

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
REPORT OF ACTIVITIES
January 1, 2015 to July 1, 2015

Over the past couple of years, the Planning and Development division has undergone a transition that has resulted in a re-allocation of duties and divisional oversight. Previously, supervision of the division was the responsibility of the Chief Building Official. Oversight of the division has been assumed by the CAO. For the last few years, the Planner has served as the secretary to the executive committee. Recently the CAO directed that responsibility would be assumed on a rotational basis with each staff member taking a turn. Presently, Travis Rob our CBO is fulfilling that role.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Planning and Development Executive Committee met eleven times since the new Council took office on December 1st, 2014. Currently the Committee is chaired by Doug Kitowski, with John Albanese and Wendy Brunetta as members. The Mayor is ex-officio on the committee. The executive committee meetings continue to be convened in the Civic Centre committee room on Monday at 8:00 a.m., the week prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of Council. The public is welcome to attend. Executive committee minutes and agendas can be found on the Town's website at www.fort-frances.com

The Planning and Development Executive Committee considered and/or made recommendations to Council on the following matters:

- Appointments to Committee and Boards
 - BIA, Fort Frances Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation and Committee of Adjustment – (first time in many years that all three committees are sitting at full complement of members).
- Property Matters
 - 3 land sales
 - purported neighbour disturbance
 - Request by Canada Post to place Community Mail Bin
- Community Events – consideration of issues in support of
 - Harmony of Nations Music Festival – waiver fee for erection of tent
 - International Boundary Waters Dragon Boat Festival – Parking of Equipment Trailer at Marina
 - Canadian Bass Championship Inc. – waiver fee for erection of tent
- By-Law Enforcement/Property Standards
 - Business Licensing By-Law in regards to street vendors
 - Designated Location Request for Adult Entertainment Parlour
 - Goose Management Program
 - Dog Activity at Point Park
 - Smoke Free Ontario regulation – amendments to the smoking by-law
 - Off Leash Dog Park

PLANNING

Routine matters dealt with by the Municipal Planner during this period include 28 requests for property information (Letters of Compliance, etc.) and 100+ reviews for zoning for building permits and/or development proposals. In addition, there have been ongoing discussions on applications for minor variance (2), severance applications (1 for single family and 4 for expansion to multi-residential); zoning amendment, as well as 2 zoning contraventions that are anticipated to result in applications to correct.

By its very nature, many of the activities under the jurisdiction of the planning department involve either legislated timeframes, requirement for public meetings or consultation with one or more lawyers. Although processes are expedited where possible, completion can be hindered. During this reporting period the Planning Department has remained busy reconciling the Resolute and Robert Moore School site plan control agreements.

The Planner works closely with the municipal solicitor on real estate transactions. During this period, 1 land sale in the Industrial Park was completed, and 2 other are in progress and expected to be completed soon. Discussions are also ongoing with 2 other potential purchasers for Industrial Park property. In addition, the land sale policy is being reviewed in consultation with RRFDC and EDAC with a view to expanding saleable lots in the Industrial Park. A marketing package was prepared for the Huffman subdivision and is being distributed to interested parties. It contains details on each lot, a site plan, a copy of the sale agreement, zoning information, and useful contacts. There have been a number of enquiries over the past few months and currently repeated discussions with 4 potential purchasers.

The Town was delegated approval authority for Official Plan amendments. This authority enables the facilitation of proposals at the local level and a shorter processing time. There will be, however, a high level of diligence required by the Town on issues previously dealt with by the Province such as environmental, heritage, etc.

The Municipal Planner serves as the secretary/treasurer of the Committee of Adjustment. For the first time in 7 years, the Committee of Adjustment has a full complement of members and met 5 times during this reporting period to deliberate on 6 Minor Variance Applications (2 deferred from 2014); 3 Consent Applications for single residential use as well as review and discussion on Bill 73 – Proposed changes to the Planning Act and contemplated amendments to section 3.20 of Zoning By-Law 3/14 as it related to the Industrial Park area.

BUILDING

Through the first half of 2015, the Building department has seen an increased occurrence of permits being issued. To the end of June 2015, there has been 77 permits issued with a total construction value estimated at \$2,075,000.00. Of this construction, there have been two new houses started and numerous renovations, additions, garages and decks constructed this year. Further to this, there have been 5 successful applications to the Town of Fort Frances Residential Revitalization Grant Program.

In addition, the Building office has continued to review and analyze the energy consumption of the Municipality and submit this consumption to the Ministry of Energy in accordance with the regulation. Other projects underway are the tendering for the construction of a new Animal Shelter, Public Works renovations, and the replacement of the roof on the Council Chambers at the Civic Centre. A major undertaking within the Building department has been the Rainy Lake Hotel building demolition and the proposed market square development. Currently preparation of the tender for building demolition is well underway.

BY-LAW

Activities within the By-Law department are usually consistent and ongoing with a regular focus on areas such as:

- parking enforcement;
- business licences;
- taxi licenses;
- smoking by-law enforcement;
- snow complaints;
- wildlife feeding by-law enforcement;
- animal control;
- unpaid parking ticket convictions;
- various property standards enforcement (unkept property, overgrown grass and weeds, derelict vehicles).

Over this reporting period, a primary focus within the By-Law department has been to review, amend and update numerous municipal by-laws. This review has included by-laws related to:

- i) Smoking;
- ii) Off Road Vehicles
- iii) Signage
- iv) Business Licensing
- v) Sewer
- vi) Fencing

The By-Law officers have noted an increase in time spent regarding property standard matters. There have been more complaints regarding the condition of properties within the community, especially as it relates to grass cutting and the upkeep of buildings. For this reason, by-law in conjunction with the building department, will be initiating a review of the Property Standards and Building by-laws. The intent of this review is to eliminate any “gray” areas and give the Town more ability to utilize enforcement mechanisms. In addition, the By-Law department wishes to initiate discussions with administration and Council regarding the implementation of a program to eliminate blight within the community.