



Local News

No Cobourg marina expansion

By JEFF GARD, Northumberland TODAY
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COBOURG – There will be no expansion of the Cobourg Marina into the west harbour.

allotted delegation time of 10 minutes. Fowlie requested more time to complete

A motion brought forth by one councillor at Monday night's Committee of the Whole meeting to have plans cease immediately until Dec. 31, 2016 was amended by another councillor to have plans cease immediately for the rest of this Council term.

Councillor Theresa Rickerby made the motion to delay plans for 18 months to allow the new Waterfront Advisory Committee time to gather more information and make an informed recommendation to council, which could then make an informed decision.

It was Councillor Brian Darling who amended the motion, as he believed the issue was done and it was time to move forward.

There were three delegations at the beginning of the meeting from residents and groups opposed to marina expansion into the west harbour. Beth Bellaire and Jeremy Fowlie spoke on behalf of the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club and invited youth paddlers to address council members. The group went beyond the



Brian Darling

the presentation after Mayor Gil Brocanier informed the group was already five minutes over the limit. The mayor did give them the opportunity to finish the presentation.

Citizens Deb Panko and Paul Pagnuelo also spoke to give their suggestions as to how the harbour issue could be solved.

Later in the meeting, there was plenty of confusion at times surrounding Rickerby's motion, right from the time she began reading it. She said the motion on the agenda was incorrect. Changes had been sent to clerk Lorraine Brace, who was absent. Brocanier said it was an important item and told Rickerby to write out any changes so that everyone knew the correct wording and what they would be discussing. She worked with Brent Larmer, who was filling in for Brace, to get the correct wording.

Part of the motion on the agenda was printed as: "WHEREAS any further discussions regarding the expansion of slips at the Cobourg Marina into the West Harbour cease effective immediately through to December 31, 2016 to allow for further deliberations."

The only change to the motion was to replace the word "discussions" with "plans."

Councillor Debra McCarthy said her version of the agenda was also different. Rickerby said there could be different versions because of changes that were made.

Brocanier sought confirmation that "it doesn't change the intent of the motion."

"The spirit of the motion remains the same," Rickerby agreed.

Councillor Forrest Rowden questioned why Council would need to wait until Dec. 31, 2016 to make the decision when the newly formed waterfront group was going to come back to Council with some decisions.

"Basically what my intent with that was to allow the committee to get their feet wet, to get organized and what I feel is take the time to gather the information that they need to make an informed decision," Rickerby said. "We have work that I feel needs to be done. They need to be brought up to speed on the entire plan as it is presented and there are lots of questions."

McCarthy said the delay until the end of 2016 could mean the marina expansion plan could come back onto the table as is.

"If the Waterfront Advisory Committee – as representative of user groups, stakeholders and the public at large – does their due diligence, looks at the business case, looks at all of the reasons why, and they as a group feel that this needs to come back on the table in the best interest of the community, to me that is the purpose of the committee," Rickerby remarked. "If they feel that they do not support that idea and they don't want it back on the table, that too is the purpose of the committee."

"What I'm trying to do is find balance here as well, to allow the committee to do the work, but to also take the pressure off and to allow people to be able to move forward in a productive way," she continued. "Personally I feel we have a lot of work to do before we even discuss moving into the west harbour."

Brocanier said he could not support the motion because he committed to a process that included the new Waterfront Advisory Committee.

"We have advertised for people for the Waterfront Advisory Committee, we have now appointed them and to support this motion would be changing the scope of what they expected to deal with. That doesn't mean I'm supporting any kind of a plan, it just means I'm supporting the process and let's get on with it and have a decision made," said the mayor, adding he's aware of

misinformation being circulated, especially on local blogs.

“I want to get on with this and have it resolved once and for all.”

Rowden agreed with Brocanier and said the committee should be able to come back to council with recommendations within the next six months.

“I get calls on a daily basis in regards to what are we doing with the harbour so I think we have to move quickly and get a decision by the end of this year,” Rowden also said.

Councillor Larry Sherwin said he would like to make a “friendly amendment” and change the date in Rickerby’s motion to Dec. 31, 2015. If there were any delays in 2016, Sherwin didn’t want the issue dragging on late into this council’s term and possibly give the next council something they don’t need to worry about when they begin.

“I think the (committee) can have a decision made, good or bad, right or wrong, by the end of this year and bring us recommendations,” he said.

McCarthy said she didn’t support the amendment.

“I believe a great deal of time has been wasted considering this proposal that’s very, very unpopular, but there is a great deal of work for the Waterfront Advisory Committee to do and none of this is on the table right now,” she said. “I did not support the west harbour expansion (during the election). There could be marina expansion within the current footprint. If there’s truly at this table... a majority position to not support expansion in the west harbour, then let’s let go of it tonight and the Waterfront Advisory Committee can go forward to make other recommendations of the marina plan.”

