

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

The Regular Session of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted in-person and virtually combined, on Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 6:00 pm, at the Inn on Prince, Truro, NS.

In peace and in friendship, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, it was acknowledged that the Municipality of Colchester is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

**Roll Call**

Mayor Christine Blair	(virtual)
Councillor Paul Weatherby	District 1
Dep. Mayor Laurie Sandeson, Chair	District 2
Councillor Sheldon Richardson	District 3 (regrets)
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor Nigel Leggett	District 6
Councillor Sherry Martell	District 7
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor Charlene Fletcher	District 10
Councillor Allan Kennedy	District 11

**Staff Present**

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer  
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works  
 Phil Redden, Director of Solid Waste  
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services  
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development  
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor  
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary  
 Jenn Martin, Economic Development Officer  
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst  
 Pam Macintosh, Manager of Planning Services  
 Jill McGillicuddy, Senior Planner

**Public Hearing/Second Reading, Adoption of County-wide Planning Documents (Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law)**

Deputy Mayor Sandeson called the Public Hearing to order respecting the adoption of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law (MPS & LUB). It is staff recommendation that the MPS and LUB be adopted. The proposed county-wide planning documents and a related staff report have been circulated to Council members and made available to the public. A summary of the planning process, the launch of Plan It Colchester, and the community engagement process was provided.

The Deputy Mayor indicated that this Public Hearing is called as a requirement under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) to allow members of the public to provide feedback on the draft MPS & LUB. These are living documents that can be amended as required. Members of the public who may be in attendance to address concerns outside of the MPS & LUB are asked to be respectful of the Public Hearing process and be advised that the objective here is to listen and receive information, not to debate. Those wishing to speak will be given three timed minutes and are asked to state their name and be respectful of the allotted timeframe.

The CAO confirmed that the guidelines of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) regarding advertising of the Second Reading and Public Hearing have been followed.

Council members were reminded that only those present throughout the Public Hearing can vote on the planning documents when eventually considered by Council. This Public Hearing is Council's opportunity to hear about the planning documents and any concerns of Colchester County residents. Council will have opportunity to debate the merits of the amendments when the motion is presented to Council. Staff are present to answer any technical questions that may arise concerning the proposed planning documents and/or public input.

Prior to going into the public participation component of the Hearing, Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, provided a detailed overview on jurisdictional matters, specifically on municipal jurisdiction over quarries. Research on this matter continues to be updated as concerns are brought forward and Mr. James confirmed that municipalities have no jurisdiction over quarries.

Paul Smith, Director of Community Development, provided introductory remarks regarding the implementation of county-wide land use planning for Colchester. His comments highlighted the initiative's lengthy development process, extensive community and stakeholder engagement, project deadline requirements, and recent changes in provincial legislation that have impacted the project resulting in the proposed Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law being brought forward for consideration this evening.

Project consultant Ian Watson, of Upland Planning and Design, was also in attendance to deliver a presentation on *Plan It Colchester*. The presentation included an overview of the initiative, the anticipated impacts of the MPS and LUB, a summary of the engagement process and feedback received, and key planning considerations such as housing, agriculture, environment, recreation, and tourism. An outline of the next steps in the planning process was provided.

Tim Johnson, Chair of the Planning Advisory Committee presented the report from the February 18, 2025, meeting.

The CAO indicated three written submissions were received and provided a brief overview of the submissions:

- 1.. Shervan Khanna wrote concerning C-1 zoning, specifically on elimination of sole residential opportunities which was previously permitted; and, requests allowing for medium and high density uses for residential and C-1 zones without commercial components in each building.
2. Margaretta Sander expressed concerns over the provincial mandate changing setback laws for industrial wind turbines; concerns regarding the national resources position of the province and believes there is a duty to inform residents; and, urged the County to put the plan on hold to create a strategy to deal with these significant provincial changes.
3. Heather Zwicker is a resident in Glenholme and has concerns regarding industrial expansion within the shoreline zone; concerns around process; and requested that Second Reading be deferred.

A copy of each of these submissions were distributed to Council for this evening's meeting.

