

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

## **Background**

The revised Municipal Government Act requires all municipalities to have a Public Participation Policy in effect by July 23, 2018.

Under Section 216.1 of the MGA, Public Participation Policies must be publicly available and must identify how municipalities will approach public participation and engagement. The Policy must also identify the types or categories of approaches the municipality will use to engage stakeholders.

## **Purpose:**

Council recognizes that good governance includes engaging stakeholders in public participation by

1. Creating opportunities for municipal stakeholders who are affected by a decision to influence the decision;
2. Promoting sustainable decisions by recognizing various municipal stakeholder's interests
3. Providing municipal stakeholders with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participation; and
4. Recognizing that although Councillors are elected to consider and promote the welfare and interest of the Municipality as a whole and are generally required to vote on matters brought before Council, facilitating public participation for matters beyond those where public input is statutorily required can enrich the decision-making process.

## **Council Responsibilities**

Council shall

1. Review and approve Public Participation Plans developed by Administration in accordance with this policy or as directed by Council;
2. Consider input obtained through Public Participation;
3. Review this policy to ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation, municipal policies and the spirit and intent of Public Participation;
4. Ensure appropriate resources are available to solicit Public Participation in accordance with this policy;
5. Promote and support Public Participation, and
6. Request and review information from the Administrator on the scope, timing and appropriate methods and resources required for Public Participation prior to directing the development of a Public Participation Plan

## **Administration Responsibilities**

The CAO shall

1. In accordance with this policy or as directed by Council, develop Public Participation Plans for Council approval;
2. implement approved Public Participation Plans;
3. report the findings of the Public Participation to Council;
4. consider timing, resources and engagement when developing and modifying public participation plans;
5. evaluate effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan and the Public Participation Tools used in a particular circumstance;
6. develop necessary procedures to implement this policy; and
7. assess this policy and make recommendations to Council; about public participation and resourcing;

## **Stakeholder Responsibilities**

Through public engagement, citizens as individuals, are presented the opportunity to express their opinions, provide input, share ideas and represent their personal or their organizations interests toward the issue or decision at hand. With that opportunity comes a requirement for citizens to:

1. ensure to review the information provided to be informed about the issue, the alternatives, the type of input that is being sought and also the perspectives of other stakeholders; and
2. be open and respectful to new perspectives, the input from other stakeholders, and the creative solutions that this process will bring to our community.

## **Public Participation Opportunities**

The CAO shall develop and implement a Public Participation Plan in the following circumstances

1. when public programs or municipal services are established or cancelled;
2. when public programs or municipal services are under review;
3. when gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to budget;
4. when gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the Summer Villages strategic plans or business plans
5. as otherwise directed by Council

## **Public Expectations**

Legislative and Policy Implications

1. all public participation will be undertaken in accordance with the Municipal Government Act, the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act and other applicable legislation.
2. All public participation will be undertaken in accordance with all existing municipal policies
3. This policy shall be available for public inspection and may be posted to the Summer Villages website
4. This policy will be reviewed at least once every four years

## Public Participation Standards

1. Public participation will be conducted in a sustainable and inclusive manner having regard to different levels of accessibility
2. Public participation activities will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner
3. Public participation plans will consider early, ongoing and diverse opportunities to provide input
4. Municipal stakeholders who participate in any manner of Public Participation are required to be respectful and constructive in their participation. Municipal stakeholders who are disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive, as determined by Council or Administration, may be excluded from public participation opportunities
5. The results of public participation will be made available to Council and Municipal Stakeholders in a timely manner in accordance with municipal policies

## **Public Participation Plans**

Public Participation Plans will, at minimum, include the following

1. Level of engagement sought;
2. A communication plan to inform the public about the public participation plan and opportunities to provide input;
3. Identification of which Public Participation Tools will be utilized;
4. Timelines for participation; information about how input will be used; and
5. The location of information required, if any, to inform the specific Public Participation