

**Village of Haines Junction
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2024**

Present:

Mayor Tomlin
Deputy Mayor Strand
Councillor Nassiopoulos

Absent:

Councillor Charlebois (with notice)
Councillor Maynes (with notice)

CAO Fairbank, Recorder Ogden

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Acknowledgement of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Traditional Territory

Deputy Mayor Strand acknowledged that we are on the traditional territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

Adoption of Agenda

#43-24 It was moved and seconded
THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

Motion #43-24 was **CARRIED**.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

Adoption of Minutes of Regular and Special Council Meetings

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes February 7, 2024

#44-24 It was moved and seconded
THAT the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting of February 7, 2024 be adopted as amended

- Correct spelling mistake in last bullet on page 3

Motion #44-24 was **CARRIED**.

Council Meeting Minutes February 7, 2024

#45-24 It was moved and seconded
THAT the minutes of the regular Council meeting of February 7, 2024 be adopted as presented

Motion #45-24 was **CARRIED**.

Proclamations

Delegations

Residents – Willow Acres Area 3 Development Plan

Delegates: Sarah Chisholm

Materials provided: Letter to Council

Presentation:

- Many residents, who value trails and nature, signed the letter that was submitted to Council.
- Accessibility to nature is what makes this community so attractive.
- The lots in Willow Acres are particularly attractive because of their proximity to a regularly used trail network for running, skiing, ATVs, snowmobiles, and horseback riding.
- The Area 3 Development Plan is bisected by this regularly used network of trails.
- If development were to proceed in this area without consideration of these trails it would be a detriment to the quality of life for residents in Willow Acres, and for the community of Haines Junction.
- This delegation was pleased to see that Council recognizes the value of the trail network when they passed a motion requesting that the Area 3 Development Plan be revised to incorporate trails and green spaces. The group offered their support and services to work with Council to further this goal.
- Residents have an intimate knowledge of existing trail network, and knowledge about where new trails could be situated if that is what is required. The group is in support of development, and to ensure this trail system, or a trail system of some sort, is maintained.
- The delegation shared two other concerns regarding the Area 3 development, and development more generally:
 - Lots in Willow Acres need to be large enough to account for several septic fields. Due to the poor soils, many residents are now needing to install a second field.
 - Active transportation networks are highly valued by this group, and so the development of roadside pathways would be of benefit to the community.
- The delegation asked for advice from Council on how residents can support Council in reaching this shared vision.

Discussion:

- Council expressed their appreciation to this delegation for taking the time to present to Council.
- Council acknowledged the value of community engagement, and indicated that coming forward and presenting to Council makes it easier for Council's to stay on the same page as the community.

- Council confirmed its shared vision.
- Council explained that Council will deliberate on the presentation with Council members that were not able to attend this evening, particularly since the topic has to do with land. Council will respond to the delegation in writing once it has had a chance to deliberate with all members.

Pedal Junction – Bike Skills Park

Delegates: Lianna Grice

Materials Provided: Letter to Council

Presentation:

- Pedal Junction is a newly formed society to promote active transportation in the community and bicycle infrastructure for all ages in and around the community.
- This began with a grassroots approach last summer by creating a space for people to get together and have fun riding bikes. Community bike nights held last summer where skills stations were set up and advertised around town. They took place every other Thursday on the Spruce Street cul de sac. Eight bike nights hosted in total. Ended season with a bike parade that brought out 20 riders of all ages. The success of the bike nights demonstrate community interest in cycle.
- Pedal Junction would like to construct a bike skills park in Haines Junction, similar to developments in Whitehorse area (Wolf Creek, Mary Lake, Copper Ridge, Mount Mac and the Research Forest), Teslin and Dawson City.
- A skills park is a relatively low impact, semi-permanent infrastructure development, easy to build, maintain and reclaim if needed. It involves a looping system of dirt trails and bank corners with some wooden infrastructure such as teeter totters or rollers.
- It is easier to have a designated space than to set up and pack up every night a bike night is held.
- Pedal Junction would fundraise, set up, manage and maintain park. And they would have a blast using it.
- Would like VHJ to support initiative by identifying suitable land and extending general insurance coverage for parks and playgrounds to this area. Ideally the area would be centrally located (e.g. within bike or walking distance), have decent drainage and tree coverage, and be about a half a hectare in size (5000 m²).
- Wolf Creek Community Group got \$30k award from the Community Development Fund to build their park, and it was assumed under City of Whitehorse's insurance policy. The park was built by a local builder in Whitehorse.
- Pedal Junction has started a website <https://www.pedaljunction.org/>.

