

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent
Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Public Works
Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Ryan Brown, Director of Public Works
Date: July 24, 2019
Subject: Notice of Motion – Municipal Sandbag Program

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

At the May 27, 2019 Council Meeting, the following notice of motion was passed:

“Whereas the Municipality is experiencing flooding in areas throughout Chatham-Kent; And whereas the use of sandbags is a simple, but effective way to prevent or reduce flood water damage; Be it resolved, that administration prepare a report outlining the cost of initiating a Sandbag Program for flooding victims in Chatham-Kent and that the report return to Council by the end of June 2019.”

Comments

Lakeshore, Amherstburg, Leamington and Essex offer sandbags and sand to residents in certain areas due to high water levels along the shores of Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair. Affected residents in those areas are able to obtain up to 100 sand bags per property, provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents seeking to pick-up bags and sand are asked for proof of identification, and must bring a shovel to fill their bags. Residents are also responsible for future disposal of sandbags. Both the sand bags and sand are provided free of charge. The cost to the municipality is approximately \$2 per bag.

Neighbouring municipalities have expressed challenges with the sandbag program including:

- Fairness to all residents – Municipalities regularly receive requests for assistance on private property related to lake/river flooding, pump, basement flooding, and sanitary storm sewers. A specific sandbag program creates a future obligation to other requests for assistance on private property.
- Equitable distribution of the sandbags to residents.
- Supply versus demand, and the unpredictable budget impacts.

- The re-selling of sandbags by residents acquired at no cost.
- It has also been reported that some residents are using the sandbags along their shoreline or break wall instead of being used to protect “assets” like homes and garages.
- Administrative burden requires additional funding and possible staffing increases.

Based on these conversations, three options could be considered:

1. Status Quo
2. Develop a Municipal Sandbag Program
3. Enter Into a Public/Private Partnership

Details of each option are included in the table below:

Option	Pros	Cons
<p>1. Status Quo</p> <p>Municipality directs residents to local businesses for supplies or filling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents Municipality from directly competing with local businesses • Fairness to all residents; only those who need bags pay • No cost to taxpayers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local supplies may be limited
<p>2. Develop a Municipal Sandbag Program</p> <p>Sandbags and sand is provided to affected residents</p> <p>Approximate costs to the Municipality for non-filled bags are \$2 per bag including sand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents who were unprepared for a flooding event may have more access to immediate resources • Program could be run at all times or only during declared emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality would be directly competing with local business • Fairness to all residents is an issue • Costs will increase on nights and weekends due to overtime • Cost to run program year to year is difficult to forecast • If materials are brought to areas of flooding, cleanup after will increase costs • Sandbags may be resold for profit • Proper storage and disposal of sandbags is undefined at this time • Short product life span • Estimated budget costs of approximately \$200,000

Option	Pros	Cons
<p>3. Enter into a Public/Private Partnership</p> <p>Establish a contract with a local supplier to include a set price through RFP process, with possible subsidization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May provide better pricing for residents than Option #1 • Maintains consistent policy related to work on private property • Minimal cost to taxpayers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time required to administer RFP and contracts • Possible subsidization would have budget impacts

From the above analysis, it is recommended that the Municipality continue with status quo, directing residents to local businesses for supplies.

Consultation

Representatives from the Town of Lakeshore as well as a local company who provides sandbag service were consulted in preparation of this report.

Financial Implications

If the Municipality chooses to proceed with Option #2, it is recommended that a minimum budget of \$200,000 per year be allocated to implement the program. This funding is currently not available in the Public Works base budgets.

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Attachments: None