

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
June 10, 2013

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, June 10, 2013, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Athol Grant
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

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

It was indicated that there would be a conference call with Mark Eyking, MP, and a representative from Bell Mobility concerning cell phone coverage at 6:00 p.m.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the agenda be approved with the noted addition. Motion carried.

DESTINATION CAPE BRETON ASSOCIATION

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Mary Tulle, CEO, Destination Cape Breton Association (DCBA).

Ms. Tulle provided Council with an update on the activities of Destination Cape Breton Association (copy attached).

Ms. Tulle indicated that there are three pillars of business:

- Visitor Services
- Product Development
- Marketing

In terms of visitor services, Ms. Tulle advised that the goal of DCBA was to increase the number of visitors to the VIC's by 10%. The overall increase was 18%, with the number of visitors in the Baddeck VIC increasing by 6.8%. Inverness saw a 35% increase in the number of visitors in 2011.

VIC core staff participated in a Storytelling Workshop and received additional technology training. An Industry FAM was also conducted along with data collected on what collateral our visitors want and use.

Ms. Tulle updated on the 2012 product development initiatives, experiences, industry workshops, accelerated market readiness, tourism technology, industry training and educational opportunities. She also provided an update on Roger Brooks Assessments.

The Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP) is being delivered in Louisbourg and Baddeck. STEP is designed to close the gap in tourism communities by assisting communities in becoming sustainable tourism destinations and accelerating the exposure of experiential tourism techniques and formulas for a wider audience of tourism entrepreneurs and influencers. STEP is a \$40,000.00 investment. She outlined the Baddeck STEP results to date and the participants in the Baddeck STEP Program.

An update was provided on the Cabot Trail. A temporary group was formed to determine whether the need exists for a governing body moving forward. A Cabot Trail Industry/Operator engagement session with facilitator, Dr. Laurel Reid, took place in March, 2013, to determine what the partners are already doing.

Ms. Tulle updated on the 2013 product development initiatives and indicated that DCBA will work closely with the Director of Recreation and Tourism to establish criteria for experiences and packages to be used for promotion online and in print and to develop an inventory of existing experience and package offerings.

Marketing statistics were also provided. The 2012 Experiential Icon goal was an increase of 5%. While Louisbourg and AG Bell were slightly down, both the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and the Highland Village have seen increases of 5% and 2% respectively. The 2013 Experiential Icon goal was also outlined.

Ms. Tulle outlined the 2013 website goal results and the year to date results for 2013. She advised that five of the top ten industry packages on cbisland.com are from Victoria County operators. The 2012 marketing support provided to Victoria County was outlined, along with the proposed marketing support for 2013 which includes sponsorship of the Gaelic College 75th anniversary and Ambassatours bus wraps.

The 2013 Chronicle Herald ads featuring Victoria County were outlined, as were the 2013 media plans. Ms. Tulle outlined other significant events that will take place in 2013 and the partnership opportunities.

Deputy Warden Patterson questioned whether it was known how many of the 9,000 plus visitors who visited the VIC on the Halifax Waterfront came to Cape Breton. Ms. Tulle indicated that the direct impact is not known.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the matter of Ski Cape Smokey and the hopes to make this venue a summer operation also.

Councillor MacInnis questioned if Ms. Tulle had ever been to Cape Clear and she indicated she had not. This is truly one of Nova Scotia's hidden gems.

Winter tourism in Cape Breton is an untapped resource. People come from all over to snowmobile in the winter.

The effect the kiosk at Port au Basques, Newfoundland, has on visitors to Cape Breton was also questioned. Newfoundland advertises a great deal in the Ontario market and the fact of having the kiosk located there, may entice these visitors and Newfoundland residents to come to Cape Breton.

Councillor Grant indicated that the Municipality has been requested for funding for the Right Some Good Food Adventure and he questioned if Ms. Tulle could provide further information on this event. Ms. Tulle indicated that this event caters to foodies, of which there are millions world-wide. Renowned chefs, work with local sous chefs, using indigenous foods, to create marvelous culinary events. There are 8 events in Cape Breton this year, 3 of which will be held in Victoria County. Ms. Tulle indicated that she is a huge supporter of this event and it is well worth attending.

Councillor MacNeil questioned whether the Tourism Department ever communicates with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal on the condition of the roads in Cape Breton. The roads are a deterrent to tourism. He also indicated that the viewscapes are not been kept up resulting in a loss of scenic areas.

The Baddeck STEP Program was discussed. A request has been received for cost-share on a STEP Coordinator and Ms. Tulle was questioned as to when she felt this position would be implemented. She indicated that the Baddeck STEP Program is currently implementing a plan and once the plan is done in October/November, then she felt application could be made for funding for this position.

