

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
April 18, 2011

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, April 18, 2011, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – David Donovan
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

A presentation by the Baddeck Academy School Advisory Committee and an In Camera session are to be added to the agenda.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the agenda be approved with the two noted additions. Motion carried.

BADDECK ACADEMY SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Orlynn Somerville, Kendra MacCuspic and Samantha Collier, who were in attendance to make a presentation on the Baddeck Academy renovation project.

Ms. Somerville advised that the renovation of Baddeck Academy was first announced in June, 2003, with construction to start in 2007 and be completed by 2012.

Ms. Somerville outlined the original design, which was presented in November, 2009. It is now being proposed that 5000 square feet be deducted from the original plan.

Floor plans were presented outlining the proposed reductions from the scope of the project.

It was felt that much too much is being taken from the plan and the space is needed to provide programs. The students and staff deserve an improvement and they deserve to have the resources and technical innovations that all other areas in the province have.

David Parkinson and Jeanette Layes, Members of the School Advisory Committee, were also in attendance.

Ms. Somerville indicated that Keith Bain, MLA, spoke to the Minister of Education, Honourable Ramona Jennex, on this matter and she was unaware the project was reduced in scope.

Kendra MacCuspic expressed concern on the situation from the students' perspective. The fear is that the course offerings will be reduced. Students should have the opportunity to take courses of interest to them and to their abilities. She indicated that the students deserve a new school. It is difficult to keep school spirit up in the midst of the renovations and to see the project reduced is disheartening.

Dave Parkinson, elementary parent representative on the School Advisory Committee, indicated that the project was underfunded from the beginning. What was promised is not what is being received.

Council members voiced their opinions and concerns on this issue. The students and community deserve what was promised and it was felt that this issue cannot be drawn out.

Warden Morrison indicated that he and Councillor MacCuspic attended a meeting last Thursday regarding this issue and stated that this is a very important issue to the community.

Ms. Somerville indicated that would like to see Council voice their support to Honourable Ramona Jennex, Minister of Education; Charlie Ritcey, Department of Education; Paul Oldford, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board; Ambrose White, Superintendent, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board; and Premier Darrell Dexter.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that Victoria County Municipal Council provide letters of support for the Baddeck Academy School Advisory Committee in their efforts to ensure

adequate resources be available for students and staff at Baddeck Academy. Motion carried.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 5 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 28, 2011

The minutes of the March 28, 2011, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that the names of the citizens in attendance who raised concerns during the RCMP presentation should be removed from the minutes.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the March 28, 2011, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved with the noted change. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

RCMP

Councillor Donovan indicated that he spoke with Cpl. Ellis of the Ingonish Beach Detachment of the RCMP and she will meet with Councillors and citizens from the northern area of the Municipality.

UNSM

Mayor Billy Joe MacLean, President of the UNSM, had indicated he could attend a Council session on May 2, 2011, to discuss the changes to the Provincial-UNSM Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). As this is Election Day, it was felt that a meeting would not be scheduled for that day.

Warden Morrison indicated that he and Deputy Warden Patterson attended a rally in Halifax on the changes to the MOU and felt the issues were well addressed at this rally and a good sense of the implications of the changes to the MOU were provided at this meeting.

It was felt that Mayor MacLean should be invited to a future session of Council to discuss other issues pertaining to the UNSM.

Graffiti on Roadsides

The issue of graffiti on roadsides in the County was discussed. The Municipality forwarded a letter to and received a reply from Steve MacDonald, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, on this matter. Whether a by-law could be passed concerning this matter was discussed and Sandy Hudson advised that the Municipality does not have jurisdiction over provincial roadways.

Residential Heavy Garbage Collection

The residential heavy garbage collection will take place throughout the Municipality beginning on May 2, 2011. Material should be placed curbside by 7:00 a.m. on Monday, May 2, 2011 and collection will start that day and continue until all areas are completed. Collection vehicles will visit each area once.

Concern was expressed that some areas of the County are still under snow and it may be better in future years to have the collection a little later in May.

NEW BUSINESS

FIRE SERVICES STUDY

Council members were forwarded a copy of the final draft of the Fire Services Study for concerns and comments.

The study outlines steps on how the fire service can be improved and the recommendations on how to do so have been fairly well thought out. Sandy Hudson advised that he and Marathon Human Resources Consultants will be meeting with the Fire Departments on April 30, 2011, to outline the final draft report.

Scott MacKinnon, Chairman of the Chief Fire Officers Committee, addressed the issue of the report from the fire department perspective. There are major issues with the current state of the fire service in the County and hopefully this report will provide a starting point for improvement of the fire service.

