing Notice.

Examples of the original versus new Public Meeting Notice for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment or Draft Plan of Subdivision application has

been attached as **SCHEDULE 2**. Again the Rockport Development at 224 Maple Avenue was used to illustrate the differences.

The old versus new Committee of Adjustment Notice of Hearing is attached as **SCHEDULE 3**. A typical minor variance application was used to demonstrate the changes.

3. Committee of Adjustment Planning Reports:

Planning staff prepare recommendation reports to the Committee of Adjustment for every minor variance and consent (severance) application filed with the Town.

The staff reports have been restructured to provide additional detail about the proposal and further evaluation of the policy framework and tests applicable to the proposal. Additionally, a new template has made the reports more reader-friendly through the use of section headings. Examples of an old versus new minor variance report have been attached as **SCHEDULE 4**.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report relates, in part, to the following Strategic Action Plan priorities adopted by Council for this term:

1. Municipal Service Delivery:
 - Effective, efficient and economical delivery of the Town's existing services.
8. Communications:
 - A. Continue to provide timely, transparent communications with residents and business owners.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

CONSULTATION:

Planning staff consulted with Corporate Communications in the preparation of this report.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

No public notification or engagement is required for this report.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

This report is not applicable to the Strategy's implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The documents listed in this report will enhance the Planning & Development Department's public notification process.

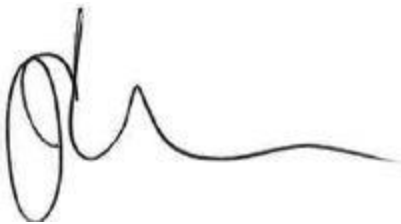
CONCLUSION:

This report has provided an overview of the work conducted to update and improve statutory notices and signage for development applications as well as Committee of Adjustment planning reports. The intent is to make the documents more clear, concise and reader-friendly.

Reviewed and Approved by,



Jeff Markowiak, Manager of Development Review



John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability



Brent Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer