

Municipality of Trent Hills

Staff Report

Dept. Report No. CAO 2011 08	To: Mayor and Members of Council	Prepared by: Michael Rutter, CAO
Subject: Community Preparations for 2012 Hastings Bridge Closure		Date: September 6, 2011

BACKGROUND:

Now that Parks Canada has announced that they will be deferring the bridge closure in Hastings until after the 2012 navigation season, I believe it would be prudent to develop a strategy to prepare the many businesses and individuals who will be negatively impacted by the closure.

I have consulted with Councillor Crate and Mayor Macmillan at length and recommend the following action plan be adopted and implemented over the coming months.

As soon as possible, we should host a meeting with Parks Canada officials in Hastings where they could provide as much information as possible about the closure, its' duration, and the extent of crossing that will be permitted. This meeting will have to wait until TSW staff has the appropriate amount of information as it is important that the information is as complete as possible. This will ensure that the "message" does not change, creating unnecessary confusion.

I am recommending that we host a series of community meetings.

The first session will focus on working with the community on the development of a marketing campaign (with a budget to be established during the 2012 budget process) to let people know that Hastings will remain "open for business" during the closure. This meeting would provide a forum where citizens could be given the opportunity to share suggestions on what the campaign should look like, and should take place in the fall of 2011 to ensure there is time to develop and produce the campaign. I would suggest that the Hastings Revitalization Association, the Trent Hills Chamber of Commerce, and the Hastings Chamber of Commerce be consulted heavily on this project, and that Lynn Phillips, our Community Development Officer be the project lead.

In the early winter of 2012 I am recommending a second community meeting where a marketing expert could come and speak to business owners about how to market their business "in a crisis". This would also provide a forum for the business community to speak about co-operative efforts they may initiate to attract people to the community and provide service to them once they arrive.

I am recommending a third community meeting where we could provide a final update on the construction process, and how services will be provided during the closure. These services would include police, fire, EMS, school buses etc.

In the meantime, we will continue to work with representatives of Parks Canada, the County of Northumberland, and our own staff to mitigate the impact of the closure.

RECOMMENDATION

That the recommended action plan to prepare for the Hastings swing bridge closure be adopted, and staff be directed to schedule the meetings as outlined.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Rutter, CAO