

An Encompassing Communications Strategy

Session Held March 20, 2017 with Councillor Shelley Bibby

The Communications session was admittedly somewhat disappointing with only 2 citizens committing to attend. In the end, we had 4 citizens. Mayor Anna also attended.

It was noted that Communications is a difficult area to take advantage of community actionable items. Indeed, it is not an area to which we should be tasking individual residents with a message that isn't consistent with the Town's overall ideas.

General consensus was that "communication" is a two-way process. Citizens need to be able to easily find info they are seeking, and in several ways and the Town needs to be able to inform citizens en masse *and* give them a simple way to seek out more details on certain things. The reach should also extend further into neighbouring counties (Kings, East Hants /west Hants/Wolfville etc.) Communication methods should not be limited to only digital means (due to our older population). Some of the things people would like to see:

- Emailed newsletter
- Flyers/same newsletter as above in with water and tax bills-a survey should be included initially to ask the best way to get our message out
- Downtown community bulletin board (and make use of existing spots – Post Office, Windsor Mall, Pharmasave) with posters/newsletters. Electronic bulletin board was suggested but acknowledged that it would be expensive
- Volunteers agreed to deliver these same flyers to nursing homes and schools, doctors' offices etc.
- Would like an ongoing question survey on web-page and/or Facebook page- so citizens feel like they are being asked for their opinion
- Central registry (accessible through Town website) for all Community Events- like Valley events
- The Town website is difficult to navigate and menus are not arranged in a way that are intuitive. The Town needs to be "brought up to date" on its communications.
- Text messaging opportunity- like the schools do when snow days
- We should be communicating about organizations that need volunteers, or that use volunteers, to encourage involvement
- Residents are looking for an opportunity to have a say on major issues
- Link press releases promoting citizens in our community (good news stories)
- Instill community pride

Priorities

1. By far the most emphasized action was to hire a Communicator. The overall opinion was that the job of communication should be handled by someone who is responsible for only this and not other things. There were suggestions to reach out to Avon View High or Universities/NSCC to engage some students who may be studying in this field.

The cost implications at this point are unknown. An interesting suggestion was to hire a person jointly with another Municipal Unit.