

COUNCIL COMMITTEE

The Regular Session of Council Committee of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was held in the Courthouse, Truro, Nova Scotia, on Thursday, January 12, 2017.

Roll Call

The roll was called with the following Councillors in attendance:

Mayor Christine Blair	
Councillor Eric Boutilier	District 1
Deputy Mayor Bill Masters, Chair	District 2
Councillor Geoff Stewart	District 3
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor Lloyd Gibbs	District 5
Councillor Karen MacKenzie	District 6
Councillor Michael Gregory	District 7
Councillor Doug MacInnes	District 9
Councillor Tom Taggart	District 10
Councillor Wade Parker	District 11

Regrets

Councillor Ron Cavanaugh	District 8
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Staff Present

Mr. Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer
 Mr. Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development
 Ms. Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works
 Ms. Jann McFarlane, MRF Manager
 Mr. Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services
 Mr. Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Mr. Mark Austin, Research, Policy and Community Engagement
 Ms. Tracey Veno, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Retirement Presentation

Mayor Blair and CAO Rob Simonds presented Mr. Lester Robinson with a retirement certificate. Mr. Robinson retired on December 23, 2016. He was employed with the Municipality at the Kemptown Balefill Facility for nine years as a Compost Utility Worker.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Gregory
 Seconded by Councillor MacInnes

“That the agenda be approved with the following amendments:

- Add Item #11b, Street Lights, Fairway Ave., Shubenacadie East;
- Add Item #11c, Great Village Community Association – Hustler Hill Trail;
- Add Item #11d, Dakota Road;
- Add Item #11e, Council Dates;
- Add Item #11f, Community Liaison Committee – Debert;
- Add Item #12b, Animal Control;

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- Add Item #12c, TIR/Emergencies;
- Add Item #12d, Volunteer Awards; and ,
- Add Item #14, Contract Negotiations in Closed Session.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Stewart

“That the minutes from the meeting held on December 15, 2016, be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

Referring to the request for a letter of support from the Colchester Highland Games & Gathering on page 1670 of the minutes, Mayor Blair indicated that the letter of support has been sent.

ACTION ITEMS

Proposed Amendments to the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations

Mr. Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development, provided a brief overview of the proposed amendments of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations as highlighted in the Action Item distributed in the Council package. A draft copy of a letter to Mr. Joe Rogers, Building Code Coordinator, addressing County concerns is attached for consideration.

Discussion was held with some concern being expressed about the change relating to adaptable housing and the Province’s recommendation to have new site build homes have additional provisions provided in their construction to address accessibility. The Province’s recommendations are not currently addressed in the new National Building Code.

Moved by Councillor MacInnes
Seconded by Councillor Taggart

“That Council Committee approves that the letter addressing the concerns of the Municipality of Colchester with respect to the proposed amendments to the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations be forward to Mr. Joe Rogers, Building Code Coordinator.”

Motion Carried.
(Councillor Parker opposed)

Kempton/East Mountain Sewer Boundary

Ms. Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works, advised that this item relates to the sewer line extending along Pictou Road/Highway 4

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from Jollytown Road to Kemptown. This sewer line became fully operational in January of 2013. Council approval is required to establish a new sewer boundary for the area and to charge applicable properties with the Sewer Service Rate.

Brief discussion was held with concern being expressed with this item being before Council in the absence of the area Councillor.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Mayor Blair

“That the Kemptown/East Mountain Sewer Boundary item be deferred until Councillor Cavanaugh returns to represent constituents in District 8.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Solar Colchester – Program Discussion

Mr. Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development, provided an overview on this item noting that Council had previously received a presentation from a group, Solar Colchester, interested in promoting solar, photovoltaic panels on homes/businesses in Colchester as an energy option. At the time of the presentation to Council in February 2016, Solar Colchester promoted the HRM Solar City Program model. However, since that time, there have been some significant changes.

Municipalities of Bridgewater, Lunenburg, Shelburne and Digby prepared an RFP to contract a third party to prepare and administer a program similar to HRM's Solar City Program. The Clean Foundation was the successful bidder for the Clean Energy Financing Program (Clean Program).

The Clean Program, which has emphasis on energy conservation, is managed by Clean Foundation on behalf of each municipal unit independently and was designed with the intent to have other municipalities join the program at later dates. The Program enables a homeowner to be eligible to borrow up to \$10,000 from their Municipality, to be paid back over a ten-year period. A home audit is prepared/reviewed by Clean Foundation staff.

Clean Foundation staff administer the program, aiding homeowners throughout the process. The homeowner would hire contractors to provide equipment and carry out the work. Municipal staff provide program oversight, advertise the program and administer the loans.

