

# **Township of McMurrich/Monteith**

Strategic Planning and Development Committee Meeting

Monday, March 18, 2024 - 7:00 pm

McMurrich/Monteith Council Chambers

## **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest
3. Acceptance of Minutes of Meeting- February 26, 2023
4. Old Business
  - 4.1 Local Business -
  - 4.2 Strategic Plan – Draft Review
5. New Business
6. Information Sharing
7. Resolutions
8. Adjournment
9. Next Meeting Date- TBD at 7:00pm

**McMurrich/Monteith**  
**Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, February 26, 2024 – 7:00 PM**

**Present:** Wesley Dyson (Chairperson), Vicky Roeder-Martin (Council Member), Annette DeCoste, Pamela Leeder, Lori McBride, Tammy Rittwage (members)

**Absent:**

**Guests:** none

**Recording Secretary:** Allyson Pedwell (Municipal Staff)

**1. Call To Order at 7:00pm**

**2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest:**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

**3. Acceptance of Minutes of Meeting:**

Minutes of the Committee meeting: November 20, 2024. See resolution below.

**4. Old Business:**

4.1 Grant Update – The Committee discussed current grants and their status

4.2 Supporting Local Business/ACED – The Committee discussed how to support local business.

4.3 Strategic Plan – The Committee discussed feedback regarding the strategic plan survey.

**5. New Business:**

none

**6. Information Sharing:**

6.1 Committee Concerns – discussed under 4.3

**7. Resolutions:**

**2024-01                      DeCoste/Roeder-Martin**

**Be It Resolved** that the Committee approves the Minutes of the Meeting held November 20, 2023. **Carried.**

**8. Adjournment:**

**2024-02                      Roeder-Martin/Rittwage**

**Be It Resolved** that the Committee Adjourns the meeting at 8:29 pm to meet March 18, 2024 at 7:00pm. **Carried**

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Chairperson – Wesley Dyson

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Deputy Clerk-Treasurer – Allyson Pedwell





**Township of McMurrich Monteith**

**5 Year Strategic Plan**

2024 - 2029



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## Acknowledgements

The municipality of McMurrich Monteith Strategic Plan was a collaborative effort involving residents, business owners, township staff, and Council. The plan reflects thoughtful reflection, input, consideration, and insightful recommendations of those who dedicated their time and effort in this initiative.

## Message from Mayor Robinson

[Text]

## Municipal Council

Mayor Glynn Robinson

Deputy Mayor Vicky Roeder-Martin

Councillor Daniel O'Halloran

Councillor Wesley Dyson

Councillor Terry Currie

## Staff

Cheryl Marshall, Clerk/Treasurer

Allyson Pedwell, Deputy Clerk

Should other staff members also be included in this list [Wes: Are we listing all staff members? Staff who helped put this document together? Should we take this out?]

## Strategic Planning And Development Committee

Wesley Dyson, Chair

Vicky Roeder-Martin, Vice-Chair

Pamela Leeder

Lori McBride

Annette DeCoste

Tammy Rittwage

## Background

[Needs Content]

## Mission Statement, Vision, & Guiding Principles

The Township of McMurrich/Monteith remains committed to the following Vision, Mission Statement, and Guiding Principles.

### Vision Statement

[Pam: I don't think we decided on a statement/mission/vision, but perhaps instead of reinventing the wheel, sticking with the previous which was:]

The Municipality of McMurrich-Monteith strives to be a welcoming community that embraces growth, while respecting the rich heritage and natural environment of the area.

### Mission Statement

We will work towards fostering growth opportunities for current and future generations by:

- Promoting community development and ensuring quality of life for our residents and visitors
- Maintaining and improving our municipal services and facilities
- Supporting local businesses and business development; and
- Encouraging a cooperative atmosphere founded on respectful communication with all community stakeholders.

### Guiding Principles

Throughout all activities and actions, the following guiding principles will provide direction to the committee and agents that are undertaking them:

- Accountable and transparent governance,
- Effective management of municipal assets and infrastructure,
- Community wellness and engagement,
- Strategic collaboration and partnerships, and
- Stewardship of our natural environment

## Methodology

The Strategic Planning Committee consulted with the public and referenced documents such as the Official Plan and Asset Management Plan to be in alignment with this Strategic Plan.

[Survey with results?]



## SWOT Analysis

Based on Strategic Planning Committee and public collaboration consultation, the following SWOT Analysis that focuses on identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats provides an overview of the internal and external factors related to McMurrich/Monteith that require consideration when developing a direction for the municipality strategic plan.

