

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
February 25, 2013

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, February 25, 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 #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #7 – Wayne Budge (Family Related Absence)

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. He indicated that Alicia Lake's presentation is on affordable housing, not sustainable housing as indicated on the agenda. Sandy Hudson advised that the selection of the County's Volunteer of the Year is also to be added to the agenda.

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

GAELIC COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA

Courtesy of Council was extended to Caroline Cameron, The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, who was in attendance to present an update on the work of the Council (copy attached).

Ms. Cameron presented Council with a card indicating the symbol for Gaelic Nova Scotia and the origin of the work Celtic and the Gaelic language. She also presented Council with a 2013 Gaelic Affairs calendar.

The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia is a non-profit society dedicated to the maintenance and promotion of the Gaelic language and culture. The Society is committed to representing the individuals, organizations and institutions of which the provincial Gaelic community is composed. Ms. Cameron indicated that the Society has a good working relationship with the Provincial Office of Gaelic Affairs.

Ms. Cameron updated Council on events held during the past year and also outlined current projects being worked on including dialogues, Telling our Stories workshops, seniors' outings, Gaelic language workshops and the annual Provincial Forum. This year the Provincial Forum will be held in May in Iona and Christmas Island.

Each year, the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia makes presentations to Municipal Councils throughout the Gaelic regions of the province. Ms. Cameron requested that Council give consideration to providing financial assistance in the amount of \$2,000.00. She outlined to Council how these funds would be allocated.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Gaelic language is very important in his area. A core Gaelic program is offered at Rankin School of the Narrows and the students have recently completed a CD of Gaelic songs that should be available in May.

The question was raised as to whether the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia had any plans with regard to the Gaelic College's 75th anniversary this year. Ms. Cameron indicated that the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia is celebrating their 25th anniversary this year.

Further discussion took place and Council expressed thanks to Ms. Cameron for her interesting and informative report.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia's request for \$2,000.00 be referred to budget deliberations. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Ms. Cameron and she was excused at this time.

COUNCILLOR BUDGE

Warden Morrison advised Council that Councillor Budge's absence was for personal reasons and indicated that Council's thoughts are with him and his family at this time.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESENTATION

Courtesy of Council was extended to Alicia Lake who was in attendance to make a presentation on Community Economic Development through Affordable Housing (copy attached).

Ms. Lake outlined her involvement in housing issues over the past years and as well as her current connection.

Ms. Lake indicated that affordable housing is considered housing costs of 30% of income before taxes. The 2006 median income in Victoria County was \$53,000.00 and statistics indicated that 4.4% of families in Victoria County had low incomes.

The forms of affordable housing were explained and include:

- Housing by private developers or individuals
- Housing by non-profit organizations
- Housing by co-operatives
- Programs such as Habitat for Humanity
- Social (government) housing

Ms. Lake presented statistics on the cost of housing in Victoria County and indicated why affordable housing is important. She outlined housing through the Age-Friendly lens.

The economic benefits of affordable housing were outlined. Ms. Lake also explained the possible roles the Municipality/Housing Strategy Committee could play in regard to housing.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the statistics provided were very interesting. He indicated that it is very important to seniors that a seniors' complex have a common room where all residents of the complex could gather.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that the Seniors Complex in Ingonish is very important in his area and there is a waiting list for admission. The seniors in the complex all know one another and look out of each other. He also indicated that affordable housing would be important for seasonal workers and attracting people to the area. A wide range of affordable accommodation is necessary.

Councillor Buchanan advised that there are five housing units in his district, of which only one remains active. The Cobequid Housing Authority has boarded up four of the units. The housing units are in good repair.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that in his area there are a number of seniors living alone. The possibility of moving a number of seniors into one home for the winter months to cut down on costs was questioned and he felt it could be something that would work well. There would have to be an organization that would take the lead to achieve this project.

Ms. Lake advised that the first Habitat for Humanity Project in Cape Breton is being carried out at present in the Glace Bay area.

Councillor Grant indicated that Victoria County is fortunate to have Ms. Lake as a resident. He questioned on her current position as a Researcher at Cape Breton University.

Ms. Lake outlined the provincial government housing programs with up to \$25,000.00 in funding. The Department of Community Services – Housing Division contact is Maureen Lever and it was felt it would be beneficial for the Housing Strategy Committee to request a meeting with Ms. Lever.

