

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Dave Hancock, Chief Building Official, Building Department, Planning and Development Division, dhancock@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	May 31, 2021		
Report No.:	Planning and Development-027-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Request for an Exemption to the Sign By-law – Rotary Club of Cobourg – COVID-19 Vaccination Lawn Signs

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this Report for information purposes; and,

FURTHER THAT Council approve the Rotary Club of Cobourg's request for an exemption to Sign By-law 96-2012 as amended to allow Cobourg residents to place 16" X 24" Rotary Club COVID-19 vaccination lawn signs on their private property to show the community that they have received their vaccination, with an expiry date of October 1, 2021; and,

FURTHER THAT Council's exemption approval is conditional on the Rotary Club of Cobourg ensuring that the lawn signs are removed from private properties in the Town of Cobourg following the aforementioned expiry date.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This Report is being published on the Committee of the Whole Agenda in advance of the meeting on May 31, 2021, and will be considered in open session prior to final consideration by Council in open session on June 7, 2021.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to provide a staff overview and recommendation on the request by the Rotary Club of Cobourg for an exemption to the Sign By-law to permit residents to purchase lawn signs from the Rotary Club of Cobourg for display purposes promoting COVID-19 vaccination and to share with the community that individuals have been vaccinated.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

Rotary Club of Cobourg has initiated a campaign for residents of Cobourg and Northumberland County to purchase lawn signs promoting vaccination against COVID-19. Town of Cobourg By-Law 96-2012 Section 2 allows a maximum of 20 lawn signs with a maximum size of 16" x 24" to be placed on private property for a period of not more than fourteen (14) days.

5. BACKGROUND

A formal email request was received on May 20, 2021 from Gord Ley, Rotary Club of Cobourg COVID-19 Committee Chair, requesting permission for residents to place 2000 lawn signs in Cobourg as part of a Town and County-wide exercise aimed at promoting COVID-19 vaccination. Please refer to Figure 1 attached for a complete overview of the proposal from Mr. Ley, and Figure 2 for a mock-up of the lawn sign.

6. ANALYSIS

A formal request was received from the Rotary Club of Cobourg to allow the placement of 2000 lawn signs across Cobourg and Northumberland County. The intent is to have the lawn signs available for County residents to purchase from the Rotary Club to display them on their private property promoting COVID-19 vaccination.

The exact quantity of signs that may be displayed in the Town of Cobourg is unknown as the purchase of the signs is voluntary and may include residents from outside of Cobourg. The hope, as outlined in the email from Mr. Ley of the Rotary Club, would be to have everyone purchase and display the signs on their private property showing they have been vaccinated. The letter does indicate that the 2000 signs constitute their "initial order" and it is possible that more signs could be procured depending on demand.

The size of the proposed signs is 16" x 24" which does meet the specifications allowed in By-law 96-2012. By-law 96-2012 Section 2 does however limit the quantity of lawn signs to twenty (20) and for a period of not more than fourteen (14) days. The Rotary letter indicates a proposed timeline until September when most persons will have had the opportunity for vaccination.

In light of the above, Council may wish to give consideration to not limiting the number of signs at this stage (enforcement would be difficult) and for providing

an upset timeline for the signs to be removed from private properties (ie. 4-5 months).

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

There are no financial implications anticipated to the Town or departmental budgets, however enforcement of the removal of the signs after the expiry of the permission may impose additional staff time. It is suggested that the Rotary Club COVID-19 Committee be responsible for ensuring the signs are removed post-deadline as a condition of approval.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, some particulars of the request do not comply with the Town of Cobourg Sign By-law 96-2012 (an amendment to Sign By-law #8-2009). Specifically, the exact quantity of lawn signs proposed to be placed in Cobourg is unknown as they are purchased on a voluntary basis by residents throughout Northumberland County. The maximum number of lawn signs allowed per the By-law is twenty (20), and they can only be in place for a period of not more than fourteen (14) days.

If Council feels that the proposed exemption is appropriate, it is recommended that there be no cap placed on the number of lawn signs, that a timeline of 4-5 months be set on the placement of the signs, and that a stipulation be included for the Rotary Club of Cobourg to be responsible for ensuring the signs are removed from lawns following the expiry of the approval.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Rotary Club COVID-19 Vaccination Lawn Signs - Planning and Development-027-21.docx
Attachments:	- Figure 1 - Rotary COVID-19 Request May 20, 2021.docx - Figure 2 - Rotary Lawn Sign Proof.pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 21, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Glenn McGlashon, Director of Planning and Development - May 21, 2021 - 3:34 PM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - May 21, 2021 - 3:43 PM