



TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

REPORT

Item No.

REPORT TO: Reeve Vincent and Members of Council
PREPARED BY: Richard AI, Manager of Employee and Business Services/Deputy Clerk
DATE: 07/11/2016
SUBJECT: Petition Policy
ATTACHMENTS: Draft Petition Policy.docx

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby receives the Manager of Employee and Business Services/Deputy Clerk's report regarding a draft Petition Policy for information purposes;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approves the draft Petition Policy as presented and directs the Clerk to prepare a by-law to adopt the Petition Policy at the November 21, 2016 Council meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Township of North Huron does not currently have a formal process defined for residents to submit petitions. Recognizing that petitions play an integral role in the communication between residents and elected officials, the establishment of a Petition Policy would provide the required framework.

DISCUSSION

Petitions are a way to express public opinion to Council. They are written requests that are organized and signed by electors within the Township which can be used to request that Council take action on a particular issue.

Recent petitions received from the public have been created by individuals using their own templates and as such have lacked the necessary disclosure statements required by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*. This is a concern due to the fact that the names, addresses and other personal information contained on a petition may become part of a future Council meeting agenda, in essence disclosing that information to the public without the explicit consent to do so from those who signed the petition.

It is important that all parties involved are aware that a petition is considered a public document once received and becomes a record in the custody of the Township of North Huron. Additionally, petitions may be subject to the scrutiny of Council and the general public. Petitions must include a disclosure statement on each page of the petition so that those who sign the document agree to, and are aware of, its public availability.

The creation of a petition policy will define, for residents to follow, the procedures required when organizing a petition. In addition, the petition policy will protect the Township of North Huron from potential MFIPPA violations.

All petitions that meet the required standards set out in the Petition Policy would be presented to Council as a Correspondence item listed on a Council agenda. Communicating this policy to the

public will be essential in order to avoid the unfortunate outcome of a petition being denied inclusion on a Council agenda due to improper formatting (e.g. a missing disclosure statement).

Petitions containing original signatures should be sent to the attention of the Clerk by mail or delivered in person to the Municipal Office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

No associated financial impact.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Establishing a formal petition procedure and defining associated requirements will demonstrate to the public that the Township of North Huron is committed to citizen engagement and recognizes petitions as a tool to provide input into Council's decision making process.

The public will have available to them a straightforward process to follow which will assist those wishing to organize a petition and the Township will be ensuring that MFIPPA requirements are met.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal #2 – Our residents are engaged and well informed



Richard Al, Manager of Employee and
Business Services/Deputy Clerk

Kathy Adams, Clerk



Sharon Chambers, CAO