



## MUNICIPALITY OF THAMES CENTRE

**REPORT NO. PDS-014-24**

**TO:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**FROM:** Director of Planning & Development Services  
**MEETING DATE:** March 11, 2024  
**SUBJECT:** **SIGN BY-LAW VARIANCE APPLICATION; DORCHESTER CHRISTIAN FAMILY CENTRE; 1256 CROMARTY DRIVE**

### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PDS-014-24 be **RECEIVED** for information;

THAT the Sign By-law Variance Application by Dorchester Christian Family Centre, for a property located at 1256 Cromarty Drive for a proposed sign having a face area of approximately 7 square metres to be erected at the Cromarty Drive entrance compared to the maximum face area requirement of 1.5 square metres under By-law No. 60-2006, be **APPROVED**.

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to evaluate a request for a variance to the Municipality's Sign By-law No. 60-2006.

### BACKGROUND:

The subject property is the Dorchester Christian Family Centre ("DCFC") which operates a church located at the corner of Dorchester Road (County Road 32) and Cromarty Drive. DCFC is proposing to construct a double-sided illuminated ground sign adjacent to their entrance at Cromarty Drive and having a face area of approximately 7 square metres compared to the maximum face area requirement of 1.5 square metres. Surrounding land uses in the vicinity of the proposed sign include agricultural lands used for the cultivation of fields crops with no residences in close proximity.

Most of the property is zoned Commercial Recreation-Holding (CR-h-3) including the church building and whereas the southerly quarter of the property along Cromarty Drive is zoned Agricultural (A). Since the sign is to be placed on a portion of the property zoned A, the maximum face area is 1.5 square metres. If the sign was placed on the CR zoned portion of the property, it would be capable of complying with the Sign By-law being under the maximum face area of 15 square metres.

## COMMENTS:

Council may authorize a variance to the provisions of the By-law provided the general intent and purpose of the By-law is maintained.

Staff is satisfied that this variance request is appropriate considering the character of the area would be maintained recognizing that the closest residence is situated at least 230 metres away. Strict application of the maximum face area standard would be unnecessary and create a hardship with the applicant. The special circumstance applying to the land is the positioning of the driveway access to Cromarty Drive and the split zoned nature of the property in that compliance with the By-law could be achieved if the sign was placed on the commercially zoned property of the lands. No concerns were raised by the Director of Public Works and the Chief Building Official. Based on the foregoing, the intent and purpose of the By-law would be maintained.

The Sign By-law also states that Council may make any decision and that the applicant shall not be entitled to a further hearing on the matter before Council and the decision of Council shall be final. Staff intends to present a new Sign By-law for Council's consideration this year. As part of that process, the delegation of authority for staff to approve sign variance requests may be also considered at that time.

The attached Location map shows a legacy address of 3352 Dorchester Road which was historically assigned to a house on the property which has since removed when the church was constructed. Staff will be contacting Middlesex County's Emergency Services being the agency who oversees municipal addressing, in order to have this legacy address decommissioned since it serves no purpose given 1256 Cromarty Drive is assigned to the church as confirmed by their website.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial implications are limited to staff's time being covered by the general tax levy in the absence of a fee under the Fees and Charge By-law for sign variance requests. A fee will be considered as part of the new Sign By-law process.

## STRATEGIC PLAN LINK

**Pillar:** *Smart Planning*

**Goal:** *Make smart planning decisions to grow the community, while maintaining a "hometown feel"*

## CONSULTATION:

Chief Building Official  
Director of Public Works  
Clerk's Office

## ATTACHMENTS:

Location Map  
Sign Design Sketch

Prepared by: M. Bancroft, Director of Planning and Development Services

Reviewed by: D. Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer