

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
July 4, 2011

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, July 4, 2011, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

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.

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

CAPE BRETON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Eileen Lannon Oldford, Executive Director, and Rev. Thomas Whent, Chair, of the Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority (CBCEDA).

Ms. Lannon Oldford expressed her pleasure on being back before Municipal Council. It has been approximately a year and one-half since her last visit and she indicated that since that time Victoria County has hired an Economic Development Sustainability Officer and she has been in frequent contact with CAO Hudson.

The purpose of the visit this evening is to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between CBCEDA and the Municipality for a Regional Immigration Navigator.

The MOU officially declares that CBCEDA and Victoria County will work in joint collaboration for the positive advancement and growth on Cape Breton Island. The Navigator will assist with settlement services and meet with immigrants in the local community to determine if these individuals meet the criteria for the Community Identified Stream of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. CBCEDA and the County will work in full cooperation to foster welcoming communities and retention of newcomers within the region.

The MOU was then officially signed by all parties – Eileen Lannon Oldford and Rev. Thomas Whent representing CBCEDA and Warden Bruce Morrison and Sandy Hudson representing the Municipality of the County of Victoria.

A joint press release on this initiative will be released tomorrow.

Rev. Whent, on behalf of CBCEDA, welcomed Victoria County as a partner in this new venture and indicated it was both encouraging and heartening to share in this venture.

Warden Morrison also indicated Victoria County's pleasure in becoming involved in this venture and thanked Ms. Lannon Oldford and Rev. Whent on behalf of Victoria County.

MUNICIPAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLANNING

Courtesy of Council was extended to Jim Morgenstern who was in attendance to make a presentation of Municipal Physical Activity Planning.

Warden Morrison requested Council members introduce themselves and then opened the floor to Mr. Morgenstern to make his presentation.

Mr. Morgenstern indicated that Victoria County's recent involvement in the Municipal Physical Active Living (MPAL) Program is a very important initiative and they join approximately 40 communities in Nova Scotia who have accessed this program.

Mr. Morgenstern advised that he is a consultant who has been involved in the recreation planning area for many years and has been retained by the Province to review and evaluate the Physical Active Living Strategies that have been done to date. As a result of the reviews he has come up with an overview on Municipal Physical Activity Planning that he then presented to Council (copy attached).

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the Municipality is presently involved in the Age-Friendly Communities Program and two focus group sessions were recently held with 30+ seniors participating. One of the drawbacks to rural life identified was the fact

that seniors are sometimes housebound in the winter months. He questioned on how this might be addressed.

Mr. Morgenstern indicated that one area he has seen as a possibility is that seniors make an effort to attend church and in other jurisdictions programs have been offered after church. Infrastructure such as cleared sidewalks is also beneficial, but in rural areas this is difficult. Organizing activities online is also an opportunity for activities for seniors. The older adults have been identified as one of the more at risk categories.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned whether the gaming such as Wii or Playstation could be used to promote physical activity. Mr. Morgenstern indicated that this is a possibility for engaging all ages. The virtual opportunities for promoting physical activity could be a viable tool in the future.

Councillor Donovan questioned that the planning process and how the plan would be delivered in communities. Mr. Morgenstern advised that you don't need a long list of projects, but you focus on the ones most beneficial. There is a need to evaluate on a regular basis and also take a long term view on the progress. It may be 10 to 15 years before you turn a corner in this venture.

Councillor Buchanan made mention of the 40 jurisdictions that have adopted Municipal Physical Active Living plans and questioned on the feedback received from these areas. Mr. Morgenstern advised that he has reviewed 13 to 15 of the plans and indicated that overall the program is a positive one. Nova Scotia is doing a good job on addressing the physical activity issue and is ahead of other provinces in terms of addressing this issue. At this point, Nova Scotia is not ahead in terms of physical activity.

Councillor MacInnis outlined programs offered by the Health Centre group in his district and the positive outcomes that have been achieved from these grassroots initiatives.

Mr. Morgenstern indicated that education, policy change and creative programming are all required to make the program successful. Physical activity decreases in the eastern part of Canada; however, it is a problem in all jurisdictions in Canada.

Councillor MacCuspig questioned on whether the importance of proper nutrition is part of the program and Mr. Morgenstern advised that the MPAL Program is one geared mainly to physical activity.

