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Council holds first regular meeting of 2026, gets behind U.S. alcohol sales

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTERShelburne council paved the way for an animal veterinary clinic to set up shop.

The zoning bylaw required an amendment that would allow a small animal veterinary clinic to operate at 122 Owen Sound Street in the downtown core. It's a building previously used as a retail space.

The town's planner explained during council's Jan. 12 meeting the proposal aligns with existing planning policies and would bring a currently vacant storefront back into use. Discussion focused largely on parking and day-to-day operations.

Staff recommended a minimum of three designated parking spaces behind the building, with additional on-street parking available to minimize traffic impacts. The applicant confirmed the clinic would not function as a kennel or boarding facility, and that animals would only remain onsite for short recovery periods when required.

With no technical objections raised by reviewing agencies, council agreed the use was appropriate and approved the zoning bylaw amendment.

Changes coming to recycling program

As the province assumes greater responsibility for recycling, new blue bins will be issued to all households.

Residents who feel the larger bins may be difficult to store or manage can request a smaller option through the town's website by Jan. 15, after which selections will be finalized.

Town clears way for possible borrowing

Council approved a bylaw authorizing the town to borrow up to $12.9 million, if necessary, as a contingency measure.

Staff explained the bylaw is required under the Municipal Act and functions as a standby borrowing authority to ensure municipal operations can continue during unforeseen cash flow emergencies.

It was emphasized that the town is not borrowing funds at this time. Instead, the bylaw establishes a maximum borrowing limit, which is about 75 per cent of annual tax revenues, that could be accessed only if required.

Town supports sale of U.S. booze stock

Councillor Lindsay Wegener highlighted a letter from Dufferin County to Premier Doug Ford in support of an initiative in several provinces to sell stockpiled American-made alcohol.

The alcohol has been removed from store shelves as a salvo in the current trade war between Canada and the U.S. Proceeds from the sales will be directed to charities and food banks.

?If we have this crazy stockpile, we should be trying to sell it off and potentially donating the money to charities,? she said. ?We have so many food banks that are struggling right now with providing food to an increasing number of people. We pulled it off the shelf for a good reason, but we should try to do something with it.?

Council supported the initiative and voted to endorse the county's letter, with the possibility of sending a separate letter of its own.