

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
January 21, 2008

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 21, 2008, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Wayne Budge in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison
District #4 – John Graham MacInnes, Deputy Warden
District #5 – Fraser Patterson
District #7 – Wayne Budge, Warden

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #6 – Lawrence Barron
District #8 – Robert MacLellan

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Budge called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 10, 2007/BUSINESS ARISING

The December 10, 2007, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

A public hearing is required for the proposed Dog By-Law.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that March 10, 2008, be set as the date for the public hearing on the proposed Dog By-Law. Motion carried.

Councillor Patterson indicated that one submission was received for updating the strategic plan. Copies of the submission will be provided to the Community Development Committee members and a date will be set for a meeting to review the submission.

The impending loss of the property mapping position from Victoria County was discussed. Two letters were included in the correspondence, one received from the Honourable Jamie Muir, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR), and one from Dennis Jones, Regional Manager, Eastern Region, SNSMR.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations expressing Council's dissatisfaction with the response and that the service to Victoria County is being comprised and we feel a meeting is required prior to the April 1, 2008, change. Motion carried.

The meeting in Englishtown regarding the *Special Places Protection Act* will be scheduled in late February.

Sandy Hudson indicated that the matter of dangerous and unsightly premises is now in the draft policy stage and CAO's are to submit comments to John Bain, Eastern District Planning Commission. After comments are received the Solicitor will draft a by-law to be submitted to the Planning Commission and Councils for review and adoption.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor MacCuspik, that the minutes of the December 10, 2007, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

NORTHERN VICTORIA COMMUNITY CENTRE

Courtesy of Council was extended to representatives from the Northern Victoria Community Centre. Kenneth "Brother" MacKinnon made a presentation to Council on behalf of the group (copy attached).

The total cost of the project is \$1.6 million dollars. The group is requesting a commitment from Council to finance the ice plant portion of the renovations. The total cost requested is \$450,000.00 - \$350,000.00 to purchase the ice plant and \$100,000.00 for installation. There is the possibility of recovery of 50 to 80% of these costs through the FCM's Green Infrastructure Fund. The County is eligible to apply for this funding.

The Centre's Business Plan has been prepared and the financial numbers are available and they requested a further meeting with Council or a Committee of Council to review and discuss the project further.

An application will be submitted to the Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection Office for funding and the deadline for this submission is February 4, 2008.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that the request for funding be referred to budget and the Recreation Committee meet with representatives from the Northern Victoria Community Centre to review their business plan and project costs. Motion carried.

Mr. MacKinnon and the representatives from the Northern Victoria Community Centre were extended a vote of thanks for their presentation.

RECESS

The Warden announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #4

Deputy Warden MacInnes advised that all possible avenues for use of the former North Shore School have been exhausted and the community now agree that demolition of the building is the best alternative. The building is built on a cement pad and it was felt that this pad should remain intact.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the Municipality proceed with demolition of the North Shore School property and the property remain in Municipal ownership. Motion carried.

District #3

Councillor Morrison again brought up the matter of the unsightly premises at Baddeck Bay.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that as a result of further complaints about the unsightly premises in Baddeck Bay, the Building Inspector be requested to conduct a further inspection and provide a written update of the next Council meeting. Motion carried.

Councillor Morrison indicated that Effie Bain has recently had 30 copies of her history of Baddeck printed and felt she should be congratulated on this achievement.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that a letter of congratulations and thanks be forwarded to Effie Bain for her accomplishment and its significance to the Village of Baddeck. Motion carried.

Councillor Morrison was contacted via email by a resident who wishes to build a home in Baddeck Bay and is concerned that when he contacted NSPI he was advised that the cost to provide electricity to his home would be \$10,000.00. He felt this was excessive.

Councillor Morrison will provide the CAO with a copy of the email received and it will be forwarded to NSPI for clarification as to the costs.

Councillor Morrison indicated that at present he is the only Councillor actively serving on the Silver Dart Centennial Committee and felt that other Council Members should become actively involved as the centennial celebrations are only 13 months away and they are of great significance to the entire County. The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 27, 2008, at 4:00 p.m. and he urged all Councillors to attend if possible.

