



Subject: *Civic Addressing Bylaw Review*
To: CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, January 21, 2025
Date Prepared: January 10, 2025
Related Motions: PAC24(77) December & C24(445)
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Summary

In December 2024, Planning & Development staff reviewed Schedule A of the Civic Addressing Bylaw (P-800) with regards to public street and private road naming guidelines and have recommended amendments to the Bylaw. The proposed amendments to Schedule A provide additional guidance to the Civic Addressing Coordinator in determining whether a road name is acceptable.

During the discussion at Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) in December, concern regarding the guideline against the use of special characters or any punctuation in public street or private road names was expressed by members of the Committee. Committee members indicated that the guideline in Schedule A of the Civic Addressing Bylaw that does not allow the use of special characters or punctuation may prevent some Acadian or Mi'kmaq names from being accepted if they required the use of special characters or punctuation.

Motion C24(445) was moved that directed staff to correspond with the Province on section A3 of the Bylaw with regards to Mi'kmaq and Acadian (as well as any other naming) of Provincial Roads.

Following that discussion with the province and further research, staff recommend giving first reading again as there are additional proposed amendments relating to the use of special characters.

Financial Impact Statement

There are no immediate financial impacts associated with the adoption of this report.

Recommendation

That first reading be given to Bylaw P-800-2 Civic Addressing Bylaw, a bylaw to amend Bylaw P-800 Civic Addressing Bylaw.

Recommended Motions

The Planning Advisory Committee recommends to Council that Council:

- *Give first reading to Bylaw P-800-2, a bylaw to amend Bylaw P-800 Civic Addressing Bylaw*

Background

Schedule A of the Civic Addressing Bylaw contains general principles and guidelines for the Civic Addressing Coordinator to determine what is an acceptable public street or private road name. Staff recommend additional criteria be added to the Bylaw that would prevent an offensive or distasteful name from being approved, as well as bring the guidelines in Schedule A into alignment with other municipal and provincial naming policies.

At the Council meeting in December direction was given to staff to correspond with the province with regards to Mi'kmaq and Acadian names of provincial roads. At that same meeting Council also gave first reading to amendments proposed and discussed at PAC earlier that month. Following a review staff undertook regarding the use of special characters, staff are recommending further changes to the bylaw which would require first reading to be given again to the draft bylaw.

Discussion

The current Schedule A of the Civic Addressing Bylaw contains the General Principles and Guidelines for naming public streets and private roads. They are listed below:

General Principles

1. Avoid Duplication - There should be no duplication of names, including street names differentiated by a suffix.
2. Avoid Confusion - street names that sound very similar should be avoided in order to avoid diction problems when people are making emergency calls under stress.
3. Establish Continuity - a public street or private road running in one direction should have one name only and should have the same name throughout its entire length.

Guidelines

- A1. No name shall be duplicated including similar names that are differentiated by street type
- A2. No street name shall sound like an existing name
- A3. No street name shall contain numbers, special characters, decimals, hyphens, apostrophes, periods or punctuations of any kind
- A4. No street names shall incorporate product, trademark or copyright names
- A5. Street names should be limited to 24 characters

There are no guidelines included in schedule A that state the name of a public street or private road name should be inoffensive to the public or "in good taste". Without an amendment, there is no mechanism for the Civic Addressing Coordinator to reject a submitted name that may be considered to be inappropriate.

Staff have not been in a position where a name that could be viewed as inappropriate has been submitted for consideration. Staff want to mitigate the possibility of that situation by adding the amendment to the Civic Addressing Bylaw, which will add additional criteria for street names.

Staff also recommend an additional guideline and an adjustment to an existing guideline in Schedule A. The new guideline will not allow a public street or private road name to be a combination of a given name and surname unless directed by Council.

Jurisdictional Scan

There is a spectrum on which municipalities regulate the naming of public streets and private roads in regard to social acceptability. In some municipalities, there is no requirement that the proposed street name be “in good taste” or free of offensive language. Other examples are as follows:

The provincial road naming policy as well as Pictou County and Antigonish County’s policies include the guideline that a submitted name must be “in good taste”. In Colchester County the road naming policy references the provincial road naming policy.

The Municipality of the District of Yarmouth’s Street Naming Policy includes the guideline “not to be offensive to the public and/or pose a safety concern”.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Municipal Street Naming policy goes into greater detail. Their policy has a section “Names to Avoid” which has the following criteria:

1. Names that could be construed as advertising a particular business; and,
2. Cumbersome, corrupted, modified names, discriminatory or derogatory names from the point of view of race, sex, colour, creed, political affiliation or other social factors; and,
3. Names with any sexual overtones, inappropriate humour, parody, slang or double meaning; and
4. Names that have a secondary negative or offensive connotation

Staff recommend an amendment to the bylaw that falls between the guideline for a name to simply be “in good taste”, and the detail of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s policy would be appropriate.

Special Characters

Following the discussion at December PAC staff also recommend that guideline A3 be amended to allow special characters and punctuation in public street and private road names at the discretion of the Civic Addressing Coordinator. This amendment will align Schedule A with Parks, Recreation & Culture’s Park Naming Policy section 4.3. The proposed amendment will also more closely resemble the provincial road naming policy which allows some special characters as well.

