



**COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Mayor Harding and Members of Council
MEETING DATE: March 11, 2020
SUBJECT: Pre-Freshet Meetings With MNR (March 3, 2020)

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the report for information purposes.

APPROVALS:

	Date	Signature
Submitted: Ken Becking P. Eng., Director of Public Works, Acting CAO	Mar.4/20	Original signed by K. Becking

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The flooding experienced in 2019 was the result of the runoff from a significant snow load in the upper reaches of the watershed coincident with heavy rains and constrictions in the system that limit the ability of the system to pass the flows. The system was operated in accordance with the requirements of the MRWMP in the period leading up to the spring flooding in 2019. In keeping with the recommendations of the Special Advisor, the MNRF is committed keeping municipal stakeholders current with conditions within the watershed. The meetings are in response to that commitment.

ORIGIN:

This report stems from two meetings between the District Staff of the MNRF and municipal representatives held on March 3, 2020.

BACKGROUND:

The pre-freshet meetings were called by the MNRF as a means to meet their obligations under recommendation 21 of the Special Advisors Report on the 2019 Flooding.

DISCUSSION

Morning Session With Municipal Staff

The morning session was held at the Bracebridge office of the MNRF between the municipal CEMC's and the MNRF Staff. The MNRF presented historical data that demonstrated the relationship between snowfall, rain, temperature and runoff. While the quantity and water content for the snow in the upper reaches of the watershed can contribute significantly to the flows, the primary determinants are the timing and rate of snow melt and occurrence of heavy rains during the same timeframe. The MNRF noted that during the 2019 runoff event the snow melt was delayed and that when the melt occurred it happened coincident with heavy rains during the same period. At the time of the runoff, the lakes were drawn down to their lowest level and only slightly above the regulated minimum according to the MRWMP. It is the position of the MNRF that there was insufficient storage capacity to absorb the volume of runoff without flooding and that constrictions within at key locations limit the ability to pass the flow through the system.

The meeting then shifted to the sharing of technical information between the MNRF and the municipalities in the lead up to and during the spring freshet period. It was agreed that the CEMC's would be the central point of contact with the individual municipalities and that the CEMC's would be responsible to disseminate the information to their respective Councils and other municipal staff within their organizations who would have an interest in the information.

It was noted that there was a significant time lag in the receipt of the information from MNRF during the 2019 spring flooding and that the delayed municipal planning and responses to the flood conditions. MNRF noted that the information was circulated to all municipalities at the same time. Municipalities were encouraged to check the firewalls of their internet connections to ensure that emails from the MNRF are given trusted status.

Municipal staff observed that in other divisions of the MNRF, information is disseminated through a morning conference call and that the adoption of a similar approach might provide more timely communications and reduce the level of effort for Ministry Staff. MNRF committed to consider the suggestion.

Afternoon Session with Heads of Council and Senior Municipal Staff

Much of the information presented in the morning session with respect to the 2019 flooding was reiterated in the afternoon session. It was noted that the system is operated according to the rules set out in the MRWMP. It was interesting to note that the current version of the MRWMP reflects a change in the target levels during the drawdown period. The MNRF noted that the flooding in 2019 was province wide and MNRF took appropriate actions in an effort to mitigate the impacts to the extent possible. This was confirmed by the Special Advisor during his review.

The Special advisory made two recommendations specific to the Muskoka River Watershed. The first of these related to the need for a communications protocol. The Heads of Council were advised that this recommendation is being implemented starting with the mornings meeting with the municipal CEMC's. It was the consensus of the room that the MNRF needs to be more open with the Councils and the public with respect to the sharing of watershed information especially during the spring freshet period.

Representatives of the Watershed Council updated the group on their efforts. The Council has issued a position paper on the results of their background research to date. The paper provides seven recommendations the most significant of which is the need for collaboration of all stakeholders in the management of the watershed. Their recommendation for next steps is the establishment of a technical advisory committee. They called on the provincial government to provide increase levels of support to assist in the work of the Council.

Attendees were canvased for the activities they are undertaking in preparation for this year's freshet. The Town of Huntsville indicated that they are hosting a public meeting to give the public an opportunity to be informed directly by the MNR and have some of their questions answered. Others questioned the value of doing so given the position that there is nothing that can be done to prevent flooding. Municipal representatives noted that there has been a tendency of the Ministry to limit the information shared and to couch the information with restrictions and caveats. It was reiterated that information must flow freely and in a timely way if we are to be able to respond to the conditions.

RATIONALE:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

N/A

TOWNSHIP STAFF CONSULTED:

Chief R. Murrell, Fire Chief, CEMC

ATTACHMENTS:

None

CONTACT:

Ken Becking P. Eng., Director of Public Work

705 765 3156 Ext 250



COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Mayor Harding and Members of Council
MEETING DATE: March 11, 2020
SUBJECT: Township Strategic Plan Update – Goal Setting Workshop Results

RECOMMENDATION:

None. This report is for information purposes only.

APPROVALS:

Date

Signature

Submitted by: D. Hammond, CAO

20/02/2020

Original signed by D. Hammond

SUMMARY:

This report provides an overview of the summary of the Goal Setting Workshop and for those members who were not available, the consultation conference call, component/phase of the Township's strategic plan update project.

ORIGIN:

As noted in Final Work Plan contained in Appendix "I", the project is divided into six components/phases. The second phase, "Goal Setting and Environmental Scan" is underway. As can be seen, the anticipated timeframe for completion of the project is late Q1, or early Q2, 2020.

BACKGROUND:

During the Council meeting of February 12, 2020, members provided feedback on the draft strategic plan framework and expressed a desire to refine some of its proposed concepts prior to proceeding to public engagement. Township and Strategy Corp Inc. staff were requested to identify the process by which this could happen.

DISCUSSION:

Draft Strategic Plan Framework

Appendix "II" contains a draft strategic plan framework based on Council and staff input provided at the Goal Setting Workshop and consultation conference call. Township and Strategy Corp Inc. have now