Discussion:

- This fits within Council's strategic priorities as well, so Council is supportive.
- Because this initiative involves land, Council will need to deliberate and get back to Pedal Junction on this request

- Is half hectare comparable to the size of the Wolf Creek park? This seems large? This size would limit options that the Village may be able to put forward.
 - This size is ideal, but could make do with whatever land is available. Research forest park is 800 m² and is more of a kids park. Would prefer to build an all ages park. The new paved track in Whitehorse is 1100 m². The Mt. Mac park is 2300 m².

Public Hearings and Public Input Sessions

Old Business

New Business

Prescribed burning in Kluane National Park

Presentation and Q&A with Jeni Rudisill, Project Manager and Linaya Workman, Site Manager

Presentation:

- Project driven by concerns over forest fuels within the park.
- State of the Park reporting requires Kluane National Park and Reserve (KNPR) to assess forest health, and the park was not ranked highly in terms of their efforts in this area.
- KNPR was successful in applying for 5 years of funding for this project, which is currently in its 3rd year of funding.
- Objectives of the project are to understand fire history, to understand how First Nations traditionally used fire in the region, to bring fire back to the landscape, to support a healthy forest and to reconnect people to the land.
- Trees in park are between 300-500 years old.
- Tree ring analysis can reconstruct fire history by looking at scars in tree ring record. This analysis has shown:
 - There used to be more fire in the area.
 - There was a decline in fire history after the construction of Alaska Highway and the opening of the game sanctuary.
 - Historically, fires occurred in the spring, and therefore were likely human caused. These practices were altered when park was established and First Nations pushed out of park, and fire suppression policies were prominent.
- The large spruce bark beetle outbreak has contributed to fuel loadings.
- Prescribe fire management planning is built on principles of adaptive management – plan, implement, monitor, evaluate.
- A working group with KFN and CAFN have screened and assessed various sites for suitability. Have narrowed down to 2 sites with good natural fuel breaks around them: Alder creek (55km south of HJ) and Jarvis (25km north of HJ).
- Need right weather, winds, moisture in the forest, and human capacity to be able to safely carry out burn.

- Earliest burn could be is late summer 2024.
- Guiding principles of the project: start small, work together, build trust.
- KNPR does have fire zones. Where there are values at risk in KNPR, for example the Kathleen Lake Campground, the area is zoned for fire suppression. In the backcountry there is an opportunity to allow fires to burn.
- Alder Creek – road accessible, island of trees surrounded by a natural fuel break. Good pre and post burn monitoring and interpretation opportunities due to road access.
- Jarvis – not road accessible, bound by rock and alpine, further back from highway.
- Presently developing prescribed burn plans. Peer review with WFM and CAFN. Preparing environmental assessments. Have done considerable public consultation and keen to integrate public feedback as well as traditional knowledge.
- Next steps: continued pre-burn monitoring of biophysical and cultural resources, wait for “burn window” (go/no-go checklist).
- Communication officer will meet with community throughout summer, have communications plan in place if burn is able to go ahead.

Discussion:

- Council was enthusiastic about the work Parks is undertaking.
- Hope for success so Parks can move forward to get more protection around the town.
- If things go well, could Parks get funding beyond first 5 years?
 - The funding program is competitively awarded, so no guarantee.
 - The hope is that by starting small and building success will be set up well for a long-term program.
 - Recognition of the importance of this work is increasing, hopefully funding will follow.
- Could one area be burned this summer and the second area next summer?
 - Only have funding in place to do the one burn.
- Many raised in culture of fire suppression, so the thought of a fire is scary. KNPR hopes this project will demonstrate fire is a tool that can be used safely.
- Fellow who is developing plans is going to be here on Monday to fly over the two sites, there is one seat open for Mayor/Council.

Accounts Payable to February 28, 2024

Materials provided: Municipal Accounts Payable to February 28, 2024

#46-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the Municipal Accounts Payable to February 28, 2024 be approved as presented.

