

Municipality of East Ferris

Report to Council

Report No.: PLAN-2021-20 Date: October 12, 2021
Originator: Greg Kirton, Manager of Planning and Economic Development
Subject: Planning Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment Onboarding to the
Escribe Agenda Platform – Tablet Purchases

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council approve the purchase of tablets to be used by the Planning Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment for their regular meetings in conjunction with the Escribe agenda software.
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BACKGROUND

The Planning Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment have historically done distributions to committee members through the physical circulation of paper copies of all agenda items. This circulation method is inefficient from both a staff time resource and a paper resource use perspective. It also requires significant additional interactions between members and staff during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, circulations have been moved to a digital format; however, there are some organizational challenges with this format. When a meeting has more than a couple applications the number of attachments on the email circulation gets very difficult to deal with for the committee members and it is not a sustainable long-term solution. In an effort to keep circulations digital and limit the circulation of physical documents while Covid is ongoing, it would be best to move both committees onto the same platform that Council currently uses for agenda circulation. This will be important as we return to in person meetings in the near future. The Covid Safe Restart Funding could be used to implement this transition.

By moving to the Escribe and tablet format for all circulations it will allow us to modernize our processes and allow for digital circulations to remain in place in a format that is manageable for the committee members. Additionally, this would allow for us to easily make agenda packages available publicly on our website in the same manner that Council agendas and packages are available online, which would help promote public involvement and the easy sharing of information.

OPTIONS

1. Option 1

That Council approve the purchase of tablets to be used by the Planning Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment for their regular meetings in conjunction with the Escribe agenda software.

2. Option 2

That Council does not approve the purchase of tablets to be used by the Planning Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment for their regular meetings in conjunction with the Escribe agenda software.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The purchase of the tablets would be the primary financial implication of this implementation. We would require 7 tablets (5 committee members and 2 staff) at a cost of approximately \$1,000.00 per tablet for a total of approximately \$7,000.00. The 2 Council members on each committee would be able to use their current tablets with the new committee agendas.

There would also be a cost associated with the additional licensing, which would be approximately \$100.00 per year for each new tablet for a total cost of \$700.00 per year. This cost would be offset by the efficiency created by doing digital circulations. Previously printing, mileage, and staff time costs were all present in the physical delivering of packages.

Escribe will not charge any additional set up fees for establishing the two new committees.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve the purchase of tablets to be used by the Planning Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment for their regular meetings in conjunction with the Escribe agenda software for a total approximate cost of \$7,000.00 and that the cost be covered with funds available from the Covid-19 Safe Restart Funding.

Respectfully Submitted,



Greg Kirton
Manager of Planning and
Economic Development

I concur with this report,
and recommendation



Jason H. Trottier, HBBA, CPA, CMA
CAO/Treasurer