



MINUTES

CITY OF MERRITT

REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, October 13, 2020
7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
2185 Voght Street
Merritt, B.C

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr. S. Smith, Chief Administrative Officer**
- Mr. G. Lowis, Director of Corporate Services**
- Mr. W. George, Economic Development, Communications & Tourism Manager**
- Mr. W. Anderson, Director of Finance and IT**
- Mr. D. McArthur, Planning & Development Services Manager**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 7:14pm

2. LATE ITEMS

3. PUBLIC INPUT

Lindsey Fehr addressed item 8.2, stating that the Trans Mountain offer to pay for bulk water and sewage processing plants was not generous, but instead simply came from taxpayer dollars.

Craig Grey spoke to item 8.2 raising concerns that the Coldwater river has annual problems of drought, and asking why the City was welcoming Trans Mountain who would not be here for long. He also spoke to Ms. Robinson's presentation, saying that they used to but no longer saw steam being used to treat particulate emissions.

Mr. George then introduced Mr. and Mrs. Ho and their family, the first entrepreneurs to settle in Merritt under the BC PNP regional pilot. Mr. Ho thanked Council for the opportunity to speak, and explained about the sewing machine shop he was opening. The Mayor welcomed him, and thanked him for choosing Merritt.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Special Council Meeting Minutes - September 29th, 2020

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-01

THAT the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on September 29th, 2020 be adopted.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

5. GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions

5.1 Community Futures Nicola Valley

Manuel Olguin to present

Mr. Olguin spoke about the BC PNP program, and how it currently operates in Merritt. He advocated for changes to the program to increase screening at Merritt which he felt would reduce the burden on applicants who had no chance of making a successful application.

Councillors asked a series of questions about how the program operates in other communities, and what the relative role of the Province and the City was. Mr. Smith ultimately suggested that a Committee of the Whole meeting could be set up, dedicated to this topic in order to go into it in-depth.

5.2 Lori Robinson

Ms. Robinson to present about clean air & air quality monitoring

Ms. Robinson explained that she had written to Council repeatedly this summer, and not initially had a response. She had argued for a permanent

air monitoring station to give real-time data, and argued for the re-activation of the Clean Air Committee, which could be more focused than an overarching Environment committee. She said that she had had a good response from subsequent engagements with Council and staff, and Mr. Smith thanked her for putting the City in touch with relevant Provincial officials.

5.3 Brett and Bernadette Nyeste

Mr. and Ms. Nyeste to present about the North Bench NDP

Ms. Nyeste spoke about raising her family on the edge of the Crown land, and their concerns about development on the North Bench. She said the recreation areas were well-used by local residents, and that the survey done had not had an explicit option for not wanting development to take place. The webinar she had attended had been innovative, but reduced residents ability to share comments compared to in-person activities. Further, she queried the development proposed, asking why Merritt needed a third commercial area. She would rather see the land remain forest.

Councillors thanked Ms. Nyeste for her comments.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 Notice of Motion

At the September 15th, 2020 meeting, Councilor Bhangu made the following Notice of Motion:

THAT a small fund be attached to each City committee in order to provide refreshments for the members

Cllr Bhangu proposed his motion that a small fund be added so the volunteers on committees could enjoy refreshments as a token of the City's appreciation. It was moved, seconded, and carried to refer the motion to staff as part of the ongoing review of City committees.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-02

THAT the motion be referred to staff as part of the Committee review currently being undertaken

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

6.2 Symbol of Diversity and Inclusion Logo

To be introduced by Mr. George

Mr. George introduced the results of the public survey. Cllr Fehr expressed his pleasure with the results, and that at least a portion of the community had weighed in.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-03

THAT Council adopts Option #1 of the attached as the Symbol of Diversity and Inclusion Logo for the City of Merritt.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

7. BYLAWS

7.1 Third Reading and Final Adoption OCP Amendment Bylaw No. 2289 and Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 2290 (3350 Voght Street and 3155 Grimmatt Street)

To be introduced by Mr. McArthur

Mr. McArthur introduced the item, and said if Mayor and Council had any queries arising from the Public Hearing he would speak to them.