Councillor MacNeil mentioned the new housing strategy that combines seniors with low income people. Seniors he has spoken with do not want to live with children. The situation that occurred in Iona where mixed residents lived in the former seniors' complex created a number of difficulties.

Warden Morrison indicated that Dan Troke, Executive Director, Housing Services, Department of Community Services, has been scheduled on two different occasions to attend a Housing Strategy meeting and has had to cancel. He will again be contacted.

Further discussion took place and Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Ms. Lake for her presentation and the information provided. Ms. Lake expressed an interest in being involved with the Housing Strategy Committee.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 11, 2013

The minutes of the February 11, 2013, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 11, 2013, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Sewage Disposal

A question was raised as to whether contact had been made with Richmond County concerning their plans with regard to the purchase of a sewage pump truck.

Sandy Hudson advised that he wrote a letter to Department of Environment concerning the close out of the septic site at Cape North. No reply has been received to date.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the CAO contact Richmond County to inquire about their plans and possible cooperation concerning a sewage pump truck. Motion carried.

Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department

Sandy Hudson advised that Joe O'Connor, CAO, Inverness County, forwarded a cheque to the Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department, for the services provided in the Meat Cove area of Inverness County.

Unsanitary Premises – Herbert Gregory

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the “Order to Remedy Condition” for the Herbert Gregory property for removal of the camper trailer and all debris be amended from 10 days for cleanup to 30 days. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he has received numerous complaints on the condition of the Kempt Head Road. He also expressed concern on the condition of the Steel's Cross Road. These matters will be addressed with Steve MacDonald, DOTIR, when he attends Council on March 25, 2013.

Whether paving of a portion of the Cabot Trail was included in the DOTIR 5-year plan for this coming construction season was questioned. It was indicated that there will be no planned paving for this construction season, but it is anticipated that additional paving will be done in the 2014 construction season.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that he has received calls from seasonal residents of his district who would prefer if the heavy garbage collection is done after the long weekend in May.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on whether the funding to the rinks in the Municipality has been forwarded this year. Tom Wilson is to receive the required financial information before the funding is released.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that most of the renovations have taken place at Ski Cape Smokey and the operation of the facility is going quite well. The facility is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and there are plans to open for all of March Break. He extended a thank you to Council for their assistance.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan questioned on the ownership of the road to the Dingwall Transfer Station. Sandy Hudson advised that it was his understanding that the road was a highway road until it branches to the former septic disposal site. Councillor Buchanan indicated that the road is not plowed from Friday to Monday and there are two residences located on the road.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to Stephen MacDonald, DOTIR, to check on the plowing of the Dump Road to the gate. Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated that Veronika Brzeski, Ecology Action Centre, recently did a presentation to Inverness County Council on shoreline erosion and is interested in making a presentation to Victoria County Council. This presentation could be scheduled for an April Council meeting and Ms. Brzeski is to be advised to contact the Municipal Office for scheduling the presentation.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that there is a seminar being held in Truro on March 18, 2013, at the Best Western Glengarry on this matter and he advised that he would like to attend. Any Council member wishing to attend is to be permitted to do so.

District #2

Councillor Grant provided Council with an update on his community meeting held in Middle River on February 12, 2013. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting and he felt it went quite well. He outlined the topics of discussion.

The status of the Green Gyms for the remaining four districts was questioned. An advertisement has been placed in *The Victoria Standard* for expressions of interest from community organizations in Districts 2, 3, 5 and 8. The deadline to submit interest is March 29, 2013.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a street light order be placed for the installation of a street light at 265 Big Baddeck Road, Big Baddeck. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant gave notice of motion that he would like information on the cost of street lighting to the County annually, the cost of the installation of each new street light, the monthly cost of each street light and any additional information on the street lighting issue for a future meeting.

Councillor Grant advised that the Alternate Energy Committee met with Krystal Therien, COMFIT Coordinator, on February 15, 2013. The proposed Wind Turbine By-law and the comments received from Genivar were reviewed. As the by-law covers the entire County, John Bain, Eastern District Planning Commission, has been requested to come to a meeting on March 4, 2013, to explain and provide advice on the process. The meeting will be held at the Court House at 1:00 p.m. and all Councillors are invited to attend this session.

