



# THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

Corporate Communications Department

Telephone (905) 372-4301

Toll Free 1-888-972-4301

Fax (905) 372-7421

Email: [communications@cobourg.ca](mailto:communications@cobourg.ca)

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Town of Cobourg Council to Review Council Meeting Structure And Governance Model**

*Changes will see Council more integrated with staff and better informed on all subject matter related to the operation of the Town*

**(Cobourg, ON) December 17, 2014** –At the Inaugural meeting of a new Town of Cobourg Council, Mayor Gil Brocanier announced that he, in cooperation with Deputy Mayor Henderson, Council, the CAO and the Municipal Clerk, reviewed the coordinator system for the Town of Cobourg and made adjustments that will see Council more integrated with staff and better informed on all subject matters related to the operation of the Town. This interim step will provide council with time to review alternative governance models that may be better suited for the Municipality.

On Monday December 15, 2014 the newly elected Town of Cobourg Council for 2014 – 2018 took their oath of office. During the Inaugural meeting, Mayor Brocanier announced that, “During Council’s strategic planning sessions in February, I will be working with Council to review the current structure of coordinator roles in the Town of Cobourg and what we can do to make the system even better.” Town of Cobourg Council will review the current structure and compare it to other governance models.

The review and adjustment to the coordinator system will occur in a two-phased approach. The first will see an adjustment to the existing coordinator system and the second will be an in-depth review of governance models that may be used in future Cobourg Town Council meetings.

#### **Adjustment to Existing Governance System:**

During Monday’s meeting, Mayor Brocanier shared ideas on how Council can further integrate coordinators with staff in their designated portfolio. Mayor Brocanier would like to continue regular status meetings between coordinators and staff. In addition, to help keep other Council Members and the public better informed on activities happening in each Coordinator’s portfolios, Mayor Brocanier would like to see coordinator reports at the beginning of Committee of the Whole meetings. Coordinator’s would report on their respective areas of town operations and advisory committees and will provide other Members of Council the opportunity to ask questions.

In the coming week’s Town of Cobourg Council Members will be participating in an in-depth council orientation program. Coordinators will meet with all staff, learn about each department and have meetings with Directors and Managers. Coordinators will be provided with detailed reports on each department, including department structure, financial information, policies as well as important issues and subject matter the department faces for the coming year. Members of Council will also meet with the Mayor and CAO to review coordinator roles and ensure each Councillor has an understanding of Municipal governance including policies, procedures and legislation. Town of Cobourg Council Members are responsible for establishing policies for the subject matter related to their portfolio. Council Members are responsible to study and report to Council on policy matters related to their portfolio.

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The coordinator roles of the new Town of Cobourg Council are as follows:

- 1) Economic Development – Mayor Gil Brocanier
- 2) General Government Services – Deputy Mayor John Henderson
- 3) Planning and Development Services – Councillor Brian Darling
- 4) Parks and Recreation Services – Councillor Theresa Rickerby
- 5) Public Works Services – Councillor Forrest Rowden
- 6) Community Services Coordinator – Councillor Debra McCarthy
- 7) Protection Services – Councillor Larry Sherwin

## **Review of Alternative Governance Models:**

During their strategic planning sessions, Mayor Brocanier and Cobourg Town Council will review the governance model to be used. These governance systems can range from a coordinator system, where each Councillor has a set portfolio, to a committee system, where Councillors share responsibility of all subject matter related to the Town. There is also potential for the development of a hybrid of both. Two full days of strategic planning has been set aside in February. The first day Council will discuss the strategic direction for the Town. The second day Council will finalize discussion from day one and will review the coordinator system.

Prior to the inaugural meeting Mayor Brocanier met with each individual member of Council regarding the potential changes in governance and council meeting structure. “We have also discussed how part of the coordinator’s role will include being open to questions from other Councillors and responding in an open forum,” said Mayor Brocanier. Each of the Council Members are very supportive of the idea and look forward to the opportunity to review current processes and examine ways to strengthen them.

## **Scheduling of Council Meetings:**

Mayor Brocanier announced that Council are proposing a change in the frequency of council meetings to provide coordinators with additional time to review the meeting agenda and ask staff and/or fellow Council member’s questions. At present time, Cobourg Town council meetings run on a weekly schedule, with Committee of the Whole and Regular Council Meetings occurring every other Monday. The Town issues the council meeting agenda on the Thursday prior to the Monday council meeting leaving coordinators little time to review and ask necessary questions. Mayor Brocanier would like to adjust the council meeting schedule to occur on a three week rotation. This scheduling would see Committee of the Whole and Regular Council meetings occurring on consecutive Monday’s, however, leaving one week at the beginning of each cycle where Council has time to review the agenda. This scheduling would also provide members of the public with additional time to review the council agenda and ask questions or attend meetings of interest.

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## **Mayor and Council Seeking Citizen Feedback on Strategic Planning:**

To gather public input Mayor Brocanier also announced that there will be opportunity during the January council meetings for the public to voice their opinions and suggestions and be a part of decisions.

Mayor Brocanier and Town of Cobourg Council invite citizens to the podium during the first four meetings of Cobourg Town Council in 2015.

The first four council meetings in 2015 will be held on Monday's at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West. Meeting dates are:

- Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup> – Committee of the Whole
- Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup> – Regular Council Meeting
- Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup> – Committee of the Whole
- Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Regular Council Meeting

Each citizen who is interested in voicing an opinion, concern or sharing a suggestion on the strategic priorities of the Town will be provided five minutes at the beginning of council meetings to speak. This will also allow for comments regarding the coordinator roles. Please note, all other delegations scheduled for the selected council meetings will be 10 minutes as per the Procedural By-law.

Those who would like to make a delegation during the January council meetings are asked to contact the Municipal Clerk, Lorraine Brace at [lbrance@cobourg.ca](mailto:lbrance@cobourg.ca) or 905-372-4301.

For additional information please contact the Communications Officer, Kara Euale at [communications@cobourg.ca](mailto:communications@cobourg.ca).

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## **Media Contacts**

Kara Euale

Communications Officer

Town of Cobourg

p: 905-372-4301 x 4105

e: [keuale@cobourg.ca](mailto:keuale@cobourg.ca)

## **About The Town of Cobourg**

The Town of Cobourg is a lakeside community (population 18,500) located on the north shore of Lake Ontario halfway between Toronto and Kingston and has been recognized multiple times by MoneySense Magazine as "One of Canada's Best Places to Live" in populations under 25,000.

Founded in 1798, Cobourg is rich in heritage offering a vibrant downtown, sophisticated small town atmosphere and renowned waterfront that serves as a popular getaway destination. As the largest town in Northumberland County, Cobourg is personified by historic Victoria Hall, hosts a \$27.4 million community centre, an educated and skilled labour force, flourishing commercial sector and supportive municipal government. Cobourg has received the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Sustainable Communities Award, accolades from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance, and multiple heritage, environmental, and event awards.

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