

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
April 30, 2007

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, April 30, 2007, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Wayne Budge in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Dan E. MacNeil
District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison
District #4 – John Graham MacInnes, Deputy Warden
District #5 – Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Lawrence Barron
District #7 – Wayne Budge, Warden
District #8 – Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Wayne Budge called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

NEAL CONRAD, DIRECTOR – OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Courtesy of Council was extended to Neal Conrad, Director, Community and Rural Development, Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development.

Mr. Conrad thanked Council for the opportunity to appear before them and indicated he had a prepared presentation, after which time he would answer questions previously forwarded to him and any additional questions Council may have.

He introduced Ross Kennedy, Regional Manager, Cape Breton Region, Office of Economic Development, who was also in attendance. Mr. Kennedy manages the Regional Office located in Sydney.

Mr. Conrad then provided Council with a presentation on Nova Scotia Economic Development (copy attached).

Mr. Conrad then addressed the questions that were forwarded to him by the Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee.

The first question was whether Victoria County is too small to be its own Regional Development Authority (RDA). Mr. Conrad indicated that he feels Victoria County is too small. Victoria County is a part of the regional Cape Breton economy and is not separate or unique from the rest of Cape Breton. Mr. Conrad advised that Victoria County needs to know their expectations and if moving forward to an RDA, should identify what the priorities and expectations are. ECBC would work with Victoria County to achieve this.

In answering the question should Victoria County be our own RDA, Mr. Conrad indicated they should not. Mr. Conrad indicated that in the past, the Office of Economic Development has attempted to maintain good contact with Ross MacDonald, but it was easy to overlook Victoria County as they were not a part of an RDA. Other government departments always assumed Victoria County was a part of an RDA and were reminded when the opportunity arose that Victoria County was not.

Mr. Conrad indicated that involvement in an RDA, would provide the Municipality with easy, consistent access to staff at the senior level and would also provide access to the services of the NSARDA.

The Business Retention (BRE) Program available through the NSARDA was discussed. It is the belief that 80% of the growth in business comes from existing businesses. Six of the RDA's in the Province participated in this program to date. The results of the program will be available after May, 2007. It is anticipated that this Program will be rolled out province-wide through the NSARDA.

Mr. Conrad indicated that during the course of his presentation he outlined the pros and cons of involvement in an RDA and he advised that he did not feel Victoria County would be restricted by belonging to an RDA.

Councillor Patterson questioned on whether funding would be available to tidy up the Victoria County Strategic Plan. Mr. Conrad felt there could be funding through ECBC and the Office of Economic Development. One thing that is critical in the strategic planning process is that there should be a way within the plan to renew itself.

Victoria County's geography and the difficulty with the decision as to which area of Cape Breton we fit in best were discussed. Mr. Conrad indicated that consideration should be given to how other services are provided in the area. Major considerations

such as to location of School Board, Health Board and other services may assist in this determination.

The fear that Victoria County is too small and would get swallowed up in an RDA structure was also expressed. Mr. Conrad indicated that this is a reason why planning is so critical, to ensure this does not take place.

Mr. Conrad outlined successful projects that have taken place on other areas through involvement in an RDA.

The question was raised as to whether if Victoria County were to join an RDA would there be input enough to create another position within the RDA. Mr. Conrad indicated that this matter would have to be discussed with the RDA, but he did not feel it would be out of line.

Mr. Conrad was also questioned as to whether there are any municipal units that are members of 2 RDA's. He indicated that a municipal unit can only be a member of one RDA; however, there is nothing to prevent a municipality from maintaining their own economic development department while maintaining membership in an RDA.

Mr. Conrad felt that a first step would be to develop a solid plan and process that reflects the requirements in Victoria County. He felt it would be beneficial for Council to meet with the two adjacent RDA's – CBCEDA and SHRDA.

The NSARDA annual general meeting will be held in Pictou in the near future and Mr. Conrad felt that it would be beneficial for representatives from Victoria County to attend to see what the organization is about first hand.

Mr. Conrad indicated that 2007-08 is a transition year for RDA's and discussions are ongoing with regard to changes to the current funding formula.

Further discussion took place and Mr. Conrad indicated that at any time, he, Mr. Kennedy and other staff would be willing to answer any additional questions or concerns from Council.

Warden Budge extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Conrad and Mr. Kennedy for their attendance.

RECESS

Warden Budge advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 19, 2007

The minutes of the March 19, 2007, session of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of March 19, 2007, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

25% Commercial Tax Rebate

A letter was received from the Honourable Jamie Muir, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, advising that, in addition to the County, the UNSM has also made the request to enable the 25% tax reduction to designated seasonal tourist businesses to be a municipal option and he has asked his staff to review the request.

He also advised that with regard to assessment capping, the government is planning to implement the CAP at CPI beginning in the 2008-09 fiscal year in accordance with the legislation. The program will be reviewed within three (3) years.

Out Migration and Youth Strategy

Correspondence was received from Gerard McPhee, Development Officer, ECBC, advising that until all the existing information with regard to out migration and youth is reviewed and analyzed by the Municipality and a well prepared and detailed terms of reference have been developed, ECBC is unable to consider the Municipality's request for funding.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Victoria County Municipal Tourism Committee

The April 18, 2007, minutes of the Victoria County Municipal Tourism Committee were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that the Victoria County Municipal Tourism Committee minutes of April 18, 2007, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Sandy Hudson advised that Destination Cape Breton Association are working on an island wide marketing initiative and have asked Councillor MacCuspic, Warden Budge and Tom Wilson to work on the Steering Committee. Sandy Hudson has been asked to serve on another committee in this regard.

Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee

The Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee minutes of April 17, 2007, were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that the April 17, 2007, minutes of the Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee be approved as presented. Motion carried.

VICTORIA COUNTY WEBSITES

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor Barron, that Sue Difiore, Helping People With Computers, be retained as a consultant to lay out the framework for a new Victoria County website. Motion carried.

BUDGET UPDATE – 2007-08

A Budget Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 10, 2007, at 3:30 p.m. The Minister of Justice, the Honourable Murray Scott, will be visiting Council briefly during this meeting.

REGION 1 SOLID WASTE

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality has pulled out of Region 1 Solid Waste and a meeting will be held on Thursday, May 3, 2007, to determine how to continue. Warden Budge and Sandy Hudson will attend this meeting. Bruce Morrison is unable to attend due to a prior commitment, and if any other Council Member is available, they can attend as his alternate.

A report on the status of Region 1 will be provided after this meeting.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #6

Nova Scotia Power representatives are to be invited to attend a future Council meeting at their convenience.

District #2

Councillor MacCuspic brought up the matter of an unsightly premise and was advised to contact David MacKenzie, Building Inspector, concerning this matter.

Councillor MacCuspic also questioned on the stockpiling of blue bags at various locations by Dutch Brook Disposal for pickup. When the garbage truck picks up regular solid waste, it also picks up blue bags, but will leave them at various locations for the smaller truck to pick up. The blue bags are picked up within ½ hour of them being left at the various locations.

Scott Richards, Dutch Brook Disposal, is to be contacted to ensure that the stockpiles of blue bags are not located near the end of a private driveway.

District #3

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that a letter be forwarded to Charlie MacDonald, Area Manager, Department of Transportation and Public Works, requesting that the Traffic Control Officer investigate the possibility of erecting a stop sign at the end of Harvey Drive and also look at restricting parking on either side of Queen Street between Chebucto Street and Grant Street. Motion carried.

Bruce Morrison indicated that the Baddeck Revitalization Project if over budget, may have the opportunity to recover monies from Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. In order to obtain this funding, Mr. Morrison may have to go to Halifax to meet and he requested permission of Council to attend this meeting if required.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that Councillor Morrison be permitted to attend the meeting with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations regarding the Baddeck Revitalization Project if necessary. Motion carried.

District #4

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Barron, that a letter be forwarded to Aliant requesting that their local representative come to Council to outline their plans for additional cell phone towers to increase the cell phone coverage in Victoria County. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden MacInnes indicated that new chairs and a table are required for the Court Room.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that a new table, chairs and sound system be purchased for the Court Room. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil and Deputy Warden MacInnes will look into these purchases.

District #7

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that a letter be forwarded to Charlie MacDonald, Area Manager, Department of Transportation and Public Works, requesting that signs be erected indicating one lane bridge at New Haven. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. A letter was received from Lawrence and Colleen MacKinnon requesting that they be allowed to purchase a parcel of land (approximately ½ acre) from the Municipality that borders their existing property in Iona.

Sandy Hudson advised that in order for the Municipality to sell property, it must be declared surplus to our requirements and put up for sale by public tender.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, the property in question be declared surplus and put up for sale by public tender and the matter be referred to the Solicitor for advice. Motion carried.

2. Letter from the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, regarding policing in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. He indicated that the policing of National Parks in Nova Scotia is a provincial responsibility managed through the provincial Department of Justice.
3. Copy of a letter to Keith Bain, MLA, Victoria-The Lakes, from the Honourable David Morse, Minister of Natural Resources, regarding structures on MacQuarrie Mountain Road and Highland Mountain.
4. Correspondence from Mark MacIntosh, Hepatitis Outreach Society, requesting the Municipality to proclaim May as Hepatitis Awareness Month and May 1 as Hepatitis Awareness Day in Victoria County.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that the Municipality proclaim May as Hepatitis Awareness Month and May 1 as Hepatitis Awareness Day in Victoria County. Motion carried.

5. Letter from Inky Mark, MP, Dauphin-Swan River-Marquette, re Bill C-417, the Canadian Soldiers' and Peacekeepers' Memorial Wall Act.

It was moved by Councillor MacLellan, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that Council support the request that the Government of Canada enact Private

**Members Bill C-417, the Canadian Soldiers' and Peacekeepers' Memorial Wall Act.
Motion carried.**

6. Letter from Michelle Cannizzaro, Child Care Connections Nova Scotia, requesting that June be declared "Child Care Awareness Days" in Victoria County.

**It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that June be declared "Child Care Awareness Days" in Victoria County.
Motion carried.**

7. Correspondence from Jack Novack, Dalhousie University, requesting consideration be given to supporting the Municipal Endowment Fund.
8. Letter from Charles Cirtwell, President and High School Report Card Co-Author, AIMS Market Studies, enclosing AIMS 5th Annual Report Card on Atlantic Canadian High Schools.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacLellan, seconded by Councillor Patterson, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Wayne Budge, Warden

A. W. (Sandy) Hudson, CAO