### Strengths

- Outdoor Recreational Amenities (Lakes, Trail)
- Recreation, Facilities
- Central located between Parry Sound, Muskoka, Almaguin, Algonquin Park
- Community Center
- Hwy 518 (touring road)
- Gas station in Sprucedale
- Volunteers
- Tourism
- Healthcare growth
- Located in Northern Ontario
- Talented people
- Community connections (service clubs, churches, etc.)
- Special events that are unique to the area
- Volunteer firefighter recruitment

### Weaknesses

- Healthcare services
- Lack of entertainment, restaurants, legion, etc.
- Lack of cell coverage over entire township, lack of high-speed internet for all residents
- Transportation options
- Employment Opportunities
- McMurrich Monteith Website
- Trust
- Culture, connection
- Walking paths (trails, sidewalks, etc)
- Township finances
- Landfill site capacity and environmental concerns
- Staff culture and turnover
- Inconsistency in Landfill fees and collection
- Illegal building and environmental practices follow up (residents may have lost trust in reporting illegal

- building and not report) ie. cabins and multiple buildings larger than 10x10 on same property without permits
- building permit structure (it sounds like this could be improved upon and especially for larger developments)
- Capacity

### Opportunities

- Northern grant availability
- Residents wanting to move forward
- Building upon what is already successful
- Creative ways of using existing funds
- Digital newsletter an easy and financially efficient way to communicate with residents
- Healthcare hub (potential for health services to access space to meet with residents)
- Health fair events
- Food truck events or permanent placement
- Community events
- Environmental focus and engagement to keep environment standards high
- A council committed to setting a higher standard for council activities, following bylaws, and more positive communication with residents
- Potential partnerships (other townships and groups)
- Potential Growth
- Potential for new families
- 85 new development properties

### Threats

- Community "buy-in"/culture shift not happening
- Increased property tax rates if no further investment from higher governments or grants

- Risk management and sometimes legislation prevents the “small town” creativity
- Staff culture and buy-in if there is not a shift in this culture. Staff need to believe in what is planned. They are the front line voice in the township. Attitude.
- Hotel and restaurant closure has affected the “tourism pull” for all seasons.
- Increased fees at landfill increase risk of roadside dumping
- Lack of transparency from staff and council
- McMurrich vs Monteith, seasonal vs permanent residents, have vs have nots, us vs then culture. Tribalism.
- Landfill closing costs, post-closure transfer station, etc.
- Government waste, fiscal responsibility

## Strategic Priority Areas

[Pam: When identifying the pillars we may want to be careful on how descriptive it gets to describe what is within those pillars – it just feels like a lot and maybe could be toned down a bit.]

- Township Operations and Services

- Shared Services
- Township Finances
- Township Operations (Admin)
  - Staffing Levels
  - Grant Writing
  - Finances
- Fire Department and First Responders (Subcommittee)
- Communications
  - Between all parties, staff, public, council, regional connections

- Infrastructure and the Environment

- Roads and Bridges
- Landfill
- Cemeteries (Subcommittee)
- Parks and Trails
  - Playground Equipment
- Capital Assets (Buildings)

- Economic Development and Community Improvement

- Local Economic Development
- Business Support
- Land Use Planning
  - Downtown Revitalization
- Tourism
- Housing
- Transportation
- Regional Partnerships
  - ACED [Wes: Are there more we should/could list?]

- Healthy Living and Wellness

- Recreation
  - Special Events
  - Programming
- Inclusivity
- Sports Programming
- Health (AHC)
- Special Events
- Library
- Medical Services

[Pam: In the former strategic plan there is a statement to consider including in this section:]

Throughout the consultation process, several key areas of focus emerge as common themes based on the input received from community stakeholders. These themes are as follows:

- Township Operations & Services
- Infrastructure and the Environment
- Economic Development and Community Improvement
- Healthy Living and Wellness

To increase the potential impact of this plan, specific goals of Council and the Strategic Planning

Committee have been identified as areas for desired improvements over the next five years. The indicators of success under each goal have been specifically identified as desirable through the consultation process, however, other indicators of success may be considered should they be qualified to be pursuant to one of the goals set out in the plan.



## Strategic Priority: Township Operations, Services, and Council

[Insert Background]

### Goal: Continuing To Improve The Township's Financial Sustainability

The township currently has no major debt with roughly \$2-3X.X million in total reserves as of [Date of publication]. According to the last financial audit, the Township has XX in tangible combined assets including real estate and capital assets.

Council and staff are encouraged to build on this strong financial foundation by exploring every avenue of securing provincial and federal grants and new development revenue streams before raising taxes or spending large amounts of reserve capital.