Warden Morrison indicated that he has attended most of the Baddeck STEP meetings and advised that this is not just a benefit to Baddeck, but the outlying regions and the entire County also.

Sandy Hudson requested a report on the marketing levy. Ms. Tulle indicated that \$640,000 was collected last year. She outlined how the majority was spent and advised that she would send a full report on the marketing levy to the Municipality.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Ms. Tulle for her excellent presentation and she was excused at this time.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Eileen Oldford, CEO, CBCEDA, and Joyce MacDougall, Training Coordinator, Small Business Development Centre (SBDC).

Ms. Oldford indicated that the Small Business Development Centre was situated at Cape Breton University and research done indicated that the clients wanted this service to be provided in the downtown core. The opportunity presented itself and CBCEDA was chosen to administer the Centre.

The SBDC is funded by ECBC through the ACOA Program. One person came from CBU with the Centre, being Joyce MacDougall. There are two counsellors, one training coordinator and one financial officer employed by the Centre.

The SBDC provides support for the successful creation, operation and growth of small business on Cape Breton Island with:

- Business Counseling
- Business Plan Development
- Business Skills Training
- Entrepreneurship Awareness

The initiatives of the SBDC include:

- Business Services
- Training
- Awareness

The role of the SBDC is the development of business skills necessary for every business owner. These skills include the appropriate blend of knowledge, abilities, and experience in areas of:

- Management

- Marketing
- Communications
- Commercialization
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Innovation
- Strategy

Ms. Oldford outlined meetings they had with Northeast Highlands Chamber of Commerce and BABTA recently.

Joyce MacDougall outlined the training component and what is available for small business owners. They compile information from all the different agencies out there and pull it all together and take this information on the road to communities. She provided information on the programs available and ongoing initiatives.

Ms. MacDougall provided Council with the Small Business Development Centre pamphlet and left copies with the Municipal Office for display.

Small business is classified as 50 employees and under. Ms. Oldford indicated they work with sole proprietors, franchisees, partnerships, co-operatives and others. The one area that is lacking is the not-for-profit sector. There is no category for not-for-profits and Ms. Oldford indicated that this is a gap that should be addressed through the REN when it is established.

Ms. Oldford requested Council to share this information with their constituents and refer them to the SBDC where they will be looked after.

Council expressed their thanks for the information received and indicated it is good to know that this resource is available. Various questions were answered.

At present the SBDC is working on a MOU with Nova Scotia Community College regarding custom programs.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council would assist in getting more exposure for the SBDC's programs in Victoria County. He suggested putting a link on the County website to assist with promotion.

Warden Morrison then extended a thank you on behalf of Council for the information provided.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 27, 2013

The minutes of the May 27, 2013, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Councillor Grant indicated that a change was required on Page 8 of the minutes. He and Warden Morrison did not meet with Yvon LeFort, they talked with him via phone.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of May 27, 2013, be approved with the noted change. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Salt Silo

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he contacted Steve MacDonald, DOTIR, concerning the remnants of the salt silo at Wreck Cove and was advised that materials would be removed within the next week.

Steve MacDonald will be meeting with the Councillors from the northern area of the County on June 21, 2013.

Green Gyms

Councillor Buchanan questioned on the green gyms. Sandy Hudson advised that he had information he would bring forward later in the meeting.

EHS Meeting

The EHS meeting has been again postponed. It will be rescheduled to a later date and Council will be advised.

Canadian Border Services

Sandy Hudson advised that he did not forward the letter to Canadian Border Services as he was advised that the proposed import tax on boats owned by non-residents is no longer an issue.

SKI CAPE SMOKEY

Councillor Dauphinee gave a notice of motion at the last meeting concerning possible funding for Ski Cape Smokey.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he has done research and the cost to make the ski lift operational is \$56,578.98. Ski Cape Smokey has \$4,000.00 of their own funds and is looking for the Municipality to provide \$52,000.00 to make the ski lift operational. Councillor

Dauphinee indicated that he will be seeking funding from the Province and ECBC also for Ski Cape Smokey.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Municipality provide \$52,000.00 to Ski Cape Smokey to assist in making the ski lift operational. Motion carried.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess to allow for a conference call with Mark Eyking, MP, and a representative from Bell Mobility, concerning cell phone coverage in Victoria County.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #8

Councillor Buchanan mentioned the green gyms and Sandy Hudson advised that he has forwarded the information on the outdoor gym equipment to the appropriate Councillors to decide what equipment is required. The equipment can then be ordered accordingly.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis mentioned the opening of the new school at Wagmatcook today and questioned if the Municipality was notified of the opening.

An invitation to the opening was not received. Discussion took place.