The following provides a summary of points made by members of the public who were in attendance to address Council concerning the proposed planning documents and/or other issues:

Nancy Frame, Protect Wentworth Valley and Green NS First

- over 3 years of discussion on by-laws with respect to wind turbines, long and extensive process with a great deal of resources committed by community members, staff, Council and consultants
- consultations were conscious of regulations including setbacks to protect communities and environment from risks of industrial wind turbines
- not all concerns of residents were addressed in the by-law but appreciative of the safeguards put in place and the democratic process
- shocked/dismayed by provincial changes to the Municipal Government Act overriding the work of Council and the community's work on setbacks that are less than half of what was committed to, as well as prohibiting visual impacts as a consideration for industrial wind turbines
- province was not involved in the drafting of the by-law
- lack of democratic process and protection to Nova Scotia from the province when considering these amendments
- changes made by the province to make the projects economically viable but current projects underway are abiding by by-laws and are viable
- discouraged to not have any MLAs in attendance
- question whether the County will respond to the provinces' changes and bill them to recover costs for the planning that took place and is being overridden.

Wayne Edgar, West Earltown

- live approximately 2.4km from Nuttby wind turbine development and closer than 2km would be quite impactful on residents depending on topography, wind direction and ambient noise
- 2+ years that residents have been bringing this before Council
- disappointed MLAs not in attendance to hear concerns
- not opposed to wind development but needs to be properly done
- actions of government heavy handed
- Council should express to the provincial government on behalf of citizens their disappointment in this decision and request reconsideration

Judi MacKenzie, Pleasant Valley

- voiced concerns about the announcement of the closure of the Lower Truro Springs
- decision made without knowing the concerns or wishes of the public, perhaps by those who have access to clean, safe water
- believes that in 2025 access to safe drinking water should be a right but it is not
- landowner who pays taxes but can't drink tap water
- thousands use and rely on this water
- times of economic hardship, need to ease financial burdens

- Council in public service to help people
- leases being a minimal expense to the County
- landowner has no issue regarding use of land
- County having liability insurance for other areas in the County and should find a solution
- regular testing and UV light should address safety issues
- social justice issue
- decision benefits big corporations
- suggestion to use car counter system to get accurate number of users

Peter Watson, Truro Heights

- shared photo of filter from well water after five days
- assessments done by experienced individuals and nothing can do financially to change water quality to make safe to drink
- drawn water from Lower Truro systems for decades
- traffic in area speaks to demand
- consult with First Nation lands regarding the importance of clean potable water
- need to be respectable at the site; pay for liability if necessary
- generosity of farmers to provide water
- many from all over the County depend on that water; basic right

Elliott Hebb

- questioned how many members of Council use and rely on the Lower Truro spring water source
- easy to vote to shut down over liability
- many residents rely on this water, ludicrous to shut down
- consider putting up signage and rules; consume at own risk
- not acceptable, pay taxes
- bought property in North River, water not available - cost to buy about \$25 every three days
- do not realize how much water you use until you have to lug to your home

Elaine Urquhart

- echo what hearing tonight
- heard news secondhand

Effie Moore

- spoke about current and previous set up at site
- questioned whether the water was going to be capped or if able to get water as they did prior to the current system

Wanda Tanner

- questioned how many members of Council use the site

John Mumford

- live in community and have used the spring water for over 20 years
- previous traffic concerns were addressed
- farmers donate the land
- used extensively

- provide money to third world countries for clean water supply and should be a high priority of this Council
- basic right
- propose Fundy view area as a possible solution; low traffic zone and existing water supply already there for washrooms

#### Sherry Light, Kent Road

- source of water during power outage
- questioned sudden concern over liability when been in use for over 20 years and costs to cover liability

#### Kevin Ward, Debert

- high levels of arsenic in water
- depend highly on spring, using over 20 years
- a lot of problems/issues addressed can be easily resolved
- no more altercations at site, fear of losing
- Council's chance to make a difference

#### Janet MacKenzie

- grew up on the Lower Truro spring water
- raise chickens to keep food costs down and need to feed them spring water as well water is not good enough
- contribute to local economy
- challenge to afford to keep our pets
- not disappointing but devastating

#### Liel Drueke, East Noel

- in support of the Lower Truro spring
- use regularly
- cleanup of whole area will cost more than making the shoulder wider to address traffic issues