Staff and Council should regularly review their asset inventory and make strategic acquisition and disposition decisions as necessary. [Pam: Wondering if something should also be mentioned about work plans for staff in this area too. Work plans are important for internal accountability for internal processes and supports financial sustainability]

- Financial Planning
  - Efficiencies
  - Internal Processes (what are they? How do we improve them?)
  - Financial Planning
  - Professional Development
  - Capitalize on External Revenue Sources / Grants
- Revenue Streams, Capacity
- Provincial and Federal Assistance

### Goal: Transition To The CAO Model

The Chief Administrative Officer is a role that sits directly between Council and Staff and is responsible for exercising general control and management of the affairs of the municipality for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective operation of the municipality. During municipal training, it was recommended that Council create and fill this position.

The CAO is ultimately responsible for staff and carrying out the decisions of Council, providing vision and leadership to the Township through planning, organizing, and directing the operation of all municipal services in accordance with legislation, by-laws and policies established by Council.

Moving to a CAO model more clearly defines the role of Council and differs from the way McMurrich/Monteith has traditionally operated. Council ideally should be "steering the ship, not rowing the boat". With the appointment of a CAO, Council would also delegate authority over topics like HR matters and Treasury, eliminating many Closed Sessions and freeing up Council time to complete other tasks.

### Goal: Improving Management Systems

#### 1. Clarify Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.1. With a small staff and tight budgets, the Municipality of McMurrich/Monteith must place a high priority on effective organization and staffing. Council will continue to take steps to clarify staff roles, responsibilities,

and authorities, and to ensure that all staff are trained and equipped to perform their duties. Council will review job descriptions annually during the employee review period as well as assess and assign training to staff as needed.

2. Enhance Performance Appraisals

2.1. Performance appraisals, evaluations, and mentoring of staff will be undertaken to ensure staff are measured against key objectives for their positions (using a 360 Review approach with input from supervisors, peers, and subordinates). This will provide meaningful and authentic feedback and identify strengths as well as development opportunities.

3. Review policies, Procedures, and Processes

3.1. Council will review established policies, and procedures, and processes to bring them up-to-date (complaint?) and to ensure their consistency with the Official Plan, Strategic Plan, and best municipal practices.

4. Administration Efficiencies

4.1. Staff and Council will regularly identify efficiencies and implement solutions within Administration and throughout the rest of the municipality. Examples include:

4.1.1. Digitizing Documents

4.1.2. Improving workspaces

4.1.3. Improving internal and external processes

4.1.4. Employee time-shifting

4.1.5. Work from home policy

4.1.6. Digital Collaboration

5. Improved Communication

5.1. Continue to improve the online newsletter (monthly issues at a minimum with a community engagement and event focus).

5.2. Website improvements

5.3. Create a Communications Policy that outlines what, when, and how Council and Staff formally communicate with the public.

5.4. Move to Virtual Meetings

5.5. Bi-annual Town Hall Meetings

6. Maintain and Update Township Priority Project Lists

6.1. Use the living document approach to maintain ongoing task and priority lists

## Indicators Of Success

[List]



## Strategic Priority: Infrastructure and the Environment

[Insert Background]

### Goal: Planning For Better Roads, Bridges, And Culverts

Roads and related infrastructure can improve with long-term investment and planning. The Asset Management Plan should be used as a planning guide when making decisions and creating work plans. Both the Asset Management Plan and work plans should be reviewed and updated regularly.

The Township's heavy equipment assets require ongoing maintenance and planning for end-of-life replacement. Maintenance and replacement planning should be reviewed regularly.

McMurrich/Monteith must take advantage of available grants that can be directly applied for improving our infrastructure such as upgrading equipment, purchasing aggregates, and labour.

### Goal: Expanding Our Hydro Coverage

Encouraging hydro expansion in McMurrich/Monteith is essential to growth in the township. To meet future demand, our hydro infrastructure needs to grow to service new areas and building lots.

Many areas of the township have no hydro access at the road, requiring owners to use alternative power solutions like solar and generator power. New hydro lines create new business opportunities by supplying power with higher capacities than alternatives can provide. They also make new building lots more appealing to newcomers and developers.

McMurrich/Monteith needs to advocate for improving/upgrading our existing hydro infrastructure and request assistance from higher levels of government to build new lines.

See 'Appendix XX' for the Hydro Service Map.

### Goal: Expanding Cellular And Internet Coverage

Providing reliable internet access is especially important for rural communities to prosper in our increasingly digital world. Many areas of the township have either unreliable coverage or no coverage at all. To build our local economy and support future development, cell coverage needs to expand.

