

For Immediate Release

City of Cambridge Adopts Recommendations Investigative Report on Special Council Meeting

Cambridge, Ontario. July 25, 2008...Recommendations received late yesterday regarding the City of Cambridge notice provisions for a special public meeting will soon be adopted under the procedural by-laws and policies of the municipality. While the report concluded the city has procedures in place that were adequate for public notification, it did make a few recommendations that will be adopted by the municipality.

The system to review procedures and report to city council has been in place at the city since November 2007 when Local Authority Services (LAS) were appointed to the role of investigator. This process reflects changes that were set forth in the amendments to the Municipal Act amendments under section 239.2 effective for January 2008.

On April 24, 2008, a member of the community put forth a complaint with regard to a special council meeting on March 31st, 2008 questioning the process around notification of this Special Meeting. The official report received from Amberley Gavel Ltd., the firm engaged by LAS to undertake the investigation, reviewed section 239 of the Municipal Act which deals with meetings of a municipal council.

Interviews with key staff, elected officials, and the complainant formed part of the investigation. The other component was a full review of documents such as agendas, minutes and notices of meetings. The complainant questioned the intent of the city to make the Special Meeting public because it wasn't posted on the website. The subject of the Special Meeting was the Venice Biennale.

While the mandate of the investigators under the Municipal Act is to explore processes around closed meetings, the firm did give an opinion about the public meeting requirement.

"It is apparent that the Special Meeting was intended to be public. The media were notified and attended as did over 30 members of the public. Because of website difficulties the City's usual practice of posting the notice on the website did not happen. The fact that the meeting was not posted on the

City's [website] as the usual policy allows, although unfortunate, did not deter the public from attending the meeting," the report states.

"We're making the appropriate enhancements to our procedural by-law and policies to adopt the recommendations as concluded in the report," says the City Clerk Alex Mitchell.

The investigator did review the processes around the closed session that was part of the March 31st agenda. Three recommendations were put forth:

1. That the public motion to go into closed session comply with the requirements of the Municipal Act, 2001 and that council only deliberate matters at a closed meeting that have been authorized in the public.
2. That the Procedure By-law be amended to include public notice for meetings as required by the Municipal Act, 2001, including time and location, that reflect the City's current practice including posting on the website. The rules should distinguish the differences between a regular and a special meeting of council.
3. That after closed sessions of Council that the chair of the closed session rise and report to the extent possible and that this be reported in the minutes of the public meeting.

The report references that the municipality didn't follow its procedural by-law with regard to notification of the Special Meeting. One of the enhancements would change the current City of Cambridge by-law which requires notification of public meetings to occur 21 days prior to the meeting. The original intent of this timeline was generally for planning matters; however, the proposed changes to the by-law will better reflect the administrative requirements of a municipality.

The report will go to council at the next regular meeting in August and is now available on line for the public as per section 239.2 (11) of the Municipal Act. There is also a modification noted from the City of Cambridge which provides further clarification on the reference to the website being down on page 6. The report should state that there were technical difficulties to post the agenda to the website which prevented this from occurring on the traditional posting date.

All Council, General Committee and Special Meetings of The City of Cambridge are open to the public except parts of the meetings that deal with matters under section 239 of the Municipal Act.

The City of Cambridge is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. It is strategically located astride highway 401 in Southwestern Ontario, part of Canada's Technology Triangle. In 2008, the population reached over 125,000 people. With a multicultural mix and a strong foundation of support services, Cambridge has a diverse economic base with leading industries in manufacturing, automotive, high technology, pharmaceutical, business and financial services and hospitality/retail. The Corporation of the City of Cambridge is an employer with a work environment that offers the opportunity to provide service to the community through creativity and innovation, and with opportunities for career growth and advancement. Based on the 2007 BMA Management Consulting Inc Municipal Study, the City of Cambridge is one of only four municipalities in the province that is debt free.

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