#### Debbie Atkinson

- want to address setbacks for windmills
- 20 years ago, fighting to keep windmills from coming, now realize necessary evil
- it is about quality of life; 40 dB - no idea of noise levels in a lot of areas; live in Wentworth, 3km setback and workers say noise will be heard from miles away
- devastation to roads in building the turbines
- disbelief that Premier making changes without proper consultation
- municipalities should have a say in this

#### Dan Smith

- started going many years ago as a kid, live in Town but continue to use
- luxury/win for the County to get water from an artisan well
- water accessible during storm
- good, clean drinking water

Betty Graham

- not only individuals getting water, businesses as well
- comments regarding money being spent on Christmas lights and fields for sports but people needing water have to do without due to costs

Alex MacDonald, Great Village

- speaking about rural zones, making sure there is accessibility for housing
- allow for single dwellings and other opportunities such as mixed-use areas
- ensure proper testing of water for future development

Wayne Edgar, West Earltown

- looking for map of protected agriculture areas

Elaine Urquhart

- requesting to find out information on when Council will discuss the issue on water again

Barb Holland

- unable to drink water at home, devastating to be closed
- willing to go back to the way it was
- request reconsideration of decision

Krista McNair, Executive Director, Truro Housing Outreach Society

- praises to Council and staff regarding the land use planning and the inclusion of supportive housing in the planning documents
- noted that this will help make a difference

There were no additional comments or questions from Council or staff regarding the Public Hearing on the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law.

The Chair of the Planning Advisory Committee put the following motion on the floor:

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council adopts by way of Second Reading, the Municipality of Colchester Municipal Planning Strategy and Land-Use By-law as presented.”  
Carried unanimously.

Deputy Mayor Sandeson advised that the adoption of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law has been approved and is not appealable to the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Boards (formerly Utilities and Review Board). However, Council's decision will require the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Upon approval from the Minister, a notice will be published and the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law are then in force.

With no further business on this matter, Deputy Mayor Sandeson declared the Public Hearing closed.

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the agenda be approved with the following amendments:

- Add Item #9b, Recommendations from Nominating Committee, Authority to Approve;
- Add Item #9c, Lower Truro Spring/Water;
- Move Item #12 Property Matter to Item #13 Property Matter both in Closed Session; and
- Add new Item #12, Legal Matter, in Closed Session.” Carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the minutes of the meeting held on January 30, 2025, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Business Arising from Minutes**

None.

**Standing Committee Reports and Recommendations**

*Councillor Martell, Alternate Chair of Council Committee, presented the report from the meeting held on March 13, 2025.*

**Approval to Proceed with Water Rate Applications for Tatamagouche Water Utility and Debert Water Utility**

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the Municipality of the County of Colchester apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for changes in its rates for water and water service, fire protection to the Municipality and changes to its rules and regulations for customers served by the Tatamagouche Water Utility, as set out in the water rate study prepared by G. A. Isenor Consulting Limited in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited; and,

That the Municipality of the County of Colchester apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for changes in its rates for water and water service, fire protection to the Municipality and changes to its rules and regulations for customers served by the Debert Water Utility, as set out in the water rate study prepared by G.A. Isenor Consulting Limited in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited.” Carried unanimously.

**Fairway Avenue Streetlight Petition Results**

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council waives policy and approves the installation of streetlights on Fairway Avenue.” Carried unanimously.

**Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP)**

Moved by Councillor Martel, seconded by Councillor Fletcher

“That Council adopts the Strategic Tourism Expansion Program Report and directs staff and legal counsel to proceed with the formation of a Tourism Society as described in this report; and

That the appointment of a Council member to the Tourism Society Executive Committee be referred to the Nominating Committee.” Carried unanimously.

Debert Airport Operator Contract

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council approves entering into a new Airport Operator Agreement with the Truro Flying Club for one year, under the same terms and conditions as the previous agreement.” Carried unanimously.