One of the barriers in rural areas is the access to schools after school hours. Mr. Morgenstern indicated that this is a policy issue and it is important to identify policies that are barriers to physical activity.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that in his district there are movie nights for children at the local school and Wii games are set up for use on these nights.

Warden Morrison indicated the challenges with health issues in Cape Breton and stated that there is only one way to go and that is up.

The set up of a Working Committee was discussed. Mr. Morgenstern indicated that Committee should be a staff based working committee, with Vince Forestall, Physical Activity Strategy Coordinator, being the lead. Representatives at the staff level from health, education, senior adults, etc. should also sit on the Committee. This Committee should identify a number of priorities and develop a focused action plan for Victoria County. Council should be briefed on a regular basis. Programs, policy, communication and infrastructure are all important components and after the completion of the plan in year one, then it will be time to initiate action.

Further discussion took place and Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Morgenstern for his presentation.

Mr. Morgenstern indicated that in the last number of years the commitment and investment in the promotion of physical activity has increased by huge amounts, but physical activity has gone downhill during these years. The MPAL strategy is about targeting the inactive groups and increasing physical activity in all age categories. He indicated that Victoria County is fortunate to have Vince Forrestall leading the development of a MPAL plan for Victoria County. He thanked Council for allowing him to opportunity to meet with them.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Nona MacDermid, Economic Development Sustainability Officer, who was in attendance to provide an update on economic development initiatives.

Ms. MacDermid indicated that she met with Sandy Hudson in March, 2011, and at that time five key initiatives were identified for her to work on and they included:

- Business Discovery Survey
- Innovative Communication for Customer Service
- RDA Assessment
- Fishery Conference
- Alternate Energy

Ms. MacDermid provided an update on all these initiatives (copy attached).

Ms. MacDermid then provided Council with an update on the RDA Assessment from her point of view, as well as an overview of the options and the pros and cons associated with same (copy attached).

A general discussion took place on the key initiatives and the RDA assessment.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the alternate energy issue and the fact of the pollution coming from the Lingan coal fired generating station. He questioned on where the energy produced in Cape Breton is going and felt we should be able to negotiate with NS Power to make sure this power is kept in Cape Breton.

The COMFIT – community feed in tariffs program was discussed and the fact that as new power is generated from alternative energy sources, some of the old type energy production is to be discontinued.

Sandy Hudson advised that an RFP on the development of an Alternative Energy Strategy Study has been issued and will close on July 29, 2011.

On the innovative technology side, Councillor MacNeil indicated that we cannot forget Broadband. We have the infrastructure and were a leader in this field and are now falling behind. We are losing opportunities for business development.

The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) seminars provided to County businesses were discussed. A session was held at the Keltic Lodge, Ingonish and one at the Gaelic College in St. Ann's.

Nona MacDermid mentioned on the possibility of starting a column or having an interview session in the local media to increase visibility. She also mentioned of work being done on the Victoria County Website to draw more traffic to the site.

The possibility of holding training session for non-profit groups who do festivals and events was discussed.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Ms. MacDermid for her presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 13, 2011

The minutes of the June 13, 2011, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of June 13, 2011, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board

Discussion took place with regard to school board issues and the fact that a reply has not been received from Lorne Green, Board Chair, to the many inquiries.

Councillor Dauphinee expressed concern that a young family in the north of Smokey area has decided to relocate to the Northwest Territories, due to the uncertainty of knowing if they will receive teaching positions in the fall and the lateness at which these decisions are made.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspik, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a registered letter be forwarded to Lorne Green, Chair, with a copy to Ambrose White, Superintendent, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, requesting an update on the issues raised with the School Board. Motion carried.

BADDECK MUNICIPAL PLANNING MATTER

A public hearing was held today prior to Council on the application of Kurt Johnston, to amend the Baddeck Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law to allow the development of tourist commercial uses (cottages or cabins) in the Residential Urban (R-1) Zone in Baddeck.

Approval of 1st read of this amendment application was granted at Council on May 9, 2011, and the public hearing was held to hear the public views and opinions on the application. No public presentations were made at the public hearing.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that second and final reading of an amendment to the Baddeck Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law to permit up to five (5) tourist cabins/cottages on an unserviced lot in the Residential Urban (R-1) zone, with the lot size to be determined by the Nova Scotia Department of Environment, be approved. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 20, 2011

The Committee of the Whole minutes of June 20, 2011, were presented.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Committee of the Whole minutes and the budget recommendations contained in the minutes be approved, with the exception of the Wagmatcook First Nation application which is still pending. Motion carried.