Sandy Hudson advised that Council should adopt the report in principle, as it lays out the process on how to proceed and implement the recommendations.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the Fire Services Study report be adopted in principle. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #2

Councillor MacCuspig advised that the West Side Middle River Road is presently being patched with reclaimed asphalt and this is not acceptable and an insult to the community.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal expressing concern on the work being undertaken on the West Side Middle River Road and advising that it is not acceptable. Motion carried.

The lack of adequate signage in the Big Baddeck area was brought up and a reminder is to be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal with regard to this matter.

Councillor MacCuspig provided an update on the solar street light to be installed at the eastern entrance to the Beverly's Hill Road. The light is on order and he is presently dealing with a new salesman and hopefully we will see movement on this issue in the near future.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether the County had a policy with regard to taking over private roads. Private roads are to be brought up to Department of Transportation standards before they are taken over.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that private roads are to be brought up to Department of Transportation standards before consideration is given to assuming ownership. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Donovan brought up the proposed cuts being considered by the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School and he felt it would be beneficial to meet with the School Board to discuss their rationale on the cuts and the programming that will be provided in Victoria County.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that representatives from the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board be invited to come to Council at their convenience. Motion carried.

Councillor Donovan brought up the move to change the Cabot Trail to the Caboto Trail and he felt the name should remain unchanged.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Tourism advising that Victoria County Municipal Council is opposed to a change in the name of the Cabot Trail. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that \$1,000.00 be provided from the District #7 budget to both the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Volunteer Fire Department and the Ingonish Volunteer Fire Department. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee brought up a couple of issues concerning the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The bridge at the foot of Smokey has flooded on a number of occasions and the pavement is being compromised. Also now that spring is here, the side roads in the area require grading.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that the erosion of pavement at the bridge at the bottom of Smokey be addressed and that the grading of side roads be undertaken. Motion carried.

Councillor Dauphinee expressed concern on the proposed School Board cuts. A couple who relocated to his district are now considering leaving due to the lateness of hiring which is not completed until August and uncertainty if they will obtain jobs. This issue will be addressed with the School Board representatives when they come to Council.

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson referred to Councillor Dauphinee's request concerning the grading of side roads. He indicated he would like to see of schedule of when this will be completed in all areas of the County.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that most side roads require ditching before grading is completed.

Steve MacDonald, Area Manager, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, will be invited to the next Council meeting and these issues can be addressed at that time.

District #7

Councillor Donovan requested that the June session of Council be held in Neil's Harbour. Council agreed with this request.

DOCTORS PRESENTATION

Courtesy of Council was extended to Dr. Bernie Buffet, Family Physician in the North of Smokey area.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council had received a couple of presentations from John Malcom, CEO, Cape Breton District Health Authority, with regard to doctor recruitment for Victoria County and have also received the Ross Report and the recommendations contained in same. Council are interested in receiving input from Victoria County doctors on the medical situation in the County and where the Council might be able to assist. Warden Morrison advised that Dr. Genge has also been invited to attend.

Dr. Buffett indicated that there are two doctors in the North of Smokey area at present. There used to be three doctors in the area and the workload on the two remaining doctors is excessive and both are looking on slowing down their practice in the future. The physician recruitment for this area has been advertised nationally for the last two years with no luck to date.

Dr. Buffett advised that other areas in the country offer doctors everything from bonuses, housing, car, golf memberships, etc. to locate to their area. It is difficult for rural areas to compete with this.

Dr. Buffett indicated that on average doctors in New Brunswick receive 28 to 33% more money per patient visit than doctors in Nova Scotia. He also indicated that Nova Scotia just sold 10 seats at Dalhousie Medical School to Saudi Arabia for the next 10 years.

Another problem in his area is the lack of support staff for doctors. There is only one RN on shift covering both outpatients and inpatients at Buchanan Memorial Hospital in Neil's Harbour.

Approval has been received for a Nurse Practitioner for this area but they have been unsuccessful in this recruitment. Dr. Buffett explained the level of care than can be provided by a Nurse Practitioner.

The paramedic coverage in the northern area of the County was outlined. There is only one advanced care paramedic in the area, with the remainder being primary care paramedics. There are only two days per week when the advanced care paramedic is on duty. Ambulance coverage was also explained.