Regarding the use of special characters and punctuation in public street and private road names, the Provincial Department of Public Works’ Road Naming Policy addresses the use of special characters in section 4.2. The section reads, “Names submitted with special characters (ie. hyphen, genitive apostrophe, etc) will be accepted only if the special characters are found in a subset of the extended ASCII character set. This subset does not include stylized symbols such as #, %, etc.”.

Staff have communicated with the Department regarding this section in their Road Naming Policy. Staff at the Department of Public Works indicated they review road names with special characters on a case-by-case basis. In some systems such as databases or mapping software, special characters are not compatible and will restrict functionality. The Department recommends using road names without special characters for this reason, but have made allowances for some road names. Department staff do not have any record of road names being rejected due to a special character.

Parks, Recreation & Culture’s Park Naming Policy also has a section regarding the use of special characters, and of given names and surnames for use as park names. Section 4.3 of the Parks Naming Policy mirrors section A3 of Schedule A of the Civic Addressing Bylaw, with an additional statement recognizing that restricting the use of special characters and punctuation “precludes the use of many Mi’kmaq names” and will allow the use of special characters at the discretion of Parks, Recreation & Culture staff.

Where the Department of Public Works reviews road names with special characters on a case-by-case basis and are therefore approved at the discretion of Department staff as well, Municipal staff recommend language that borrows wording from the provincial road naming policy.

Appealing a Rejected Road Name

Staff have recognized there is no process laid out in the Civic Addressing Bylaw that would allow for an appeal of a rejected road name. Staff recommend a subsection be added to Section 7 of the Civic Addressing Bylaw which pertains to public street and private road naming. This new section will allow a written appeal to be submitted to Council if a street name has been rejected by the Civic Addressing Coordinator.

Proposed Amendments

The proposed amendments are as follows (green text is proposed text and red strikethrough text is proposed to be removed):

Proposed Schedule A:

Guidelines

Street Name Characteristics

- A1. No name shall be duplicated including similar names that are differentiated by street type
- A2. No street name shall sound like an existing name
- A3. No street name shall contain numbers, special characters, decimals, hyphens, apostrophes, periods or punctuations of any kind. **Special characters and/or punctuation found in a subset of the extended ASCII character set may be accepted at the discretion of the Civic Addressing Coordinator.**
- A4. No street names shall incorporate product, trademark or copyright names
- A5. Street names should be limited to 24 characters
- A6. **No street name shall be discriminatory or derogatory, or have a negative or offensive connotation.**
- A7. **No street name shall be a personal name such as a combination of given name and surname without the consent of Council.**

Staff have noted an error in subsection 8.1.c of the Civic Addressing Bylaw, where it references subsection 8.1.2. This subsection does not exist and should be notated as subsection 8.1.b. An amendment is proposed as follows:

Proposed subsection 8.1.c

(c) where permission is obtained in accordance with subsection ~~(8.1.2)~~ (8.1.b), erect, maintain in good condition, and replace as necessary, a sign and signpost at the intersection of the private road and the public street in a manner consistent with any conditions attached to such permission and other lawful requirements, and, except to the extent of any inconsistency with such conditions or other lawful requirements, in accordance with the following standards:

- i) lettering of the private road name to be no less than 100 millimetres (4 inches) in height, in Helvetica font style and in upper case characters;
- ii) lettering to be in black against a white background with a black border of 25 millimetres (1 inch) in width;
- iii) bottom of the lettering to measure at least 1.2 metres (48 inches) above grade;
- iv) signpost to be made of pressure treated lumber or rigid non-ferrous metal and sufficiently fastened to the ground to hold the sign rigidly in place and to prevent turning of the sign in the wind;

v) to the extent possible, the signpost is to be located in an unobstructed line of sight for vehicles approaching the private road from either direction along the public street and to be set back a minimum of 3.5 metres (12 feet) from the traveled portion of the public street.

Proposed subsection 7.8

7.8 Where the Civic Addressing Coordinator has rejected a street name a written appeal may be submitted to the Municipal Clerk within 7 days of the rejection. The appellant will then be given notice of the date and time of when the appeal will be heard by Council.

Policy Considerations

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The 2021-2024 East Hants Strategic Plan identifies Integrity and Respect as two of the Core Values which guide how employees serve the community.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The legislative authority to create planning policies and regulations relating to Bylaws is set out in the Municipal Government Act (MGA), Section 172(1).

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial considerations related to the proposed changes to the bylaw.

Alternative Option

If Planning Advisory Committee does not support the additional changes outlined in this report which include the use of special characters and the appealing of a rejected road name, the original version of the amended bylaw which was given first reading in December will be added to the Council agenda this month to be considered for second reading.

Conclusion

Staff propose amendments to Schedule A of the Civic Addressing Bylaw which will provide additional criteria for the Civic Addressing Coordinator in determining whether to accept or reject a proposed public street or private road name. The amendment will align the Civic Addressing Bylaw's naming guidelines with Parks, Recreation & Culture's guidelines for naming public parks. Staff also propose a housekeeping amendment to 8.1.c.

Due to changes relating to the use of special characters and an addition to section 7, staff are recommending first reading be given again to the amendments to the Civic Addressing Bylaw.

Council gave first reading to amendments to the Bylaw at the December meeting of Council (motion C24(455)). Further changes relating to special characters are proposed in this report and if these changes are supported by Planning Advisory Committee, then a recommendation to give first reading again will need to be moved.

Attachments

- Appendix A - Draft amended Civic Addressing Bylaw