Eleanor Anderson, Project Manager, Silver Dart Centennial Committee, is to be invited to attend a future Council session to update on the Centennial.

District #2

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that the cost of the installation of two (2) street lights be approved from the District #2 budget. Motion carried.

District #1

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that \$1,200.00 be approved from the District #1 budget for new navigational lighting for the MacKinnon Harbour Survival Association. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil advised that he received an email concerning the plans being considered to have an Orangedale Special train – a steam operated locomotive, that would take cruise ship passengers from Sydney to Orangedale. The group is making application to ECBC for funding and is seeking Council's support for their application.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that a letter of support be provided to the Orangedale Special Train group. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the status of the old Rankin School in Iona. Sandy Hudson advised that the ownership of this property is still with the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board.

District #5

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that \$1,000.00 be approved from the District #5 budget for the Ross Ferry Stewardship Society. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that \$2,500.00 be approved for the Big Bras d'Or Hall Committee from the District #5 budget. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

STRIP MINING

Councillor Patterson brought up the matter of the email included in Council's correspondence regarding the strip mining issue. Discussion took place.

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that a letter of support be forwarded to the Honourable Mark Parent, Minister of the Environment, requesting that an independent panel review be undertaken for the Point Aconi Strip Mine. Motion carried.

This letter will be drafted and sent out to Council members for review prior to it being forwarded.

ALDERWOOD UPDATE

Councillor Patterson advised that the purchase of the property for the new Alderwood Home is almost complete and the revised plans have been forwarded and received back from the Department of Health. The project costs have not been received.

The present Alderwood has apartments and it was indicated that the Department of Health will no longer fund apartments. Councillor Patterson indicated that the Board wish to conduct a feasibility study to see if the inclusion of apartments at the new Alderwood would be a worthwhile project.

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Municipality cover the cost of the feasibility study for the Alderwood apartments at a cost of \$7,000.00. Motion carried.

HIGHLAND MANOR

Deputy Warden MacInnes indicated that Highland Manor is undergoing a reconfiguration of the building to accommodate more space for recreational activities. A loan guarantee is required from the Municipality in the amount of \$175,000.00 to cover the cost of the realignment process.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the Municipality provide a loan guarantee in the amount of \$175,000.00 for Highland Manor's building reconfiguration project. Motion carried.

RURAL MAIL DELIVERY

Councillor Patterson referred to a recent article in the *Chronicle Herald* with regard to rural mail boxes being in jeopardy. Every rural mail box in Canada is to be inspected and if it doesn't fit certain criteria, mail will no longer be delivered to the box.

SCHOOL BOARD BOUNDARY HEARING

The Utility and Review Board will be convening a hearing on the boundaries of the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. Victoria County has two representatives on the School Board – one for the northern area and one for the southern area of the County. The School Board concur that these two seats be maintained.

Sampson McDougall will be making the presentation at the hearing on behalf of the School Board and are requesting a letter of support from the County for maintaining the two members in Victoria County.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that Council support maintaining the two representatives for Victoria County on the Cape Breton-Victoria District School Board. Motion carried.

PROVINCIAL COURT

A memo was circulated from the Provincial Court indicating that they would be eliminating Court Sessions in Baddeck every third Monday. At present, Court is held every Monday. This was felt to be another erosion of service to rural areas.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that a letter be forwarded expressing Council's opposition to the erosion of court services in Victoria County. Motion carried.

This matter will be discussed during the meeting with the Minister of Justice in Bay St. Lawrence tomorrow.

SKI BEN EOIN

The Cape Breton Ski Club, operators of Ski Ben Eoin, is applying to the three levels of government for funding in support of a snowmaking upgrade project. They are looking for a letter of support from the Municipality to be included in their funding application.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that a letter of support be provided to the Cape Breton Ski Club. Motion carried.

SMOKEY RECREATIONAL SOCIETY – LEASE AMENDMENT

Correspondence was received from Solicitor MacDowell concerning the amendment to the Smokey Recreational Society lease to include the upper floor of the former Ingonish School property.

Sandy Hudson requested Council to review this document and provide him with their comments.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Sandy Hudson advised that a financial statement was provided indicating that approximately \$5.9 of the \$8.5 million dollar budget has been spent as of December 31, 2007.

