



Working together with our community

Council-In-Committee Meeting – June 13, 2023

Subject: Mayor's Affordability Roundtable Meeting
Report Number: CAO-23-083
Division: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Department: Administration
Ward: All Wards
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Staff Report CAO-23-083, Mayor Martin's Affordability Roundtable be received for information;

AND THAT Norfolk County Council approve and adopt the Mayor's Affordability Roundtable and Terms of Reference to better understand affordability in the County.

Executive Summary:

On April 18, 2023, Mayor Martin introduced a notice of motion proposing a request for an Affordability Roundtable meeting with the community to get a better sense of what Norfolk County can do to help make life more affordable for community members. The goal of establishing this Roundtable meeting is to provide a road map to guide the County in identifying affordability priorities. To establish a better understanding from those most vulnerable within the community, this Affordability Roundtable will help identify priorities through the process of discussion with local community members and interested parties.

These recommendations could establish a community-based Mayor's Roundtable for Affordability Action that includes, amongst other items, ideas for housing options and benchmarking with other comparator municipalities for Council's consideration. The background studies and the community feedback gathered throughout the Roundtable sessions can help identify initiatives that can be done at the local level and suggest action items for Norfolk County.

Discussion:

Several meetings with the CAO, CAO Office Administration, and the Mayor ensued to gain a pulse for community affordability priorities, establish areas of focus, finalize Terms of Reference, and set a foundation for this Roundtable to branch out and be successful.

The Mayor's Affordability Roundtable will review local level areas of focus for affordable living in Norfolk County. The Roundtable may offer ideas for services to those who need them, deliver goals and objectives, process improvements, key investments in technology and projects, and help establish a sense of what the community needs most.

Inflation rates, property tax and water rate increases have impacted all residents of Norfolk and we know that the rates will continue to rise in the coming years. This Affordability Roundtable is meant to suggest affordable activities and opportunities for all residents of Norfolk regardless of income levels.

Norfolk County plans to consider new ideas through an Affordability Roundtable that will be required to:

- Consider how to make things more affordable in the County
- Identify ways the municipality can provide in-kind services to the community
- Identify opportunity gaps and initiatives to lobby to upper levels of government

The engagement methods that will be used to seek feedback from the community and interested parties may include the following:

- Emails received from members of the public regarding the Affordability Roundtable
- In-person or virtual meetings with the community, Council members, and interested parties

Interested parties will be identified and invited to the Roundtables based on subject matter and/or expertise to ensure that the appropriate sectors provide feedback.

The Roundtable will include:

- A presentation/delegation component
- A facilitated/moderated question and answer discussion

The facilitated question and answer discussion will be focusing on affordable housing, economic trends influencing employment and land growth, affordability recommendations in general and from the municipality by way of in-kind services, among other questions or concerns/input that the community and interested parties may have.

The Roundtable will provide a report to highlight the recommendations and actions items towards achieving affordability in the County.

The opportunity and action taken by Council is an important step in understanding affordability within the County for the next four years and into the future.

Financial Services Comments:

Based on the structure and responsibilities associated with the proposed Roundtable outlined in the terms of reference, impacts on the current year approved operating budget are expected to be minimal and would be monitored and accommodated within existing budget allocations with respect to staffing resources to facilitate meetings. This may include Clerks resources to prepare agendas, facilitate deputations and record minutes, or other tasks as required. Staff will review and make any incremental adjustments to future budget allocations as required and directed by Council to support the initiative as it evolves. At this time, there is no need for funding and no levy impact or budget amendment. Any recommendations that cause budgetary impact must be endorsed by Council.

Interdepartmental Implications:

None

Consultation(s):

Staff were consulted in the Office of the CAO.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priority Empowering Norfolk - Putting the tools and resources in place to ensure our businesses' and residents' success.

Explanation: This gives the opportunity to the community and interested parties to speak out on behalf of affordability access to “equitable service options” for those who are most vulnerable.

Conclusion:

The Mayor and Norfolk County Council are looking to make major strides in the development of an affordable community. This Roundtable will give the County a better understanding of what the community needs and how to properly address those needs on the local level. Included in Attachment A is the proposed Terms of Reference Document.

Further distribution, communication and promotion of the Affordability Roundtable meeting will follow with updates once the initial meeting is held and has occurred.

Attachment(s):

- Attachment 1 – Terms of Reference

Approval:

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