Mr. Macpherson advised that the Municipal Government Act allows municipalities to expend funds for programs such as this and that a by-law would be required to be adopted for the program. Additionally,

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other than staff time and advertising, the program would be basically cost neutral to municipalities.

Should Council be interested in proceeding with a program, Mr. Macpherson indicated that next steps would be to develop:

- a draft by-law for Colchester;
- options for a hybrid model that would accommodate solar panels as part of a property upgrade; and,
- a financing program.

Staff would also investigate levels of interest for a uniform program for the region with both Truro and Stewiacke.

Council expressed general interest in developing a program for Colchester and suggested that staff bring further information back for consideration.

Discussion was held regarding costing and feasibility of having a program for public buildings, such as the Brookfield Sportsplex, as well as the other arenas in the region.

Some concern was expressed with existing programs in the province to assist with energy efficiency and duplicating a service that is already in place.

Moved by Councillor Stewart
Seconded by Mayor Blair

“That the current joint energy audit on municipal buildings be modified to include the arenas in Brookfield, Tatamagouche, and Debert.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That staff investigate and bring back more information to Council with the objective of considering a pilot project for a solar energy program, at no risk to public funding.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Water Royalties

Mr. Mark Austin, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer, provided a detailed presentation on water royalties, indicating that various aspects need to be considered to determine the best approach in dealing with this issue.

Council's past efforts to establish a water royalty system, both directly to the Province and through UNSM resolutions, have resulted in unfavourable responses.

With two major companies, Aquaterra Corporation and Big 8 Beverages Ltd., drawing high volume groundwater for resale as filtered bottled water, Council has on a number of occasions raised the issue of water royalties with key issues being:

- Concern for the future of our groundwater supply;
- A sense of unfairness in the status quo; and
- Interest in potential revenues that could assist with water conservation.

Regarding groundwater supply, contamination poses a bigger risk than depletion from over extraction. Daily and annual water level data over the past 10 years of water bottling activities indicates there is no drop in groundwater levels.

Provinces have both jurisdiction and capacity to charge for and monitor groundwater. If Nova Scotia established a water royalty system, it would likely be administered by Nova Scotia Environment with revenues going to the Province, as is currently with high-volume permitting. Existing water royalty and permit fees across Canada are paltry. However, the commercial water bottling companies create jobs and pay corporate taxes, contributing to Colchester's economy through employment, spending, and to varying degrees, through property taxes.

With no evidence to support water depletion concerns or inadequate source monitoring, and given that implementation of water royalties would not reduce water taking, there is no indication that further water royalty requests would be successful. The Municipality does not currently have the capacity or budget to do groundwater monitoring and water royalties would not cover costs to administer them.

A number of options have been identified, as outlined in the Action Item distributed for this evening's meeting, for Council's consideration. However, staff's extensive research on the subject of water royalties has determined that there is a need to update property valuations of the two existing water companies in Colchester to ensure proper land use designations and accurate market value appraisals in relation to commercial property taxation.

Discussion was held regarding the Municipality's best way to collect revenues being through properly assessed taxation and the options of dealing with the current property assessments of the two existing water companies.

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Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

“That Council defers appealing the assessments and that the Mayor and staff arrange meetings with Aquaterra Corporation and Big 8 Beverages Ltd.”

Motion Carried.
(Councillors MacKenzie and Parker opposed)

RECC Dehumidification System

The CAO suggested that this item be moved to be dealt with after the Closed Session on Contract Negotiations.

UNSM Regional Meeting

Councillor Stewart advised that he was approached by the UNSM about the possibility of Colchester hosting a UNSM Regional Meeting. The Municipality would be responsible for costs of the venue and meal.

The CAO advised that costs to host the event would be approximately \$1,000 to \$1,200 and there are currently funds available in the Legislative Development Budget to accommodate hosting this meeting.

Moved by Councillor Stewart
Seconded by Councillor Taggart

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Municipality host a UNSM Regional Meeting in March 2017.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Highway 311/Nuttby Mountain Highway Cameras

At the request of Councillor Gregory, Mayor Blair inquired about the possibility of having a highway camera placed on Nuttby Mountain, along Highway #311 at the recent quarterly meeting with officials of NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR). Mr. Basil Pitts advised that Environment Canada is responsible for highway cameras and that these cameras are usually placed on 100 Series Highways.

Councillor Gregory indicated that he had made inquiries about this approximately three years ago. At that time, he received conflicting information about which department is responsible for highway cameras, with TIR indicating that Environment Canada and Environment Canada saying it was the responsibility of TIR. Also, referring to highway cameras being on 100 Series Highways, Councillor Gregory identified a number of cameras placed in

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locations other than 100 Series Highways, usually in places with unusual weather patterns.