***Debert Business Park Advisory Committee – minutes from meeting held on March 4, 2025.***

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the minutes from the Debert Business Park Advisory Committee meeting held on March 4, 2025, be accepted.” Carried unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Annual Account Right Offs**

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the annual account write-offs were presented at the March Council Committee meeting. There was only one property being put forth for write off, a 1974 mobile, with amount totalling \$1,605.87. The discussion was tabled pending confirmation of property ownership by staff. Upon review, it was determined that the situation involved a father and son with the same name, and the property owner was confirmed to be the deceased father.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council approves the 2024/25 property taxes and interest totalling \$1,605.87 be written off.” Carried unanimously.

**Renaming Half Moon Family Recreation Area**

The Director of Community Development reported that this item relates to the request from friends and family in November 2024 to rename Half Moon Family Recreation Area in honour of the late Bruce Moore. Signage for this parking is due to be replace so if Council approves, staff could work with the family towards an appropriate name.

Brief discussion was held on the late Bruce Moore being a dedicated community member and very deserving of this. Additionally, the offer of additional funds from the family if required was noted.

Moved by Councillor Leggett, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council approves the renaming of Half Moon Recreation Area (Half Moon Park) in memory of Bruce Moore.” Carried unanimously.

**Regional Accessibility Plan**

The Director of Solid Waste indicated that the purpose of this item is to adopt the 2025-2028 Regional Accessibility Plan. The Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee is a regional committee comprised of five public bodies: the Municipality of Colchester; Towns of Stewiacke and Truro; and, the



Villages of Bible Hill and Tatamagouche. The Plan is regulated to be updated every three years, with the current Plan expiring March 31, 2025. The consulting firm Left Turn Right Turn was hired to complete the review and update the Plan for submission to the Province. The updated Plan was presented to governing bodies via a virtual meeting on March 10, 2025.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council adopts the 2025-2028 Regional Accessibility Plan as presented.” Carried unanimously.

#### **Recommendations from Nominating Committee**

The CAO advised that advertising for vacancies on various committees has been ongoing. A number of expressions of interest have been received and staff will be arranging a Nominating Committee meeting prior to March Council. In addition to the vacancies on committees, staff will be seeking expressions of interest from Council for the newly formed Tourism Society Executive Committee and is seeking authority be granted to April Council Committee to approve forthcoming recommendations from the Nominating Committee.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That authority be granted to April Council Committee to make decision relative to recommendations from the Nominating Committee.” Carried unanimously.

#### **Lower Truro Spring/Water**

As a result of feedback heard from residents earlier this evening during the Public Hearing, discussion was held on the Lower Truro Spring. Included in the discussion were requirements to decommission; expiration of existing leases with property owners; retaining the spring until alternative solution can be found; no set date as yet for decommissioning; and, liability and risk factors.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the Lower Truro Spring be sent back to staff to investigate alternatives and/or new information.

#### **Correspondence – ACTION**

##### **Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia**

An email dated March 5, 2025, regarding a proclamation for Gaelic Nova Scotia Month, May 2025.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That May 2025 be proclaimed Gaelic Nova Scotia Month.” Carried unanimously.

#### **Correspondence - INFORMATION**

##### **Development Officer**

A copy of Development Activity Report for February 2025.

##### **Building Inspector**

A copy of Building Permit Statistics for February 2025.

**Deputy Chief Jason Blois,  
Hilden Fire Brigade**

A letter concerning an increase to the Hilden Fire Brigade tax rate.

**Jeff Mercer, Executive Director  
and Chief Librarian, Colchester  
East Hants Public Library**

An email and accompanying correspondence from the Council of Regional Librarians about bridge funding.

Moved by Councillor Leggett, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the reports from the Development Officer and Building Inspector, as well as the letters from the Hilden Fire Brigade and Chief Librarian of the Colchester East Hants Public Library be received.” Carried unanimously.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

**Reports from Council Members**

Copies of reports from the Mayor and Councillors were circulated in the package and ‘On Table’ for this evening’s meeting

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Fletcher

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:03 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:02 pm.” Carried unanimously.

**Property Matter – Lot 21  
Lancaster Crescent**

*Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, declared a conflict on this property matter in Closed Session and left the meeting.*

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves the sale of lot 21 Lancaster Crescent and directs staff and Legal Counsel to draft the Agreement of Purchase and Sales, as discussed in closed session.” Carried unanimously.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Councillor Benoit, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Tracey Venio  
Recording Secretary