McMurrich/Monteith should advocate that every part of the township should have access to 911 emergency calling for the safety of residents, visitors, and first responders. Expanded coverage creates new opportunities in terms of affordable fixed internet for at-home businesses, residents who work from home, and students.

See 'Appendix XX' for the Cell Coverage Map.

### Goal: Sprucedale Revitalization

From a business and economic perspective, Sprucedale has been in decline - the Hotel has closed, as has the general store. We have added 1 small business in 2023 which joins the Post Office and Gas Station. [Wes: Needs expanding for both background, short and long-term goals, problems we're looking to solve, and tools available to achieve these goals. This could be a very large topic]

Revitalization Goals and Steps to implement:

1. New Welcome to Sprucedale Sign

2. [Wes: Should the township revisit changing the name of the Township to Sprucedale?]
3. Sidewalk upgrades [Wes: This is a longer discussion the committee needs to have].
4. Relocate current message board and sign from our Road Yard [Where to?]
5. Relocate Public Works
6. Rezone properties in Sprucedale, along Hwy 518, to "Residential/Commercial"

### **Goal: Environmental Protection And Education**

McMurrich/Monteith has 5 main lakes, countless wetland area including marsh, rivers and streams, and ponds surrounded by rural forest over 275km<sup>2</sup> (citation needed). The environment can be maintained and cared for by a wide range of Township-led initiatives.

Semi-annual cleanups are encouraged, it's a great way to bring the community together to help keep garbage out of our waterways and green space.

Educating residents at the landfill of the importance of recycling, composting, and waste diversion should continue long-term. Public education should also include property owner's rights and responsibilities for beaver issues and watershed management.

Council should proactively support provincial and federal environmental protection initiatives by resolution that positively impact McMurrich/Monteith.

All Township buildings need to adopt green initiatives, take advantage of environmental-focus grant opportunities, and meet and exceed federal efficiency targets. Staff and council buy-in is necessary to achieve these goals and is encouraged. All fixtures in township buildings should be converted to LED. Energy-loss assessments should be done to assess the current efficiency of our buildings and remedied where necessary to increase efficiency. Future buildings should be constructed with energy-efficient methods to meet the highest energy-loss standards.

Council and staff should promote and foster community environmental initiatives and educate the public on protecting the environment where appropriate.

### **Goal: Improve Township Amenities Like Cemeteries, Parks, Trails, And Boat Launches**

McMurrich/Monteith has a wide range of public amenity infrastructure including cemeteries, parks, trails, playground equipment, boat launches, and sports facilities. These public amenities need to be consistently maintained and upgraded as needed. Also finding ways to have marketing strategies so these are used by residents and visitors.

- Spring and Fall Trail inspections and cleanups of our trails, parks, and beaches
- Create and implement a new Trail signage plan
- Revamp the current garden at the Sprucedale Community Center

### **Goal: Improve Sprucedale Community Center And Recreation Complex**

McMurrich/Monteith has a community center with a kitchen. Attached to it is the covered, open-air rink. Future suggested improvements include:

- Enclose the rink, install an ice surface radiant cooling system, revamp the change rooms.
- Upgrade the kitchen equipment to meet or exceed commercial kitchen standards.
- New Playground equipment



### Goal: Improve Our Emergency Services

Fire Department volunteers need the tools, training, and resources they require to effectively respond to calls. Like Public Works, the Fire Department's vehicle assets require ongoing maintenance and planning for end-of-life replacement.

Maintenance and replacement planning should be reviewed regularly by staff and council.

### Goal: Improving And Extending The Life Of Our Landfill

With the help of consultants, Council and staff are encouraged to create and implement a long-term plan for the landfill that maximizes its lifespan using a fact-based approach. Ratepayers using the landfill should be consulted in changes to the landfill as they will require community buy-in and support to be successful.

Better data tracking and record-keeping at the landfill is required to effectively monitor new initiatives, usage, and identify efficiencies at the landfill.

### Goal: Improved Asset Planning

Create a plan for the future of our Municipal Buildings that include: [Wes: This too is a larger topic].

1. Assess our current property assets (Sell Bear Lake Fire Hall for example - where does that building fit in to the Township's long-term plan?)
2. Plan to make future building multi-use public spaces.

### Goal: Improved Trail

Continue to work with Park to Park in improving the trails that run through McMurrich/Monteith. Develop an action plan with a yearly budget for the trails.

