MINUTES

CITY OF MERRITT

REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, May 12, 2020
7:00 P.M.
Held online due to social distancing requirements
Public access link published on City website
& social media accounts

PRESENT: **Mayor L. Brown**
Councillor M. Bhangu
Councillor K. Christopherson
Councillor A. Etchart
Councillor T. Fehr
Councillor T. Luck
Councillor M. White

Mr. S. Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. S. Smith, Director of Corporate Services
Ms. S. Thiessen, Director of Finance & IT
Mr G. Lowis, Deputy Corporate Officer
Mr. W. George, Tourism & Economic Development Manager
Mr. W. Anderson, Financial Services Manager
Mr. D. McArthur, Planning & Development Services Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Call to Order

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

2. LATE ITEMS

3. PUBLIC INPUT

Nil

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Regular Council Meeting Minutes- April 21st, 2020

Resolution No:

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on April 21st, 2020 be adopted

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. BYLAWS

8.1 Claybanks RV Park Fees Bylaw

File: 3900.2280

Mr McKeown outlined the nature of the bylaw as has passed three readings.

Resolution No:

That Council Adopt Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No 2280, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8.2 Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw

File: 3900.2281

Prior to readings of the Financial Plan Bylaw, Sheila Theissen, Director of Finance and IT will present to Council an overview of the Financial Plan and Tax Rate Bylaws.

Ms Thiessen presented about the budget process, and the impact of COVID-19, including the opportunity to do capital projects and maintenance at closed facilities.

She explained the requirement for a 5 year budget bylaw, the tax basis, and the various grants the City has access to.

Councillors confirmed that all parts of the Financial Plan other than taxes can be adjusted as needed, and the nature of the flood restoration works planned.

Resolution No:

THAT Council give first reading to Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw No 2281, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No:

THAT Council give second reading to Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw No 2281, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No:

THAT Council give third reading to Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw No 2281, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No:

THAT Council Adopt Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw No 2281, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8.3 2020 Annual Property Tax Rate Bylaw

File: 3900.2282

Ms Thiessen explained the direction from council of reducing tax rates, which areas the City had control over, and noted that a tax calculator would be provided on the City's website at merritt.ca from Wednesday 13th May onwards to allow people to estimate their bills before the formal ones arrive.

She also explained that a revised scheme had been adopted, pushing back the due date, and reducing the penalty for late payment, and that if

people wished to opt out of the later date and reduced penalty, they could do so by informing City Hall by June 15th.

Councillors spoke to note they had done what they could to make life easier for residents while being in compliance with government regulations.

Resolution No:

THAT Council give first reading to Annual Property Tax Bylaw No 2282, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No:

THAT Council give second reading to Annual Property Tax Bylaw No 2282, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No:

THAT Council give third reading to Annual Property Tax Bylaw No 2282, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No:

THAT Council Adopt Annual Property Tax Bylaw No 2282, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Facilities & Recreation Update

Oral report from Sky McKeown

Mr McKeown explained how recreation managers were working across the Province to return to recreation facilities. These provide mental support, aid healthy living, and community cohesion during troubled times.

He explained that the plan was for the Province's Public Health Officer to approve plans for re-opening, which will need to emphasize cleaning and personal distancing. He spoke about staff who have already returned, or who will be soon. There is currently no hard date for re-opening, which is intended to be co-ordinated across British Columbia.

Councillors asked questions about the plans to re-open, which user groups might be involved, potential timescales, and communications.

9.2 Zoning Bylaw Update

Oral report from Don McArthur

Mr McArthur provided an update on the status of the Zoning Bylaw updates. The March 4th plan had been an aggressive proposal to bring the Bylaw to the May 12th meeting, but subsequent developments meant this work was not able to be completed. That is hoped to come forward some time in June.

He also provided an update on the GIS update underway, the Official Community Plan update, and the North Bench Plan, and the work of the department overall.

Councillors asked about the bench development, the status of applications, and discussed the possibility of adding summer meetings if needed.

9.3 CAO Update

Mr Hildebrand praised staff for their work over the last 8 weeks as the City shut down to essential services, progressed to core services, and began working towards the re-opening.

Ms Thiessen will be retiring in the next 6 weeks, and plans are being made to replace her.

The Voght St corner project is progressing towards flood mitigation, and is currently under budget.

Emergency Operations Centre has been open for the last two months, beginning with Covid-19, and now focusing on flooding, and preparing for summer fires. Working to ensure community stays as dry as possible, and shifting towards fire awareness.

Continuing to work with BC housing to support the vulnerable population with housing and washrooms.

Audit and Finance meeting coming up, Worksafe visited the school and made a surprise visit to the City's public works, whom they gave a great evaluation.

Business group is being established to talk through re-opening strategy.

City hoping to reopen City Hall safely after long weekend on Wednesday May 20th, with limited hours, on the first floor only. Residents are encouraged to do everything they can online, but those who cannot will be able to make payments and access services at a safe distance.

Councillors spoke to praise work done by the CAO and staff through the crisis.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil.

11. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL

Councillor Christopherson wanted to mention activities were happening at the airport when possible, including the cracked ceiling.

12. INFORMATION ITEMS

12.1 Strategic Planning Priorities

12.2 District of Lake Country

13. CLOSED SESSION

Resolution No:

13.1 Vote to close item to press and public

THAT this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) of the *Community Charter*

Resolution No:

THAT this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) of the Community Charter

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

13.2 Personnel Update

13.3 Vote to return to public meeting

THAT this meeting be returned to open session, having conducted the business that required closure pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) of the *Community Charter*

Resolution No:

THAT this meeting be returned to open session, having conducted the business that required closure pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) of the Community Charter

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

14. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The Mayor declared the meeting ended at 8:52pm

_____

Corporate Officer

Sean Smith

Certified correct in accordance with Section 124(2) (c) of the Community Charter

Confirmed on the ____ day of _____, 20____

_____

Mayor

Linda Brown