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

“That a letter be written to NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting serious consideration be given to placing a highway camera along Highway #311 at Nuttby Mountain.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Street Lights, Fairway Avenue, Shubenacadie East

Councillor Cooper advised that he has received a request from a resident regarding the installation of street lights on Fairway Avenue. A copy of this request was distributed on table for this evening’s meeting.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Parker

“That the letter from Denise Scothorn be referred to staff to proceed to petition process for the installation of street lights on Fairway Avenue.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Great Village Community Association – Hustler Hill Trail

The Great Village Community Association recently made a presentation to Council requesting the Municipality acquire the lands in relation to Hustler Hill Trail and work with the Great Village Community Association to enhance the accessibility of Hustler Hill Trail.

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the request from the Great Village Community Association regarding Hustler Hill Trail be referred to staff to investigate and report back to Council.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Dakota Road

Councillor MacInnes raised concerns regarding the condition of Dakota Road, including patchwork, paving and snow plowing. He indicated that there are seven businesses with 53 employees along this road and inquired about the Municipality taking over this road or investigating the possibility of a trade off with the province for snow plowing.

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Ms. Newell, Director of Public Works, indicated that the challenge in doing this would be the need for the Municipality to acquire a different vehicle to accommodate the snow plowing of this road. Other roads that the Municipality plows in Debert are narrower and different equipment is used for plowing. However, the logistics of taking over the plowing of the road could be discussed with staff. Ms. Newell also expressed concern about the trend of taking over the plowing of provincial roads when they are not plowed to standard.

Mayor Blair agreed to contact NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to discuss the possibility of the County taking over snow plowing on Dakota but prior to doing so, would require additional information from staff.

Council Dates

Councillor Taggart inquired about dates for budget meetings. Discussion was held regarding the 2016 meetings being held in April and this working well for Council.

The CAO advised that an item would be forthcoming at the February Committee meeting with suggested budget meeting dates. Also, staff are considering having two nights for grant presentations, possibility in late February and early March. Date suggestions for these meetings will also be coming forward in February as well.

Community Liaison Committee

Councillor MacInnes advised that Envirosystems would like to proceed with a Community Liaison Committee and requested that staff spend some time with them to assist with establishing the Committee. It was agreed that staff contact Envirosystems to offer assistance with this initiative.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Design/Costing – Truro Heights Water System

Council had previously directed staff to prepare cost estimates for water service extension to residents in Truro Heights. It was noted that a revised Information Item was circulated on table for this evening's meeting.

After reviewing the existing water distribution system located within the Truro Power Centre, staff are presenting a four phase extension of the water system at an estimated cost of \$4,095,000. This cost would include main lines within the streets, valves, hydrants and service laterals to each property line.

Discussion was held regarding what the costs would be to each household. The majority of houses in the area do not have issues and those having issues may not be interested once they know the costs. It was suggested that staff determine what the costs would be and then proceed to public meetings to determine level of interest.

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Animal Control

Councillor MacInnes inquired about the policy for dogs running at large and how calls of this nature are handled.

Mr. Macpherson, Director of Community Development, advised that the dog would have to be captured and held in order for the Animal Control Officer to tend to a call of a dog running at large. If the dog is not captured, the Animal Control Officer would not typically go chasing dogs throughout the County. However, if the dog were showing aggression or has bitten someone, the Animal Control Officer would absolutely tend to the issue. Mr. Macpherson also noted that we have only one staff person handling the job of Animal Control 24/7.

Clarification was sought on the process for handling calls regarding dogs running at large and whether all messages of this nature, including those of dogs not captured, get referred to the Animal Control Officer.

TIR/Emergencies

Councillor Cooper inquired about the process for NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) regarding snow plowing when dealing with emergencies. Council members reported that if there is an emergency situation, a call should be placed to TIR and they will respond accordingly.

Volunteer Awards

Mayor Blair advised that the Volunteer Awards will be taking place on April 24th or 25th this year. In conjunction with the Volunteer Awards Ceremony, the County will also be recognizing Volunteer Firefighters with 50 plus years of service.

Director's Report

A report from the Director of Public Works was circulated in the package for this evening's meeting.

An inquiry was made regarding the Carter Road sidewalk, pending a successful open house. The Director of Public Works confirmed that this project is on the books for this year. A date for the open house will be confirmed.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Cavanaugh

"That the meeting go into closed session at 10:33 pm."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gibbs
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

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“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 11:00 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

RECC Dehumidification System

Moved by Mayor Blair
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Municipality cost share the dehumidification upgrade at the RECC on a 60/40 basis with the Town of Truro up to an amount not to exceed \$319,200 (excl. HST), contingent on the Town of Truro agreeing to fund it’s proportionate share.”

Motion Carried.
(Councillor Taggart opposed)

Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the meeting adjourn at 11:36 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary