



Town of Newmarket
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Reopening Town Office at 395 Mulock Drive Information Report to Council

Report Number: INFO-2021-32

Department(s): Operational Leadership Team

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Distribution Date: October 21, 2021

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise members of Council as to plans around reopening of the Town Office, located at 395 Mulock Drive to members of the public. The Town has been and continues to be committed to providing extraordinary public service. Throughout the pandemic this has continued to be the priority as staff pivoted to find alternative ways to deliver virtually all services. This report will outline how the reopening of the Town Office will serve as an additional format for delivery service while existing alternative delivery successes will be maintained.

Background

In March, 2020, the Town Office was closed as part of the provincially mandated closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The organization pivoted quickly to virtual meeting platforms and delivering the vast majority of services with alternative methods. This has been met with considerable success – virtually all services have been able to be continued through alternative and online platforms. Given the success of these alternative service delivery options, there was not previously a pressing need to reopen the Town Office.

The Town has resumed operation of Recreation & Culture facilities, following specific provincial guidelines and public health measures.

Rates of vaccination throughout York Region are strong, with over 80% of individuals aged 12 and up currently vaccinated. The Province and York Region, are now seeing declining numbers of cases after the fourth wave (Delta variant). Given the high vaccination rates, and provincial mandates that are further encouraging vaccination, public health officials are optimistic that this fourth wave will be the final significant wave.

As more businesses reopen, it is appropriate to explore a gradual reopening of the Town Office. This will not be a whole sale reopening, nor will it represent a return to the office for all staff. As has been discussed previously with Council, staff are continuing to explore hybrid and remote work models, as well as a variety of other transformative workplace practices. This work will continue while balancing the opportunity to provide exceptional service through the addition of in person services.

Discussion

Staff are proceeding with a soft reopening for customer service interactions effective November 1st, 2021 and appointment based services, effective November 8th, 2021. The following outlines the operational plans anticipated for this opening.

Screening/Vaccination Verification

Upon entry to the Town Office, a patron will be greeted by a screener. That screener will verify the patron has no Covid-19 symptoms and will inquire as to the vaccination status of an individual.

For Fully Vaccinated Individuals:

If an individual is fully vaccinated they will be directed to the Customer Service area or to the location of their appointment.

For Unvaccinated Individuals:

If the patron is unvaccinated, they will be directed to the first counter at the Customer Service area. The patron will be able to receive all customer service and appointment based services from that location. These patrons will not be permitted into any other area of the facility.

Customer Service Counter

The Customer Service Counter will be opened to all in person interactions. No appointments will be required. Online and alternative service delivery methods will be maintained and continue to be encouraged.

Appointment Based Services

For those services that are not able to be delivered by Customer Service Associates (ie. Building permit questions and approvals), individuals will be able to book an appointment to speak with an individual in the respective departments. Appointments will be introduced slowly, with appointment availability limited. If demand for appointment exceeds availability, more appointments will be added. Each department will determine their schedules for in person appointments and will be responsible for booking those appointments.

Hybrid Meetings with In-Person Participation for Councillors to Commence November 1, 2021

On August 30, 2021, Council approved the Hybrid Meeting Policy, which establishes a framework for hybrid meetings of Council and Committees. Hybrid meetings will include both in-person and remote participants. Beginning at the Council meeting on November 1, 2021, Council members may choose to continue to attend meetings remotely, or join by attending in-

person in Council Chambers. Members who attend remotely will continue joining through Zoom. Members who attend the Council Chambers will join the meeting using the audiovisual system installed in Council Chambers, using the built-in cameras and microphones. Staff members will continue to join meetings remotely, with limited Clerks staff located in Council Chambers to facilitate the meeting technology.

Hybrid Meetings with In-Person Participation for Local Boards and Committees to Commence November 1, 2021

Committee and Board meetings will also begin to be held using a hybrid option as of November 1, 2021. Committee and Board members will be able to attend meetings remotely through Zoom or by attending the Town Offices for in-person participation. Meetings will be held in meeting rooms which have the necessary equipment installed, such as Council Chambers. Members of the public can continue to join Committee and Board meetings through the Zoom meeting option.

Members of the Public May Provide Deputations to Council through Remote or In-Person Option

Members of the public will continue to be encouraged to join Council and Committee of the Whole meetings remotely by watching the live or recorded video stream, or by providing a deputation through video or telephone at the Zoom meeting. In-person deputations will be made available on an appointment basis for members of the public who cannot attend electronically. In-person deputants will need to observe all requirements of entering Town facilities, including COVID-19 screening measures.

Conclusion

The reopening of the Town Office will be a welcomed addition to the service delivery within the Town. It is important to note that this is viewed as an addition to the service menu. Online and alternative service delivery will be maintained and encouraged through the various communication tactics that will be deployed.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Well managed – the reopening will balance exceptional service delivery with a shift to more online service availability and alternative service delivery.

Consultation

All departments have been consulted.

Human Resource Considerations

Staff impacted by the reopening of the Town Office have been consulted. The work will continue around the new workplace models – the reopening will not represent a full return for staff to the office.

Budget Impact

Not Applicable.

Attachments

None.

Contact

For further information contact Colin Service, Director, Recreation & Culture, or Bonnie Munslow, Manager of Corporate Customer Service.

Approval

Ian McDougall, Chief Administrative Officer