Members discussed the situation of water in the City, including the ongoing research into how the rivers and aquifers interact, and the recent vote to instruct staff to look at improvements to the Kengard well.

Council discussed the proposals on the site, and the difference between a Zoning application and a specific site development. The implications of this proposal being a downzoning were discussed, as well as the differences between R4 and R7 Zoning.

Staff reminded Council that the OCP and Zoning questions, while closely tied together, were separate and should be considered separately.

It was moved, seconded, but not carried to amend the proposal to replace the R7 zone with R4.

Council expressed that this was a difficult decision, where anything would leave a number of unhappy people, and that the current zoning allowed for uses which would doubtless make people even unhappier.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-04

THAT Council give Third Reading to Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 2289, 2020

Against (2): Mike Bhangu, and Melvina White

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-05

THAT Council adopt Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 2289, 2020

Against (2): Mike Bhangu, and Melvina White

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-07

THAT Council give Third Reading to Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 2290, 2020

Against (2): Mike Bhangu, and Melvina White

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Amendment: Resolution No: 2020RC-16-06

THAT the proposal be amended to remove the R7 section and to rezone the relevant parcel entirely with R4.

Against (5): Linda A. Brown, Kurt Christopherson, Adam Etchart, Travis Fehr, and Tony Luck

DEFEATED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-08

THAT Council adopt Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 2290, 2020

Against (2): Mike Bhangu, and Melvina White

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

7.2 Permissive Tax Exemptions

Mr. Lowis explained how the wording of the Bylaw as initially proposed had potentially rendered the Bylaw open to challenge, and that staff were proposing a revised Bylaw wording with corrected section numbers.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-09

THAT Council rescind Third Reading of Permissive Tax Exemption Bylaw No. 2288, 2020

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-10

THAT Council amend Permissive Tax Exemption Bylaw No. 2288, 2020 as attached;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-11

THAT Council read Permissive Tax Exemption Bylaw No. 2288, 2020 a third time;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-12

THAT Council Adopt Permissive Tax Exemption Bylaw No. 2288, 2020

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

7.3 Land Use Fees Amendment Bylaw No. 2292 (Schedule B Fees)

To be introduced by Mr. McArthur

Mr. McArthur introduced the report, noting that the existing fees had not been altered to account for costs in many years, and that revisions to Bylaws had resulted in new services being offered that did not yet have fees attached to them.

He explained that discretionary uses of land are those that the Zoning Bylaw allows staff to approve or reject on a particular site.

Mr. Smith said that staff had worked to make the fees responsive to concerns about competitiveness, and hoped that reductions in some areas would incentivize people to go through the proper processes.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-13

***THAT Council give First Reading to Land Use Fees Amendment
Bylaw No. 2292, 2020***

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-14

***THAT Council give Second Reading to Land Use Fees Amendment
Bylaw No. 2292, 2020***

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-15

***THAT Council give Third Reading to Land Use Fees Amendment
Bylaw No. 2292, 2020***

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Investing in Canada Infrastructure – Grant Application

To be introduced by Mr. Lowis

Mr. Lowis explained that if Council approved of this item, staff would apply for a grant to fund the continued work on Voght St. A successful grant application would 90% fund the project, which would be provided to the Government in two phases in order to maximize chances.

Mayor and Council expressed support for the project.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-16

***THAT Council direct staff to submit an application for the Voght St -
Phase 2 project through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure
Program – Rural and Northern Communities stream;***

***AND THAT Council support the project and commit to the City's
share of project costs (\$747,586)***

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8.2 Bulk Water and Sanitary Dump Locations

To be introduced by Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith introduced the item, and linked it back to the amendments earlier this summer. He explained that the proposed usages would represent 1.24% increase of water, and 2.5% of sewage, and that in specific times when groundwater infiltration due to freshet was exceeding capacity, or the City was in drought, staff would ask Trans Mountain to go elsewhere. He said staff had identified two sites that were not near existing commercial or residential uses in order to avoid concerns about odour.