Warden Morrison indicated he would contact Chief Bernard with regard to setting up an informal meeting between both Councils.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that the lobster industry is in a crisis mode and the prices being received are down to prices received twenty-five years ago. Poundage limits have been set and buyers aren't buying.

He indicated that the Lobster Council of Canada had a successful Christmas campaign which advanced sales readily and are undertaking a Father's Day campaign. This advertisement is a \$12,000 venture and he felt the Municipality should get on board with the campaign and be recognized as supporting the lobster industry.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that \$1,000.00 be approved for the Lobster Council of Canada's Father's Day campaign to be published in the *Chronicle Herald*. Motion carried.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Central Cape Breton Community Ventures group wish to meet with Council and Keith Bain to update on *Aros Na Mara*.

Council agreed to meet at a location and date to be decided by the Central Cape Breton Community Ventures group.

Council will be notified when the meeting is scheduled.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a street light order be placed for location at 4673 Lower Washabuck Road, Washabuck. Motion carried.

District #3

Warden Morrison indicated that the Mayor and Wardens met last Friday in Arichat where discussion took place on the REN and the possible expansion to include a greater area. Not all units are on board as yet. If the membership increases, so should the provincial contribution.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he and Warden Morrison sat on a panel on Age-Friendly Communities at the Silver Economy Summit held recently.

He advised that the Age-Friendly Communities Committee met today and a number of issues and new initiatives were addressed.

Chris Prentice, IBI Group, who are currently doing the Transit Study for the Municipality, will be in the area on Thursday and Friday of this week. Plans are to have the draft report ready by September, 2013.

COMMUNITIES OF DISTINCTION

Warden Morrison advised that he was contacted by a gentleman from Florida interested in doing a segment on Victoria County for their series on Communities of Distinction hosted by Terry Bradshaw.

The shows are 10 minute segments and they will come to the area within the next six weeks to tape the segment. The segment is aired for a six month period. There is a cost of \$25,000.00 to the Municipality and it was felt that consideration should be given to whether this would be worth pursuing.

It was suggested that a conference call should be arranged with all Council to obtain further information and outline what the Municipality wishes to receive from this venture, should they become involved.

NEW BUSINESS

Municipal Climate Change Action Plan

CBCL are currently undertaking the development of a Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) for the Municipalities of Inverness and Victoria and the Town of Port Hawkesbury. The MCCAP is a requirement to obtain gas tax funding.

Public information sessions will be held at Ski Cape Smokey, Ingonish Ferry, on Monday, June 17, 2013, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and at the Court House, Baddeck, on Tuesday, June 18, 2013, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tax Certificates

Discussion took place on the fee charged for issuing tax certificates. Sandy Hudson indicated that Pauline Davis, Director of Taxation, feels this fee should increase. At present the cost is \$10.00 per certificate.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the cost for a tax certificate increase to \$20.00 effective June 1, 2013. Motion carried.

EHS Meeting

The meeting with EHS has been postponed due to their labour concerns and will be rescheduled to a later date. Council will be advised on the new date.

Street Lighting

The issue of street lighting and the thrust to the new LED lights was discussed. At present the Municipality pays for 1714 lights at a cost of \$270,000.00. Sandy Hudson updated on the options with regard to this issue and recommended that the Municipality continue with the NSPI service and in seven years' time our cost will decrease to \$200,000.00 annually.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Municipality continue with the NSPI service for street lighting. Motion carried.

EMO By-Law

Lyle Donovan, EMC, has requested that an EMO By-Law be approved for the Municipality.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that work commence on obtaining information to develop an EMO By-Law for the Municipality. Motion carried.

Right Some Good

The request for financial assistance for the Right Some Good Food Adventure was discussed. There are three events scheduled for Victoria County.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that \$5,000.00 be approved for the Right Some Good Food Adventure. Motion carried.

Committee Membership

Expressions of interest are to be obtained for citizen membership on the Economic Development Committee. This ad has been placed in the next issue of the *Victoria Standard*.

Warden Morrison also mentioned that one member is required to serve on the Planning Advisory Committee. This was advertised with no replies being received.

Inverness County has approved their contribution towards the Crime Coordinator position for the North Highlands Region. Consideration is also being given by Inverness County to the request for assistance with the cost of an additional RCMP member for that area.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on June 24, 2013, at 5:00 p.m. in the Court House, Baddeck. Staff Sgt. Craig Yorke, RCMP, will be in attendance at this meeting.

A meeting with Jol Hunter, Grant Thornton, will be held prior to Council on that date at 4:00 p.m.

The Deputy Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has been scheduled on the agenda of the July 8, 2013, meeting of Council.

Grant Thornton will present the year-end report for the Municipality at the Council meeting scheduled for July 22, 2013.

It was felt that unless the need arises, no Council meetings will be scheduled during the month of August.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