It was indicated that we are still awaiting a response from Wagmatcook with regard to setting up a meeting with them to obtain additional information on their financial request.

It was felt that a letter should be forwarded to Wagmatcook with regard to a meeting to discuss their request for financial assistance from the Municipality.

The question was raised as to when the tax bills would be mailed out and Sandy Hudson advised they were taken to the Post Office for mailing today.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that approval be given for the installation of a street light in MacKinnon's Harbour, the civic address to be provided, from the District #1 allotment. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the brushcutter or mower has not been to his district as yet. Warden Morrison advised that they were in the Baddeck area today.

Sandy Hudson is to contact Steve MacDonald, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, to question on when the Victoria County signs will be erected.

District #2

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to Steve MacDonald, Area Manager, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, requesting that the signage for the Big Baddeck area be installed and questioning on the status of the resurfacing of the Big Baddeck Road. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a street light be installed at 115 Beverly's Hill Road (Mark Morrison residence) from the District #2 allotment. Motion carried.

District #4

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources concerning the closure of the picnic park at North Shore. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the matter of garbage being dumped in the Black Head area of Englishtown. He was advised to contact the Department of Environment in this regard and they will investigate and if possible, they will charge the individuals dumping the garbage.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan brought up the matter of the Muise property, Dingwall. The County now owns the property and an RFP has been issued to tear down and clean up the property.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee requested that a letter be sent to Steve MacDonald, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, congratulating the Department on the great work undertaken on Corson Bridge and questioning on the street light that was removed and request that it be replaced.

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson reported on the Age-Friendly Communities focus group sessions that were recently held in the County. Eleven attended the North of Smokey session and 16 attended the Gaelic College session. Brenda Hattie, Mount Saint Vincent University, was impressed with the sessions and has taken the information and will prepare a report in late summer/early fall.

The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association recently was advised that they were successful in obtaining their UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve designation.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter for congratulations be forwarded to Dr. Theresa MacNeil,

Chair of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association, on their recent UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve designation. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison indicated that the Disaster Relief application forms for the December storm damage did not apply to rental properties whose income was less than \$10,000/year, making these properties ineligible for funding. This was felt to be unfair.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister Responsible for Emergency Measures expressing concern on the policy with regard to the ineligibility of rental properties whose income is under \$10,000 annually for funding under the Disaster Relief Program. Motion carried.

The elimination of one of the daily Acadian Line bus runs was discussed. There is now only one eastbound run daily stopping in Victoria County (MacAulay's Ultramar, TCH 105, Baddeck). The public were for the most part unaware of this change in scheduling and it creates a difficulty for the public and businesses in the Municipality.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to both Acadian Lines and the Utility and Review Board questioning on the elimination of the bus run and how this change was communicated to the public. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison then reassumed the Chair.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Victoria County Municipal Council will meet on July 18 and 25, 2011, and it was questioned whether a session would be necessary in August. Whether a meeting will be held in August will be determined later on in July.

UNSIGHTLY PREMISES

Three properties received notification under the Dangerous and Unsightly Premises – two in the Baddeck area received 30 day notice letters requesting they clean up their properties and one in the Meadow Road, North River, area was given an order giving 30 days to remedy the condition or the Municipality will undertake to do so.

Discussion took place on unsightly premises in the County. John Bain is to be contacted to determine the status of the remaining unsightly premises that were provided to him for action.

TIDAL ENERGY SYMPOSIUM

Warden Morrison will be attending a two day Tidal Energy Symposium in Halifax on July 7 and 8, 2011.

A COMFIT Project Planning Conference will be held at the Best Western Glengarry, Truro, on July 5, 2011.

Council members wishing to attend either of these sessions are to contact Heather MacLean to be registered.

LAUNCH – SPIRIT OF THE LAKES SPEAKS

The Bras d’Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative’s (CEPI) launch of “The Spirit of the Lakes Speaks” will be held at the Crane Cove Seafoods Complex, Eskasoni, on July 8, 2011, beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Warden Morrison is unavailable due to a previous commitment and a representative from the Municipality is to attend. This will be determined.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacCuspik, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

