

# **Town of Riverview**

## **COUNCIL REPORT FORM**

Presented to: Mayor and Town Council

Presented by: Colin Smith, CAO

Date: December 11, 2017

Subject: Status the Town's Planning & Inspection Services



**Agenda Item:**

**Meeting Date:**

For use by Office of the Town Clerk only

### **BACKGROUND**

Council requested that the CAO complete a review of the Town's planning and building inspection services and to evaluate possible alternative options for providing those services for Riverview. The attached report outlines the research that has been completed on this topic. The report provides Council with the following:

- An overview of the service arrangement the Town has in place today;
- A comparison of other municipalities' service models; and
- An assessment of the pros, cons and potential costs of 1) maintaining the current arrangement with the City of Moncton; 2) acquiring the service from the Regional Service Commission; and 3) establishing the Town's own planning and building inspection department.

The Town's objectives for completing this review were:

- To improve the service delivery the Town was receiving today for these services;
- Explore what service delivery alternatives were available to the Town;
- Provide a cost comparison on what our services costs today and what those cost could be under the different scenarios.

From a service perspective, there is no clear cut answer that will inform Council on what is the best option to select. It truly depends on what are the most critical factors that influence what Council sees as the Town's priority for this particular service. My assumption of Council's priorities for planning and inspection services are:

- To be able to provide planning and building inspection services to the development community here in Riverview; and
- That the planning and inspection service providers are integrated and work well with the Town's other development services.

After the initial discussing on the analysis that was completed it was clear that the two best options moving forward for the Town would be: to 1) improve the service delivery we received from the City of Moncton or 2) establish a contract with the Regional Service Commission for those services. Establishing our own departments was not a viable option. Of the two options the one that appears to provide

Council with its objectives is moving ahead with acquiring these services from the Regional Service Commission.

After Council's initial discussion on this topic, I followed up with Moncton and the Regional Service Commission to find out how they could deliver our services in the future to meet the Town's expectations. In particular Moncton was given the opportunity to address any of the concerns we currently have with the service we are receiving. Moncton indicated they valued our partnership and would like to see the Town continue to acquire these services from their departments. Moncton indicated they were prepared to strengthen the services they provide us today, by meeting with Town staff more often and on schedule intervals; attend Council meetings on a quarterly basis; and the Town would be able to access their new development portal system they are developing.

The Executive Director of the Regional Service Commission proposed providing all the services the Town receives today with the following approach:

- Hire two full time staff to be located and operate at a Town of Riverview Facility.
- Provide access to central services support from the other RSC staff. The Town would also get access to GIS services.
- Provide planning support services to a Planning Advisory Committee if the Town wants to continue to have its own PAC.
- Planning staff would hold regular and ongoing discussions with Town of Riverview staff.

The Commission estimates that it would provide these services for around \$315,000 a year which is slightly under what we pay today (2018 budget is \$360,000). The commission would require us to sign a three-year service agreement. The only operational challenge with what the commission is proposing is they are seeking both administrative support for their employees (manageable on our end) and administrative support for PAC if Riverview is to have their own Planning Committee (need to determine level of support required).

While the City of Moncton would like us to continue receiving services from their department, they did not really offer any significant enhancements to the services they provide us. Having Riverview acquire services from Moncton is of clear value to their organization, however they were not able to articulate the value we were receiving from this service except staff history and comfort level of the development community. If we were to break our agreement with Moncton, they would hold firm on the two year opt out requirement. Moncton needs the two years to plan for the impact their declining revenue will have on their operations. I did raise the concern if we did opt out of the agreement how would they ensure quality services over that time period and they have indicated they would continue to deliver quality services during that transition period.

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## **CONSIDERATIONS**

Legal: Town currently has a contract with the City of Moncton. With a two year opt out requirement.

Financial: Potential financial savings to the Town through the regional service commission

Policy: n/a

Stakeholders:

- Development Community
- Planning Advisory Committee members (the current planning advisory committee members were not consulted. They have a strong working relationship with the existing Moncton staff so this may not feel this is an issue the Town of Riverview needs to consider.)

Strategic Plan:

***Smart and Sustainable Growth.*** - *Assess whether the establishment of the Town's own Planning and/or Building Inspection Departments would support development in our community. This was a specific action included in the Strategic Plan.*

Interdepartmental Consultation: N/A

Communication Plan: N/A

Recommendation of Staff

Town Council direct Town staff to notify the City of Moncton that the Town of Riverview is giving the City notice, per terms of the agreement, that it is opting out of the current Building Inspection and Municipal Planning Services Agreement. Furthermore, Council directs staff to begin discussions with the Regional Service Commission to enter into a direct service level agreement with the Regional Service Commission to deliver Planning and Inspection Services for the Town of Riverview.

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