TWINNING – GOLF COURSES

Sandy Hudson advised that discussions are in the preliminary stage between the Cape Breton Highland Links Golf Course and Bell Bay Golf Course to twin with two golf courses in the Highland Region of Scotland.

Council felt this idea would be something the Municipality could support in terms of promotion.

BUDGET TALKS

Budget discussions should begin in the near future. Sandy Hudson indicated he would draft a preliminary budget for review.

BUILDING CANADA FUND

The deadline for expressions of interest for applications for Round 1 of the Canada-Nova Scotia Building Canada Fund, Communities Component is January 31, 2008. The second round of applications closes on August 31, 2008.

Sandy Hudson advised that no application will be made for Round 1; however, consideration will be given for the second round of applications.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next Council meeting will be held on Monday, February 4, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. John Malcom, CEO, Cape Breton District Health Authority, will making a presentation on the status of health care. This will be the only presentation scheduled for this meeting.

A meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee will be held on Wednesday, January 30, 2008, at 5:00 p.m.

A Victoria County Municipal Recreation Committee meeting has been scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2008, at 5:00 p.m.

IN CAMERA

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, to adjourn to an In Camera meeting.

Council returned to regular session.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Patterson, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

A. W. (Sandy Hudson, CAO

Wayne Budge, Warden

PRESENTATION – NORTHERN VICTORIA COMMUNITY CENTRE

Over 25 years ago the need for a recreational facility located central to all communities North of Smokey was identified.

It was answered by providing what today has become a year round multipurpose family focused entertainment and recreational resource called Northern Victoria Community Center.

The facility serves the community through the continued dedication of its volunteers. The center provides year round activities for permanent residents of Northern Victoria County, as well as visitors.

As a result, North of Smokey has had 25 years of natural ice one and a half to 2 months per year, a venue available for large cultural events, and the top rated cross country ski trails in Nova Scotia.

Volunteers from the area continue to be focused on the Centers mission developed through consultation with all communities North of Smokey and its founding Board of Directors which is to complete the extension of the building, install artificial ice and top notch ski lodge facilities.

After years of having most of the necessary infrastructure in place for example the fully poured slab, and piping, we continue to be faced with the challenge of bringing to our community a facility that can fulfill its original mandate.

Other challenges include,

Ice time; the maximum number of months one can expect good but not great ice conditions is 2, the center provides this service to the community North of Smokey despite the adverse financial and volunteer burn out effects that have become evident as time goes by.

Building; in its original design was to include and accommodate an expansion what is now just an exposed exterior concrete slab and required refrigeration piping. The lack of ice plant and extension of the surface present a burden on the communities the Northern Victoria Community Center serves because the facility cannot be used to its full potential.

Nordic Ski Facility; Presently this group possess the top rated cross country ski trails in Atlantic Canada. By the region having access to these trails and the programs associated with cross country skiing, we have the privilege to have had many world champions come from our community.

They require renovation to bring this area up to the standard expected by world class skiers on first class trails.

The Northern Victoria Community Center continues to respond to the health, physical, and cultural challenges of North of Smokey. As central focal point the organization continues to build positive intercommunity relationships.

To meet the needs of the residents North of Smokey the Northern Victoria Community Center Board of Directors is committed to the required capital project. As well community tradespersons, local businesses, and residents have come forward to support this initiative by donating tens of thousands of dollars of time and equipment rentals.

Because of the project there will be a positive growth in economic development in our area. The new facility will expand not only our winter activities but our summer festival and events programming and North Highlands Nordic Ski.

Long term sustainability will be on everyone's mind which includes potential funders and users when one discusses a project such as this. Through creative programming and money saving green infrastructure like the geo-exchange system for heating, and ice making our business plan clearly supports the expansion and the case that it will continue to be self sustainable.

In conclusion we are not the entire package that may draw, and retain residence to live and visitors to return to our area and County but we are one of the pieces.

What we require today from council is a commitment to finance the ice plant portion of the renovations.

The Northern Victoria Community Center is and hopes to continue to be a critical resource to the communities North of Smokey.

Feel free to contact us at your earliest convenience and I will answer any questions you have right now concerning what was said.