Rowden responded by asking why the committee was needed if Council made a

decision regarding the west harbour Monday night.

Sherwin’s amendment was defeated. He had the support of Rowden, but it was opposed by Deputy Mayor John Henderson, Rickerby, McCarthy and Darling.

Following that vote, Rickerby offered clarification about the function of the Waterfront Advisory Committee, that it will have numerous issues to discuss, not just marina expansion.

“The reason for Dec. 31 of 2016, it’s not to just push the plan back and delay the process, it’s to allow the process to happen, to honour the committee and honour the process we have said to the public. I think the public deserves for the committee and for council to make an informed decision.”

While Darling said he agrees there is a lot of work ahead for the committee, he was going to propose an amendment to take the expansion of 116 slips off the table permanently.

“I feel that the community as a whole does not want 116 slips in that west basin. I think all of us in our hearts know it,” Darling said. “My campaign was not for that (marina expansion) and I’m going to take a foot forward here.”

Brocanier said Council needed to understand what Darling’s amendment specifically was.

Rickerby and McCarthy surrounded Darling as they discussed the details.

“I think this is Councillor Darling’s amendment,” Mayor Brocanier reminded them.

There was a brief delay before the amendment was announced as: “WHEREAS any further plans regarding the expansion of slips at the Cobourg Marina into the West Harbour cease effective immediately.”

McCarthy said she supported that amendment and thanked Darling for following through on an election commitment.

“This isn’t about not supporting staff,” she said. “The work that they’ve done and the process that was undertaken has led us to a point where there’s been incredible community engagement.”

Sherwin asked when the report from the advisory committee would come back to council since the date had been removed from Rickerby’s motion. Brocanier asked Darling to clarify that the amendment was to permanently remove plans about the marina expansion into the west harbour. Darling confirmed he was talking about the addition of 116 slips into the west harbour.

The mayor said there was no mention of 116 slips in Darling’s amendment, which led to more confusion.

Rickerby then asked Darling, for clarification purposes, if the amendment was keeping the Shoreplan Engineering Study for information purposes only, remove any consideration for slip development in the west harbour permanently and dissolve the working group (Marina Expansion Steering Committee) and replace with Waterfront Advisory Committee

Darling agreed and said he would add “116 slips” into the amendment to the motion.

“I can’t support that, Councillor Darling,” Rickerby responded. “I think that leaves it open to people coming back with 50 slips or 40 slips.”

Rickerby asked Brocanier if this council makes the decision to not support any slips, would that decision carry on past their term.

“Another council could overturn that,” the mayor answered.

Darling said he was changing his

amendment to from “116 slips” to “any slips.”

“Councillor Darling, I do thank you for putting that forward and I hear where you’re coming from,” Rickerby said. “My only concern is we’re making this decision without having solid background information that leads this to come back to the table in another term without having the information.”

“I agree that that would be really nice, but I think the decision in the end would be the same,” Darling said. “I feel that strongly about it and if there’s enough people in the public out there that four years from now they want to vote in a council that’s all pro-expansion, they can go ahead and do that at that time.”

Brocanier said he was willing to support whatever recommendation the Waterfront Advisory Committee comes back with, even if it meant no marina expansion.

“I just think we’re short-circuiting the process,” he said.

Rowden suggested the amendment could read that no decisions are made until the report came back from the committee.

Rickerby said that if the work was put in now to make an informed decision, a future council considering marina expansion could look at the work from this term that decided it was not a good idea.

“They wanted the financial transparency, they wanted the reporting, they wanted the information,” she added about Cobourg citizens. “The 18 months was really to allow us the time to do that as well as work on other projects.”

Brocanier agreed with Rickerby about the need for accurate information. He pointed to Pagnuelo’s presentation, which included financial information, but when asked by the

mayor if he had spoken to marina staff or the town's financial department, Pagnuelo said no.

"He was hoping that once he presents this information someone would go to work and verify that it is either factual or it's not," Brocanier said. "That's the problem we have right now, there's so much information floating around out there that is wrong. Let's get the information right and then the Waterfront Advisory Committee can make an informed decision and council can understand why they're making that informed decision. Even if it ends up being no slips, I don't have a problem with that."

Henderson and Rickerby are council representatives on the Waterfront Advisory Committee.

"I would really love to hear from the committee that represents our community," Henderson said. "I've heard the citizens, we all have, it has been going on for some time, but finally we have a committee that I hope would be representative of the stakeholders."

Despite reservations by some councillors, the amendment was approved and carried.

Rickerby then moved the motion as amended and approved by council and it was approved 5-1. Sherwin was the only dissenting vote. The mayor, meanwhile, would have only voted in the event of a tie.

The decision requires final approval at next Monday's regular Council meeting.

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