Motion #46-24 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Board of Variance Application Fee

Materials provided: February 28, 2024 RTC

CAO Report:

- Two recent applications were fairly arduous for the Board.
- Board suggested a review of fees for variance requests be reviewed because of amount of work that is involved.
- Compared to rest of Canada, Yukon has extremely low variance fees.
- Staff recommend raising fee to \$500 for application or appeal by applicant, and that fee for an appeal by an adjacent property owner be \$100.
- Rationale is that applicant is developing property and want to weed out applications that may not really present a hardship or practical difficulty.

Discussion:

- Typo noted on page 2 – reference to \$250 should be \$500
- Seems like a large jump, this would take us to highest rates in Yukon. Is the intention to recoup funding to increase payment to the board?
 - This will never be fully cost recovered, the intention is to avoid frivolous applications related to minor preferences, there is a limited disincentive to throw in an application and see what happens.
- A fee of \$300 may be more reasonable, it would allow applicants to ask the question without breaking the bank?
- May see more variance requests when new lots open up as there will be a large uptick in the number of development applications.
- Does this conversation fit better within new zoning bylaw discussion, and how we feel new subdivisions should look e.g. more standardization towards a neighbourhood look or feel? For example, all homes on Spruce Street look very different, there is no neighbourhood feel.
 - Currently, there are no architectural controls within the zoning bylaw, most variances are related to setbacks. In the future if there is more multi residential and commercial may see more variances related to the look and feel.
- Council agrees with the desire to discourage frivolous applications and agreed to setting the fee at \$400.

#47-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the Consolidated Municipal Fees Bylaw be amended to set fees for Board of Variance Hearings and Appeals as follows: the application fee for a Board of Variance hearing, or appeal by the applicant, be set at \$400, and the fee for an appeal of the Board of Variance decision by an adjacent property owner be set at \$100.

Motion #47-24 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Board of Variance Honoraria

Materials provided: February 28, 2024 RTC

CAO Report:

- The Board of Variance recently reviewed two applications. Staff estimate about 6 hours of time was spent on each of the applications by each of the three volunteer board members. This is a substantial commitment for remuneration of \$100 per variance.
- Staff propose increasing hourly remuneration for when a member is in a meeting to \$100/hour, this reflects that time will be spent outside meetings (usually several) to prepare. A cap of \$400/application is also proposed so costs don't get out of hand.
- There is some social jeopardy to being a member of the Board, as decisions can be impactful to relationships in community. It takes a certain kind of community member to be willing to step up to do this work, noting we did have troubles finding members to constitute this Board.

Discussion:

- The RTC notes rates for the Dawson Heritage Committee - does the heritage committee do the work of a Board of Variance in Dawson?
 - No, it is very difficult to find information on what Board of Variance members are paid, so the RTC reflects what we were able to find for committees with similar responsibilities.

#48-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the honorarium in the Terms of Reference for the Board of Variance be updated as follows, effective immediately:

- For attendance of an official variance meeting, board members will be remunerated at \$100/hour while actively hearing from the public or deliberating, and
- The maximum that can be claimed per variance request is \$400; and
- A meeting to provide orientation for new board members is considered unremunerated time.

Motion #48-24 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Waiving Mezzanine Rental Fees for Wellness Group

Materials provided: February 28, 2024 RTC

CAO Report:

- Staff were approached by the Mental Health and Substance Use services of YG for free use of the Mezzanine for a weekly wellness and sobriety group meeting.
- Under our policy YG is not able to access facilities free of charge.
- Given the importance of these meetings to the community, staff recommend waiving fees and now allowing group to be bumped by a paid user group, per the policy, to ensure this group has a regular and consistent space to hold these meetings.

Discussion:

- Why can't YG pay for this?
 - They are operating on a limited budget and staff feel these fees would be better put to coffee and sandwiches than facility rental.

#49-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council directs staff to waive the rental and damage deposit fees for the weekly MHSUS sobriety support meetings, that staff provide a viable alternative location if the meeting must be relocated, and that staff allow the group to book the Mezzanine for its regularly scheduled meeting, for as long as the group is active.

Motion #49-24 was **CARRIED**.