### Indicators Of Success

[List]

- Better Hydro (electrical grid) coverage in our township (currently XX% of our roads do not have hydro [Wes: Should this be calculated on KM of road or number of lots?])
- Improved internet and cell coverage. The goal should be 100% 5G/LTE coverage for cellular in the Township.
- A facts-based plan for extending the life of the landfill [Wes: This needs to be expanded with concrete metrics]
- Following the asset management plan, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure need to be rated and ranked and a plan made for replacement and improvement. A living document showing work completed and scheduled with dates.
- Promote Community Assets (new playground structure to replace condemned equipment, improvements to the community kitchen)
- Trail improvements - annual cleanup, installed signage
- Purchase new MMFD equipment (ex Pumper)

## Strategic Priority: Economic Development and Community Improvement

[Insert Background]

### Goal: Better Communications

Improving community togetherness starts with better communication on behalf of council and staff.

Improving communications between public, staff, council, the region through:

1. Newsletters
2. Semi-annual Town Halls
3. Virtual Meetings
4. Updating the website to be user friendly and searchable as well as up to date with partnerships, community connections, etc.
5. Developing social media accounts for available platforms

### Goal: Affordable Housing

Create affordable seniors living units in Sprucedale [Wes: Needs to be expanded on with discussion].

### Goal: Improving \_\_\_\_

Economic and Business Development / Downtown Revitalization

1. Township buy-in for new and existing businesses
2. Fostering inter-business connections and partnerships
3. Outreach to businesses

[Pam: Not sure if this is the pillar we would put it under, but another goal of Supporting volunteer development and encouraging volunteer opportunities in the community.]

- Volunteer manual, job descriptions, advertisements on website
- Volunteer appreciation week (usually in April)

### Goal: Helping Local Businesses Start And Succeed

Out of the box thinking to support this such as a page on website to list local businesses, trail signage sponsored by businesses, community events sponsored by business, etc. Creating business after work networking opportunities in township facilities

1. Support Businesses and Organizations
2. Join ACED (Almaguin Community Economic Development) to be aware of and participate in regional economic initiatives. To avail ourselves of their support and resources (grant writing, partnerships, etc.).
3. Help to reestablish/resurrect NETWORK (or a new name) as a community business association. [Vicky: This might be more detail then required:]
  - 3.1. Create a current and regularly updated list of local businesses

- 3.2. Plan an initial meeting for local business owners to connect with one another, hear their suggestions for economic development and get their feedback on supports they need.
- 3.3. Promote and develop municipal-wide advertising, such as bailout and online flyer promoting all the places to eat in the summer
- 3.4. Provide free Community Center space to this new association twice per year
- 3.5. Business appreciation letters
- 4. Collaborate with existing Businesses
  - 4.1. The municipality will seek strategies that assist existing businesses to grow and prosper
    - 4.1.1. To work with the Official Plan in order to create economic opportunities in our municipality
    - 4.1.2. Downtown revitalization and beautification
    - 4.1.3. Explore the value of writing a community improvement plan
- 5. Other general points that could be included or considered: [Vicky: some are from the previous SP]
- 6. New MM business directory and map

## Indicators Of Success

[List]



## Strategic Priority: Healthy Living and Wellness

[Insert Background]

### Goal: Provide Active Living Opportunities To All Residents And Visitors Available To All Age Ranges

- Maintain financial support to Recreation Committee for delivery of community events
- Encourage growth and availability of youth sports programs.
- Maintain partnership with East Parry Sound Community Support Services to provide senior programming and socializing opportunities
- Develop opportunities with annual healthy living fair and speaker opportunities in collaboration with health services

### Goal: Engagement And Collaboration In Healthcare Services Discussions And Opportunities To Provide Access To Area Healthcare Services For Residents.

- Encourage partnerships with healthcare services (ie. providing space for clinics or information)
- Regularly being involved in discussions on transformation of healthcare services (MAOHT, Parry Sound OHT, Community Paramedicine, Almaguin Health Centre, inviting MAHC for community consultation, etc.)
- Out of the box thinking
- Links on website for 211 Ontario and NEHealthline
- Create new medical space in MM for an RN or GP, part-time to start.

### Goal: Improved Township Events

- Grow our events and add focus to the broader community to bring visitors to McMurrich/Monteith from surrounding areas.

## Indicators Of Success

[List]



## Appendix 1 - Letter of Support

As the elected official representing the township of McMurrich/Monteith, hereby adopt this Strategic Plan, as presented by the McMurrich/Monteith Strategic Planning and Economic Development Committee. We collaboratively agree to support this Committee as they execute the initiatives outlined within this Plan.

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Glynn Robinson, Mayor

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Vicky Roeder-Martin, Deputy Mayor

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Dan O'Halloran, Councillor

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Wesley Dyson, Councillor

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Terry Currie, Councillor

## Appendix 2 - Cellular and Hydro Coverage Maps