

Engage and Inform Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 2nd, 2025

Members Present: Councillor Valerie Durston, Mayor David Mayberry, Councillor Paul Buchner, Deb Riley and Catherine White

Staff Present: Clerk Julie Middleton, Clerk's Assistant/Records Management Coordinator Nicole Chambers

Regrets: Jen Thomson and Tabitha Kosmal

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m. by Chair Valerie Durston, and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

Resolution No. 1 Moved by Catherine White
Seconded by David Mayberry

RESOLVED that the agenda for the April 2nd, 2025 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Approval of the Minutes

Resolution No. 2 Moved by Paul Buchner
Seconded by Deb Riley

RESOLVED that the regular minutes of the March 5th, 2025 Engage & Inform committee meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

New Communications Plan

The Committee discussed the Township's proposed new communications plan (draft). It was noted that the plan falls under the direct mandate of the Committee – staff are looking to receive comments and input before it is brought forward for Council's consideration.

The following comments were provided:

- Committee members questioned how we can encourage individuals to receive Township communication. Are we trying too hard to help people when they are not keen to help themselves?
- Unable to track print media, but can receive analytics regarding electronic/web-based communication.
- Discussion took place regarding the Township's use of the "X" platform (formerly Twitter). It was noted that there is not much engagement on this platform anymore.
- Importance of open communication and battling misinformation that litters the internet.
- Discussion regarding the goal of Township Communications – communication plan needs to be based on the needs of the people. Township needs to be the source of information.
- Need for educating residents regarding the role of municipal government and representatives such as Mayor, Council and Staff. Staff can share information from the 2022 Candidate Information package.

The Committee brainstormed how to expand on the proposed plan, including:

- Implementation of live video during Township events (or other events that we are participating in).
- Township App – targeted website format which includes: most frequently accessed pages on the website, community events, newsletter sign-up link, videos, etc.
- 6-month trial of "Council Highlights" page on website – shared on social media via Township page and groups, newsletter and print media.
- Incorporation of information regarding the role of municipal government and representatives into ongoing Township communication efforts (e.g., share Council Code of Conduct).
- Question and answers with members of Council – to share on Township's YouTube Channel.

Earth Day Event (April 26th, 2025 at the Sweaburg Lions Pavilion)

It was noted that staff are ordering and coordinating the delivery of materials. The Committee was reminded to bring your own chair, water and sunblock.

Action items:

- Valerie will share a video of the event on social media (morning of).
- Nicole will print large signs for the tables.
- David to contact Bryan Smith to determine if Sweaburg Church will be selling coffee/baked goods again this year.

Deb Riley is unable to attend the event this year.

SWOX Township Fare Event

The Committee reviewed the registrations received and noted the following:

- Email to be circulated to businesses located out of the Township boundary to advise we are unable to proceed with their registration/application at this time.
- Approved registrants will receive an email with the flyer and details (e.g., hydro not provided/ask if they require water, etc.)
 - Set up time: starts at 10:00 a.m.
 - Committee asked to arrive between 9:30-10:00 a.m. Saturday, May 24th.
 - Committee to meet at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, May 23rd to set up tables at the hall – will need spray paint for outdoor spaces
- Committee members are encouraged to continue canvassing for SWOX businesses who may want to participate. Nicole will circulate an email to vendors/businesses on our list that we did not receive applications from.
- Nicole to contact the following groups to discuss their potential participation in the event:
 - Dereham District Lions – BBQ
 - Funnel Cake Factory
 - Oxford County Planning – ARUs
 - Cycles of Life, Oxford Food Rescue, Seniors in Food Crisis (vulnerable persons support groups – two tables)
- If we have reached the public consultation phase for the new park in Mount Elgin, the Township will consider having a booth at the event to display more information
- Consideration of adding scavenger hunt/passport to event (for children)
- Committee will offer a prize for newsletter sign-ups
- Nicole to provide floor plan for the event

Continued Discussion re: Food Insecurity in Oxford County

Valerie expressed appreciation for Irene Grace Bom's presentation and inquired about potential actions the Committee could take to support the community. Julie informed the group that various organizations are beginning to collaborate on community initiatives through Oxford Food Rescue. They are working to formalize the group's efforts to improve food distribution in Oxford County. However, it is currently unclear what specific requests these groups may have of the Committee.

It was noted that it may be a challenge to implement sharing cupboards in other Township halls due to the absence of a library and the challenges related to maintaining anonymity.

Initially, the goal of the presentation was to inspire the Township to fund a project. However, the focus has shifted to exploring ways to better connect individuals within the community. Julie proposed incorporating these groups into the Township's community grant application process moving forward.

Act on Litter Day

The Committee was reminded of the upcoming Act on Litter Day event – we are only able to have appointed members of this Committee participate due to insurance reasons. We will meet on April 29th from 1-2pm at **Dereham Line/Ostrander Rd** and work northbound towards Dereham Centre.

Correspondence

SWOX Talks and Village Voice

The Committee reviewed the monthly newsletters and Village Voice ads for March, 2025.

Discussion Items – None

Standing Items

Review of SWOX 2030 Action Item List (minutes of August 12th, 2015 meeting)

1. Social Responsibility
2. Communication
3. Active Living
4. Safety & Security

Adjournment

Resolution No. 3 Moved by Deb Riley
 Seconded by Catherine White

RESOLVED that there being no further business, the Engage and Inform Committee adjourn at 2:31 p.m. to meet again on May 7th, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

DISPOSITON: Motion Carried