

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

January 17, 2022



THE INTERNET AT LIGHT SPEED

Council has endorsed signing of a Letter of Intent with Canadian Fibre Optics (company) to pursue private-sector based, advanced broadband enhancement in the Town of Calmar. An agreement will be signed to open the project and work with the company on design, build, and finance project elements.

A successful initiative will see fibre optic connections to all premises in the Town of Calmar – enable gigabit (and better) services.

Internet speed and reliability is increasingly critical to daily life...at work, in school, at home. It's a utility as important as water pipes and roads. It's critical for attracting new residents and investment...who have come to expect high Internet speeds and can get them elsewhere....particularly large urban centres. This initiative will accelerate the Town's ability to enable its ambitious future.

The Project:

- 2022 full construction to all premises in Town of Calmar
- Access – Canadian Fibre Optics to lease from TELUS or SuperNet
- "Pipes" – Canadian Fibre Optics would own the conduit
- "Connections" – Town of Calmar would own infrastructure from "pipes" to lot connection
- No monopoly...others could run fibre through Town-owned conduit
- Internet rate cap for 5 years
- Cost recovery from suppliers (e.g. cable, phone, Internet) providing service

Cost: 500/household estimated as Town cost (x approx. 900 households = \$450,000). The Town will determine applicability of Municipal Sustainability Funding.

PLAN IT

Council has entered into an agreement with Parkland Community Planning Services (PCPS - a group of municipalities that got together to share planning and development expertise and generate cost efficiency) to provide all subdivision, planning policy and development approval process services to the Town of Calmar. Retirement of the Town's Development Officer instigated an evaluation of planning service and costs. The annual contract with PCPS will enable the Town to do some new things – including updating planning policy to be more enabling of ambitious strategic direction, and maintain efficiency of development approval services, while reducing total costs (based on past development rates and estimated usage of the service on a fee for service basis) if the position was replaced internally. PCPS currently provides services to 14 communities in central Alberta, including the Towns of Ponoka, Olds, Innisfail, Clearwater County, and County of Stettler.

Related: Subdivision Development & Appeal Regional Board Bylaw #2021-31 was given second and third readings. This Bylaw enables PCPS to provide intermunicipal subdivision and development appeal board services.

AT YOUR SERVICE

Council adopted Policy #2022-031 to recognize Town staff long-term milestone service with cash vs gift reward. The adjustment provides more flexibility for employees, while being revenue neutral to the Town in implementation of its long-standing policy to value and recognize long-term service. This employment milestones and retirement policy will return to Council Committee of the Whole for further review in Fall, 2022.

HOUSEKEEPING

Taxes - Council gave three readings to Tax Penalty Bylaw 2022-03, a more administratively efficient 2% monthly penalty on unpaid taxes vs a previous system of 12% total account penalty on Jan. 1, and 8% penalty on current-year taxation on July 1. Penalty systems ensure everyone pays their fair share. And while we know “taxes” doesn’t adrenalize spirits, think of property taxes as “investment”....where every resident is a co-owner of all the infrastructure – from streets to arena – enabling work, recreation, and quality of life.

Bylaw Enforcement - Council gave three readings to a Bylaw Enforcement Bylaw & Policy #2022-01 that create a framework for appointment, powers, and conduct boundaries for bylaw enforcement. “Success” is a two-way street, where procedures establish transparency and expectations for the community, while also enabling those who conduct bylaw enforcement to do their job(s). The Town of Calmar has 12 primary bylaws that may come into contact with bylaw enforcement: <https://calmar.ca/government/town-office/bylaws-and-policies/>

Volunteerism - Council has adopted the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement. To be used as a reference guide for all employees and volunteers, the Code places high value on volunteerism – a spirit at the heart of community life - frames the relationship between volunteers and the Town of Calmar, and identifies standards of practice – from supports to risk management to training – to help further nurture growth of volunteerism. A next step forward will include a Volunteer Canada audit that will provide recommendations on steps the Town of Calmar could take to build organizational capacity to further support and recruit volunteers.

Name That Park – the “Calmar Recreational Grounds” (inclusive of ball diamonds) has been officially named by Council to support park planning and design work underway that needs more than a locational reference. A formal name brings more recognition, and enables other actions like Town securing of sponsorship for sport fields to support quality of recreation amenities. A new park name may be considered once upgrades are completed.

SUNNY DAYS

Council approved writing of a letter of support to Voltarix Group (as part of their Alberta Utilities Commission power plant application) for their proposed Creekside Solar project located just SW of the Town of Calmar. Stats: 140 acres. 41,500 panels. 32.5 MW – enough to power 5,000 homes. 17,150 tonnes – annual carbon displacement, working towards Alberta’s goal of sourcing 30% of the province’s electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

<https://voltarixgroup.com/projects/creekside/>

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Held virtually @ 7p.m the first and third Mondays each month (except January, July & August).

Watch Facebook and website for details!