Mayor and Council confirmed that if the plan went forward the City would pay nothing, and discussed how the revenue could be used in any way, including being earmarked for improvements at the Kengard well.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-17

THAT Council direct staff to amend the 2020-2024 Financial Plan Bylaw to include the Bulk Water and Sanitary Dump infrastructure projects, conditional upon entering into a final agreement with Trans Mountain to cover all costs associated with these projects.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8.3 Retail Cannabis Sales

To be introduced by Mr. McArthur

Mr. McArthur introduced the report, noting that staff had made this proposal in 2019 as well.

Mayor and Council discussed the merits and pitfalls of a numerical cap solely on retail cannabis stores within Merritt, raising questions around free enterprise, the position of government stores, cannabis' status as a formerly controlled substance, and the comparison with liquor and tobacco.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-18

THAT Council direct staff to prepare, for Council discussion and debate, a report to amend Section 4.41.3 of Zoning Bylaw No. 2284, 2020, removing the maximum cap of four Retail Cannabis Sales stores in the City.

Against (3): Mike Bhangu, Adam Etchart, and Melvina White

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8.4 Memorandum of Understanding – Carpere Canada Industrial Park Corp.

To be introduced by Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith introduced the item, and explained Carpere's position as a new company, and emphasized that the MOU did not commit Merritt to doing anything beyond what the City would do for any company bringing forward land use proposals.

Council raised concerns about land banking and what role the company would play in the community, and confirmed that there were no firm guarantees or promises of action made by either party.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-19

THAT Council authorize Mayor Brown to sign the attached Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Merritt and Carpere Canada Industrial Park Corp.

Against (3): Kurt Christopherson, Travis Fehr, and Melvina White

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8.5 Community Planner Position

To be introduced by Mr. McArthur

Mr. McArthur explained that with the amount of interest in development in Merritt, an additional planner would result in improved customer service, and that the position would at least partially pay for itself due to increased fees for services provided.

Council discussed the commitment, raising concerns about spending money, and what justification there was for that. They also discussed the current staff workload, and the implications of using consultants rather than staff.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-20

THAT Council direct staff to include a Community Planner position in the proposed 2021-2025 Financial Plan.

Against (1): Mike Bhangu

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8.6 Agreement to Remove or Demolish (2082 Aspen Street)

To be introduced by Mr. McArthur

Mr. McArthur explained that the property owners wish to continue living in a duplex while they build a new modular home and to then demolish the duplex, but that the Zoning Bylaw as written does not allow this.

Council noted that a similar approval had been granted earlier this year.

Resolution No: 2020RC-16-21

THAT Council accepts the Agreement to remove or demolish the mobile home at 2082 Aspen Street, following the issuance of an occupancy permit for the new dwelling;

AND THAT Council authorizes the Mayor and CAO to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

9.1 Tony Luck

To direct staff to conduct a long-term water supply study, including the use of Nicola Lake as a water supply source

10. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL

Cllr Fehr noted he had seen an increase in groups of people walking around Merritt not wearing masks, and that he hoped the local media would bring to public attention the importance of mask-wearing to reduce risk of infection.

Cllr Luck wanted to thank the logger sports show for putting together a good show.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

11.1 City of Merritt BC PNP Committee 2020 Third Quarterly Report

Mr. Smith suggested that following from Mr. Olguin's presentation earlier, a Committee of the Whole meeting be held in November to discuss Merritt's involvement in the BC PNP program.

11.2 North Bench Neighbourhood Development Plan Update – Survey Results

Mr. McArthur introduced the survey results, and related them back to concerns raised earlier in the meeting. He explained about the efforts to include people in spite of Covid making it hard to host events in-person, including the webinar series, website, and pop-up booth at the Farmers' Market to answer questions. He wanted to make clear staff are engaging as many ways as they can.

Councillors thanked staff for working to get information out, and emphasized the need to keep residents informed.

12. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The Mayor declared the meeting ended at 10:16pm

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