Dr. Roland Genge entered the meeting. Dr. Genge has been a Family Practitioner in Baddeck for the past 36 years and indicated that until two years ago, there were three doctors providing service in this area. During the past two years, he and Dr. Chow have been working enormous hours to provide coverage. Dr. Genge indicated that both he and Dr. Chow are looking towards retirement in the future.

Dr. Genge indicated that there has been interest expressed from a husband and wife who are recent graduates and may be willing to locate to the area as early as October, 2011. Hopefully, this will become a reality.

He also advised that the doctors currently practicing in the two First Nations communities – Wagmatcook and Waycobah, will be leaving in July. This will make for busy times ahead as they sometimes provided coverage in Baddeck.

It was indicated that the young graduating doctors have totally different expectations. They don't wish to work long hours and want to have reasonable lives. They will not devote the long hours that are presently being provided by the doctors serving Victoria County. The young doctors will locate in the areas that are most attractive to them. They want a guaranteed income and regular hours of work.

It is very worrisome that both hospitals in the County are operating with two doctors. If anything were to happen to any of the doctors, it would be impossible to operate the hospitals with one doctor. The caseload of the doctors at present was outlined and what an ideal caseload would be was discussed.

The Ross Report as it pertains to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital was discussed. The possible extension of the hospital to build a medical clinic is a consideration. It is presently being investigated as to whether there is adequate land to build such an extension. Offices attached to the hospital would ideally house 4 doctors and the Nurse Practitioner.

Discussion took place on what could be done to entice new doctors to come to rural areas. It was indicated that this would take collaboration of all levels of government to create an atmosphere that would be conducive to attracting young doctors. A medical facility, with reasonable rent would also be required.

The EHS coverage was again discussed. It may be possible to negotiate with EHS in regard to the coverage.

The possibility of governments providing medical students with financial assistance in return for service was discussed. It would take some years to see results from such action, but it would be a starting point for the future.

The lack of housing in the North of Smokey area is another deterrent to anyone wishing to relocate. The nursing shortage in the area is also a concern to be addressed.

After further discussion, Dr. Genge and Dr. Buffett were extended a vote of thanks for attending. The information they have provided has painted a much different picture than what Council is advised when John Malcom, Cape Breton District Health Authority, makes a presentation.

It was felt that Council should write a letter in support of the expansion to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital to accommodate medical offices. Also further discussion can be held with Drs. Genge and Chow to see what can be done to entice the two doctors considering relocating to the area to indeed come.

Parks Canada have plans to tear down a building that could be possibly utilized for housing in the North of Smokey area and the possibility of discussing this matter with Parks Canada officials was discussed.

George McLellan, CEO of the EHS, is a summer resident of the area, and is to be contacted to come to Council to discuss the ambulance service in Victoria County.

John Malcom, CEO of the Cape Breton District Health Authority, is to be invited to come to a session of Council in late May/early June.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. A letter was received from Jim Foulds, Vice-Chair of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association, advising that their nomination has passed the Canadian review process and has been recommended for approval by the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Review Committee. It is expected that the designation will be official in July and they plan for a weekend of celebration of the UNESCO designation in September and are asking Victoria County to contribute \$5,000.00.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the Municipality approve \$5,000.00 to assist the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association in their planned celebrations for the UNESCO designation. Motion carried.

2. Approval was received from both the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the Eastern District Planning Commission for the naming of unnamed roads at the Inverary Resort, Baddeck.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that Council approve the names Ceilidh Street, Inverary Lane, Cottage Loop and Argyle Street for the roads at the Inverary Resort, Baddeck. Motion carried.

3. A petition was received to approve a change in a road name from Bird Island Lane to Livingstone Lane, Big Bras d'Or.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the petition for the road name change be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the Eastern District Planning Commission for approval. Motion carried.

4. A letter was received from Stephen MacDonald, Area Manager, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, retracting his recommendation to Council to rename a portion of the Jimmie Gillis Road to Red Point East Road. He outlined the rationale for the retraction and advised that he would be notifying the Road Listing Coordinator and the Eastern District Planning Commission of the retraction.

This matter will be clarified with Stephen MacDonald and he is to be invited to attend the May 9, 2011, session of Victoria County Municipal Council.

5. The UNSM Spring Workshop will be held at the Digby Pines from May 11-13, 2011.

Warden Morrison, Deputy Warden Patterson and Sandy Hudson will be attending.

NEXT MEETINGS

Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, May 9, 2011, and Tuesday, May 24, 2011, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

IN CAMERA

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, to move In Camera. Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that Council come out of In Camera and return to regular session. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

Page 11, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, April 18, 2011

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacCuspik, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO