

***VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL***

***October 21, 2019***

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, October 21, 2019, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil  
District #2 – Perla MacLeod  
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden  
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis  
District #5 – Fraser Patterson  
District #7 – Wayne Budge  
District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO  
Alix Redden, CFO  
Jocelyn Bethune, Communications Officer  
Heather MacLean, Recorder

Absent was:

District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden (Personal Reasons)

***CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA***

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and acknowledged the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

The meeting agenda was presented for approval. Warden Morrison indicated that an In Camera meeting will be held at the end of the Council agenda.

**It was moved and seconded that the agenda be presented with the noted In Camera addition. Motion carried.**

***CASSANDRA YONDER, SENIORS' SAFETY OFFICER***

Leanne MacEachen introduced Cassandra Yonder, new Seniors' Safety Officer to Council. Ms. Yonder began work in the position today. Councillors provided introductions to Ms. Yonder and expressed their pleasure of having her on Board.

**CAPE SMOKEY HOLDING LTD.**

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Martin Kejval, Cape Smokey Holding Ltd., and Patrick Austin, EDO for Victoria County to the meeting.

Martin Kejval, Development Director, Cape Smokey Holding Ltd. provided a presentation on the plans for Ski Cape Smokey. He presented a layout of where the tree walk would be located and the views from the 15m and 30m height overlooking the ocean. He indicated that it is hard to compete with the views at Ski Cape Smokey.

Mr. Kejval provided examples of tree walks in the Czech Republic, Germany, and other areas in Europe. There are 2 ski resort/tree walks and 9 other tree walks in Europe. Cape Smokey Holding's tree walk in Ingonish Harbour would be a first in North America.

The first phase would consist of a gondola, lodge and micro-brewery. Mr. Kejval presented architectural visuals of what this development would look like. Accessibility is an important part of this project.

Mr. Kejval indicated that the planned opening for the first phase is in 2021 and it will take 10 years to complete the entire project. Cape Smokey Holding Ltd. just took official ownership of the Ski Cape Smokey property last week. The company is very excited with this planned development and feels it will provide new business opportunities for the area.

Patrick Austin indicated that it is hard to imagine the scope of the project. The parking lot will house 800 to 1000 vehicles. There will be lots of traffic and it will be a game changer for tourism in Victoria. Tourists who do the trail in one day will be staying longer and there will be new business opportunities that arise from this development.

Mr. Austin indicated that the Cape Breton Partnership has 28 new inquiries – 8 for business expansion, 8 for renovations and 12 new business plans. He advised that we are on the verge of an economic boom for the entire county.

Cape Smokey Holding is anticipating that 300 year around jobs will be developed and the population of the area will significantly increase in the next 10 years.

This is an exciting time for our County. Martin Kejval indicated that additional rooms will be required and he urged local businesses to build. This project will not succeed without the help of the local community.

Council indicated that it is indeed an exciting time for the whole County and they are looking forward to the project becoming a reality.

Mr. Kejval indicated that workers are ½ way up the mountain cutting trees and it was questioned if the marina was part of the development. Council was advised it is and this part of the project will begin 3 years down the road.

Council commended Deputy Warden Dauphinee and the Ski Cape Smokey Board for keeping the ski hill alive over the last number of years. Mr. Kejval indicated that Ski Cape Smokey's operation was a huge reason for Cape Smokey Holding developing this project.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended congratulations to both Deputy Warden Dauphinee and Patrick Austin for the time spent in making this project a reality. He also extended a thank you to Martin Kejval and Patrick Austin for their good news presentation.

**SENATOR DAN CHRISTMAS**

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Senator Dan Christmas and congratulated him on his appointment to the Senate.

Senator Christmas was appointed to the Senate in 2016 and was sworn in as an Independent Senator for Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq Nation. He is the first Mi'kmaq Senator to be appointed to the Senate of Canada.

Senator Christmas expressed his pleasure on being in Victoria County. He indicated that he is Co-Chair, with Councillor MacNeil, of CEPI. They have hosted two major conferences – Sustainable Development in 2016 and Biosphere Reserves in 2019. CEPI also has projects on sustainable forestry and fisheries.

Senator Christmas indicated that this week he celebrated his third year as an Independent Senator and he finally feels comfortable in the job. He is the only serving Senator that lives in Cape Breton.

Senator Christmas indicated that in November 2017, a meeting was arranged between the 5 First Nations and 5 municipalities to discuss thoughts on Cape Breton. The biggest challenge is the population decline. Cape Breton is losing over 1100 people per year – almost 100 per month. He worked with Ray Ivany during the Ivany Commission and all Nova Scotia is losing population, but Cape Breton is the worst of all Nova Scotia.

Senator Christmas presented three options for Cape Breton moving forward.

- Making Cape Breton the 11<sup>th</sup> Canadian Province – This involves amending the Constitution of Canada and receiving approval from 7 of the provinces
- Making Cape Breton Canada's 4<sup>th</sup> Territory – There is no amendment required to the Constitution of Canada. It would require an Act in Parliament and approval of Nova Scotia
- Cooperative Governance by Cape Breton's 5 First Nations communities and its 5 municipalities – a treaty based model – A variation of the 1700's treaty to share the land and resources and jointly govern the land we reside on.

Senator Christmas advised that he wishes to host a conference to create discussion on the three models outlined.

Council expressed their interest in attending the proposed conference and discussing the options for Cape Breton. The loss of population over the years has resulted in 30% less schools on the Island. We have an aged population.

The possibility of creating some economic projects to bring former residents and newcomers to Cape Breton was discussed. What PEI has done to strengthen their province was discussed. They are welcoming immigrants to the province and the results are showing an economic boom for PEI. Senator Christmas presented similarities in the size and population of Cape Breton and PEI.

There is now a level of cooperation between the First Nations communities and the Municipalities. This is something that all of Cape Breton should be proud of.

Warden Morrison indicated that our future depends on moving forward and this conference, and the credibility it will have by Senator Christmas promoting and bringing such a discussion forward is welcome. Council will support this project moving forward and will be eager attendees when the conference is held.

Warden Morrison requested that Senator Christmas take a photo with Victoria County Municipal Council. It is believed that this is the first time a sitting Senator has visited Council and is a historic moment to be captured. He also extended a thank you to Senator Christmas for coming to Council.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 30, 2019**

The minutes of the September 30, 2019, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of September 30, 2019, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to come forward.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Leanne MacEachen indicated that she sent out her CAO Report previously for review.

The CAO indicated she contacted the Village of Baddeck regarding the cruise ship visits and was advised that there will be no visits for the remainder of the year and the 2020 listing will be forwarded to the Municipality.

An Expression of Interest will be requested for a Christmas Display for the Court House lawn this holiday season.

The CAO indicated that the Village office has relocated to the former Recreation Office and the former Village office will be used as an accessible meeting space on the main level.

Work is being completed on the healthcare workshop sessions in the County. Ian MacNeil will be the facilitator for these sessions which will be held during the third week of

November. The location for the meetings was discussed and it was felt Neil's Harbour would be a central location for the northern area and the Baddeck Community Centre for the southern area. Leanne MacEachen indicated that once the details are finalized, the information will be forwarded to Council and advertised to the public.

The CAO advised that since the seasonal residents have left the County, there is a significant drop in the number of black bags being seen during collection. There were 9 bags total in the past week.

Our contract with Guysborough will be up in 2024 and discussion will be held with CBRM on other possibilities leading up to this time.

The Re-Use Centre will be closing for the season on November 2, 2019. To date, over \$10,000.00 has been raised for non-profits at the Centre. Something similar will be investigated for the northern area.

### **TAXATION UPDATE**

Total taxes outstanding as of today are \$2,237,827 compared to \$2,344,296 this time last year so we are now \$106,469 ahead of last year. Reminder letters have gone out so we are seeing some momentum from those.

Since the last update on current (2019), there is a difference of \$36,699 behind (\$1,533,637 vs. \$1,496,938).

Arrears (2018 & prior) have also improved since the last update with us now being \$143,168 better than last year (\$704,190 vs. \$847,358).

Since last council on September 30th, \$279,000 in payments has been received.

### **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL ISSUES**

#### **District #1**

Councillor MacNeil indicated there have been potholes which are marked using pylons all summer on the Washabuck Road. The holes should be repaired.

The streetlights on the Barra Strait Bridge have not been repaired and a number of signs have not been replaced and some are in the ditches of the road.

There is a washout on the St. Columba Road at Nash's Hill and it requires grading.

**District #2**

Request that a study be done on the Cabot Trail, Middle River, in the area of MacLeod's Brook, as there have been two serious accidents in this location in the last month – one of which resulted in a fatality.

Request that North Branch Road be included on the list for RIM funding next year.

Solar light at the eastern entrance/exit to the Beverly's Hill Road, be repaired.

**District #4**

Request that Rear Barrachois Road be graded and ditching be completed on the Murray Road in the area of Civic Address #513.

**District #5**

The matter of the ditching on the Baddeck Bay Road and the debris remaining on the roadside on the top of Kelly's Mountain from a recent motor vehicle accident is to be included in TIR issues.

**District #7**

The shoulders of the road in New Haven need to be repaired.

**District #8**

The shoulders of the road in Cape North by the Cabot Volunteer Fire Department and the South Aspy Bridge status are to be included in the letter to TIR.

Leanne MacEachen advised that Steve MacDonald will meet in the northern area on Wednesday, October 23, 2019, at 10:00 am.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Department of TIR concerning the items brought forward by Council. Motion carried.**

Leanne MacEachen advised that an action list of all items brought to Council concerning the Department of TIR over the past year has been compiled and she will be sending the list to Council for review and to eliminate items that have been addressed.

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #8**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Bay St. Lawrence Harbour Authority with regard to the blocking of the beach area which has been used by the residents of the area for many years. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to Morley MacNeil, Department of Lands and Forestry, with a copy to Keith Bain, MLA, inquiring on the “No Camping” signs for the Dingwall Beach area. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter of thanks be forwarded to the students of Baddeck Academy for their support of and donation to the local food bank. Motion carried.**

The status of the public washrooms at the Wreck Cove General Store was questioned. They are currently installing a new well and Public Works is developing a tender document. The CAO will request an update on the status.

It was indicated that the Wreck Cove Store will be closed for the next two months – reopening on January 1, 2020.

**District #2**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Lands and Forestry requesting that a representative come to Council to update on the Uisge Ban Falls Park area. Motion carried.**

**District #3**

Warden Morrison advised that the Victoria County Kilt Walk raised \$8,000 for the Victoria County Memorial Hospital Foundation. He also indicated the Celtic Colours just ended another successful festival.

**It was moved and seconded that letters of congratulations be sent to both the Victoria County Kilt Walk and Celtic Colours on their successful events. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison updated Council on the Victoria County Trails Federation's trail project from behind the Baddeck Curling Club to the multi-purpose bridge. There are three sections to the trail and two of the sections are being developed at present. A further update will be provided at the next Council meeting.

**District #2**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) to see if there is funding for doctor recruitment. Motion carried.**

Leanne MacEachen indicated that there is a recruitment workshop happening and information has been sent out to the Committee. More information will be known next week. The session is to be held on November 8, 2019.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Alderwood Management Board met and discussion on their audit and budgeting was held and it was suggested that the CFO attend the Alderwood Audit Report meeting.

Victoria County Transit Board will be meeting on October 29, 2019, at 3:30 p.m. The transit is operating and Council indicated that they have heard positive things. Another driver is required in the northern area of the County.

**BY-LAW POLICY REVIEW**

Nothing to report at present.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, November 4, 2019, at 5:00 p.m.

**IN CAMERA MEETING**

**It was moved and seconded to move In Camera to deal with a financial and taxation issue.**

The meeting returned to regular session.

**It was moved and seconded that the recommendation of the In Camera meeting be accepted. Motion carried.**

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

**Leanne MacEachen, CAO**