

# Planning Approvals Task Force Report

January 24, 2017



# Overview of the Presentation

- Members of the Planning Approvals Task Force
- Background
- Planning Approvals Task Force meetings and public Open Houses
- Key Issues Collected from Public Input
- Recommendations
- Recommendations Already Implemented
- Cost Benefit of Two New Staff

# Planning Task Force Members

- Councillor Pollard, Chair
- Kent Randall, Vice Chair – Planning Consultant
- Councillor Breadner
- Councillor Yeo
- Monique Dmytrow
- Ron Warne (Rob Messervey) - KRCA
- Pat Murphy - Builder
- Jeremy Plaunt – Small business owner
- Karl Repka – Engineering Consultant
- Jennifer Wilson – Chamber of Commerce
- Staff : Chris Marshall, Director  
Wendy Ellis, Recording Secretary

# Background

The City of Kawartha Lakes is targeting a population of 107,000 by 2041:

## Infrastructure

- Completion of the Northwest Trunk Sanitary Sewer line in Lindsay
- Sturgeon Road Sanitary Pumping Station and system upgrades (Omemeesee)
- Ellice Street Sanitary Pumping Station and Francis Street Pumping Station upgrades (Fenelon Falls)
- Second Feeder Watermain from the Water Treatment Plant to Canal Street (Bobcaygeon)
- Colborne Street Sanitary Pumping Station expansion (Lindsay); and
- Various traffic corridor studies in Lindsay and Fenelon Falls

## Planning Policy:

- the new Secondary Plans
- Core Service Review of Planning and Building Departments.

# Establishment of Task Force

November 24, 2015 Council adopted Terms of Reference for the Planning Approvals Task Force. Councillors Breadner, Yeo and Pollard were appointed to the City of Kawartha Lakes Planning Approvals Task Force.

The objectives of the Planning Approvals Task Force were as follows:

- to streamline the planning and development approval processes;
- implement strategies to accelerate growth and development in the City;
- analyze what is creating a negative perception of the development process; and
- recommend ways in which the City could improve the development process so that it is more customer-friendly and perceived as being “Open for Business”.

# Task Force Meetings and Open Houses

## The Planning Approvals Task Force

- met a total of 16 times over a 9 month period
- Interested members of the public attended the meetings and were given an opportunity to provide input at the meetings.
- Depending on issues being addressed a variety of City Staff attended meetings

## Opportunities for Public Input Included

- Open House held in Lindsay for larger developers on May 24, 2016
- Open House held in Fenelon Falls for the general public on June 20, 2016
- Open House held in Lindsay for the general public on July 13, 2016
- A final Open House held on July 14, 2016 in Omemee
- survey was circulated to the public for input.
- Public attended Task Force Meetings

# Key Issues Raised by the Public

- Staff are adversarial and impatient and do not have a welcoming helpful attitude;
- Telephone calls and emails are not returned;
- The rules change midstream;
- Additional information is required late in the process causing delays and additional costs;
- Lack of consistency – get different answers depending on the staff member you talk to;
- Lack of clarity of the steps in the process and the cost of the process;
- Process is driving investors away;
- Time is money and processes are taking too long
- Customers get lost amongst departments and are bounced from one department to another;
- Poor communication between City Departments and with Kawartha Region Conservation Authority (KRCA) that causes delays in the process;
- Too much process for small applications;
- Processes are difficult to understand;
- Multitude of Zoning Bylaws in the City makes it confusing for developers;
- Too many upfront costs
- Customer needs to be walked through the process by staff
- KRCA is an unreasonable delay

# Issues Categorized

1. Customer Service/Checklists;
2. Security Deposits and Application Guidelines
3. Communications
4. KRCA Process Improvements



# 1. Customer Service/Checklists

## Customer Service

- I. Customer Service Training (Completed December 2016)
- II. Development of Corporate Wide Customer Service Standard (March 2017)

## Two New Staff Members

- I. Building and Zoning Clerk (February 2017)
- II. Planner for Large Developments (June 2017)

# 1. Customer Service/Checklists

## Pre-Consultation

- outline costs of application process and fees – *Timeline: June 2016*
- checklist of reports *Timeline: June 2016*
- time frames for the various steps in the application process. *Timeline: March 2016*
- more pre-consultation meetings to reduce backlog of applications – *Timeline June 2017.*
- minor applications via telephone conference *Timeline: March 2017*

# 1. Customer Service/Checklists

## Application Guides

- Shorter and easier to read
- Incorporate Sustainability plan Policies into engineering design guidelines
  - LID drainage standards
  - Update road cross sections to encourage active transportation
  - Review drafts of new development guides and engineering standards with development community

# 1. Customer Service/Checklists

## **Application Tracking System** (December 2017)

- Enable applicants to track their applications through the process
- Make staff more accountable

## **Delegation of Authority** (April 2017)

- Director and Mayor execute subdivision agreement once draft plan conditions have been met
- Save two months

## 2. Financial Securities and Application Costs

### Application Fees

- Survey revealed application fees comparable
- Fees could be on sliding scale to reflect size and complexity of application (June 2017)

### Security Deposits

- Up front costs
- Review other Municipalities system of security deposits
- Determine level financial exposure willing to take on

## 2. Financial Securities and Application Costs

### Development Charge Deferral

- Deferral to condo registration and Occupancy
- Deferral by phase-in – high density residential buildings half the units at 1.5 years and remainder at 3 years
- Deferral to Occupancy for low density
- Deferral to Building Permit Issuance for any building

# 3. Communications

## External

- Better communication with outside agencies
- Advertise new customer service standard

## Internal

- Better use of technology/software to improve internal communications
- Align Planning and Building Departments with Economic Development Department

## Advocacy

- Facilitate discussion with outside agencies (MTO, KRCA, MOECC)

## 4. KRCA Process Improvements

- Customer Service Training
- Customer Service Survey following permit issuance
- Monthly Reporting mechanism to Board of Directors to review application timelines
- Hired additional planning and permitting staff to move permits
- New application guide and flowcharts of application process



# Issues Already Addressed

- Customer Service training.
- Office policy for staff to return phone calls and emails within 2 days
- Two additional staff positions approved
- Zoning Bylaw Consolidation included in Operating Budget.
- Survey of Application fees
- Changes to the City Website
- Development Charge Deferral Policy – adopted September 20, 2016
- KRCA customer service survey
- KRCA additional staff
- KRCA customer service training
- KRCA monthly reporting to the Board of Directors
- KRCA streamlined permit processes for minor permit applications KRCA has simplified and revised the new application guide

# Cost Benefit of Two New Staff

- Building and Zoning Clerk position funded by Building Permit fees
- Planning Position will cost about \$100,000 and will be funded by tax revenues.
- Increase number of pre-consultation meetings reduce backlog
- Reduce application processing time
- Reduce frustration
- Improve reputation
- Encourage development in the City
- Increase DC payments and property taxes
- Ensure more consistency in information provided
- Improve internal and external communications

# Conclusion

- Task Force great mix of relevant professionals
- Extensive Public Process
- Comprehensive list of issues
- Progressive and achievable recommendations with time frames
- Semi-annual Review and follow up to make sure recommendations implemented.