RTC Trail Signage and App

Materials provided: February 28, 2024 RTC

Corporate Manager Report:

- Staff would like to pick up on work that was carried out in 2017-8 that resulted in a conceptual trail network and implementation plan for a community trail network within municipal boundaries.
- This work was done under the 2015-2024 Haines Junction Community Recreation Plan.
- This work produced a comprehensive What we Heard report, along with various maps of the trail network. These products have been posted on the VHJ website.
- Staff are proposing to:
 - Establish a trail signage committee
 - Task the committee with advising on a trail signage plan, recommending sign content, locations of signs and trail names, per the above-mentioned What We Heard Report
 - To develop an app of the trail network
 - To install signage on trails
 - To work with CAFN on the above-mentioned actions.

Discussion:

- How does this tie into the Willow Acres Delegation?
 - If Willow Acres trail network changes, we could update app at a later date.
- Council agrees this fits within our strategic plan, and is a relatively low time-involved initiative.
- How would we recruit trail committee members?
 - Through a competitive process.

#50-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT Administration proceed to establish a trail signage project committee, and with advice from the Committee, contract the development of a trail network app and the design and production of trail network signage with the goal of having this work complete for the Summer 2024 season.

Motion #50-24 was **CARRIED**.

Bylaws – Reports, Readings and Adoption

Bylaw #407-24 Consolidated Municipal Fees Bylaw #343-19 Amendment #6, 1st and 2nd Reading
Materials provided:

CAO Report:

- Change \$500 to \$400

#51-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT Bylaw #407-24 Consolidated Municipal Fees Bylaw #343-19 Amendment #6, passes first reading, noting the fee as being set at \$400 not \$500.

Motion #51-24 was **CARRIED**.

#52-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT Bylaw #407-24 Consolidated Municipal Fees Bylaw #343-19 Amendment #6, passes second reading

Motion #52-24 was **CARRIED**.

Correspondence

Haines Junction Health Centre Newsletter February 2024

Materials provided: February 2024 Newsletter

#53-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the newsletter be received and filed

Motion #53-24 was **CARRIED**.

RCMP Haines Junction Mayors-Chiefs Report January 2024

Materials provided:

Discussion:

- This was moved in camera

Letter from AYC re: Comprehensive Municipal Grant

Materials provided:

#54-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the letter be received and filed

Motion #54-24 was **CARRIED**.

Letter from Minister Mostyn re: Phase 4 Infrastructure and Willow Acres Contract Award

Materials provided:

- Letter should be titled infill, not subdivision expansion.
- This may be reason for the concerns that came forward from the Willow Acres residents.

#55-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the letter be receive and filed

Motion #55-24 was **CARRIED**.

Letter from AYC to Minister Fraser re: Road Infrastructure

Materials provided:

#56-24 It was moved and seconded
 THAT the letter be received and filed

Motion #56-24 was **CARRIED**.

Council Reports

Councillor Nassiopoulos

- Mark was involved with Bison hunt and trapping trip with the school and has been away much of the past two weeks.

Mayor Tomlin

- Nothing to report.

Deputy Mayor Strand

- Nothing to report.

Questions from the Public

Christine Schwendel

- Does the Village of Haines Junction have any information from Parks on what may happen if the fire, either at Alder Creek or Jarvis Creek, gets out of control and burns down properties near to the burn or to the town, who would pay for this? Several residents have asked Parks about this, but Parks has not provided a response. Many people don't have insurance, can't afford insurance. Last year a prescribed fire went out of control and burned houses down and people were not compensated. With regards to Alder Creek there is a cabin on the side of the highway that the burn is proposed to be on. Fires can spread very fast. Anything can happen, can't predict winds, change all the time, winds are unpredictable, winds are stronger than they used to be. This is a horrible idea to do this near homes.
- Parks did advise us we can send follow up questions, which is something we can do. Christine is also recommended to be in touch with Parks directly. Parks did meet directly with concerned neighbours out near Alder Creek and this part of the conversation was off the record and residents have not yet received a response.
- Christine asked to leave her email with Aynslie, Dave will follow up with Jeni and will get back to Christine if we hear back.

Motion to Close Meeting to the Public

#57-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be closed to the public at 8:22 pm.

Motion #57-24 was **CARRIED**.

Motion to Reopen Meeting to the Public

#58-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be reopened to the public at 8:52 pm

Motion #58-24 was **CARRIED**.

Adjournment

#59-24 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:53 pm.

Motion #59-24 was **CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 8:53pm.



Mayor Bruce Tomlin



CAO David Fairbank