Councillor Grant advised that he has requested information concerning waste management issues and some answers have been provided and some are yet to be provided. The Solid Waste Management Committee should have its initial meeting in the near future. A tour of the Guysborough Second Generation Landfill will take place tomorrow with a number of Council and Staff attending.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that a number of vehicles had tires flattened in the last two weeks on the Humes River Bridge. Something has to be done to correct this situation. The Middle River Bridge is also a concern. The policy for snow removal on dirt roads in District #1 is also an issue. After the recent storm, some roads were not touched for 28 hours and this is unacceptable. He advised that he would like a letter forwarded to Darren Blunden concerning these matters.

Councillor MacNeil also advised that he has received some phone calls on the drastic increases in residential property assessments. Some have risen over 100% in one year. It was indicated that the same applied to commercial assessments in Water Street, Baddeck.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a representative from the Property Valuation Services Corporation be requested to come to Council. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson took the Chair.

Warden Morrison indicated that some time ago a request was forwarded to DOTIR to make the Jones Street/MacLeod Street intersections a four way stop. DOTIR are to be again requested to investigate this matter.

Warden Morrison also advised that there is a buildup of ice in the area of Queen Street at the bottom of Buchanan Street. DOTIR are to be requested to investigate who is responsible for this problem.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that a number of the culverts in District #1 are too low and there is a water and ice buildup and flooding is occurring.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to DOTIR concerning all the issues addressed by Council and request that they be prepared to address these issues on or before their appearance at Council on March 25, 2013. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Warden Morrison updated on the status of the four committees.

The Solid Waste Management Committee has yet to meet. This Committee should meet as soon as possible, select a Chair and take ownership of the Committee.

The RENS/RDA Committee has appointed Councillor MacNeil as Chair.

The Alternate Energy Committee has met. An update was provided earlier in the meeting. Councillor Grant is the Chair of this Committee.

The Housing Strategy Committee has yet to meet and it was felt Maureen Lever, Department of Community Services – Housing Division, should be requested to come to a meeting. This Committee should meet and select a Chair in the near future.

Warden Morrison indicated that the Mayors and Wardens met on February 14, 2013, concerning the RENS/RDA issue. CBRM have committed to joining the REN and Eileen Oldford will be coming to Council on March 11, 2013, requesting that Victoria County join. Meetings will be held with the other municipalities before the end of March.

Warden Morrison encouraged Council members to attend the sessions in their area concerning tourism in Cape Breton. He indicated it was important to have a presence at these meetings.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters were received from Margaret Petrie and the Dingwall Recreation Society concerning the Recreation Society request to lease County owned land (former Dingwall School property) at Dingwall.

This matter has been referred to the Solicitor and further information is required from the Society with regard to term, how much property, useage, etc. Councillor Buchanan indicated that this information has been forwarded to the CAO by email.

Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, to acknowledge receipt of the letters and advise that the lease document will be reviewed and a decision made at Council on March 11, 2013. Motion carried.

DINGWALL WATER

Council was advised that the Dingwall Water System will be shut down for a four hour period on February 27, 2013, for valve replacement.

BAY ST. LAWRENCE WATER

Sandy Hudson advised that Earth Water Concepts have identified an area for a potential water supply for Bay St. Lawrence. The property is owned by Thelma Burton and she has been contacted with regard to test drilling on the property, with the option to purchase property if water is found. The Solicitor is presently drawing up an agreement with regard to the test drilling and option to purchase and Mr. Hudson advised that he will be meeting with Thelma Burton to walk the property and have the agreement signed.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the CAO be authorized to carry out negotiations with Thelma Burton. Motion carried.

WATER UTILITIES

Sandy Hudson advised that he would like to see a reorganization of the Victoria County Water Utility to have an open competition for an Operator/Supervisor. At present the four utilities under the Victoria County Water Utility have 4 independent operators and 4 water systems.

The competition would be open to the four current operators and the position would require a Level 2 certification.

Discussion took place on the present operation of the water systems and some issues that have occurred. Possible solutions for the issues were outlined.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the CAO be authorized to advertise for an Operator/Supervisor for the Victoria County Water Utility. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant questioned on whether there were studies undertaken before any new water systems are considered to determine the number of users, etc. He questioned on how it is decided what projects get added to the list and how their priority is determined. Discussion took place on this matter. Projects can be added to the infrastructure priority list at any time and could include projects other than water projects.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sandy Hudson presented four applications received for the Volunteer of the Year award. The nominations included:

- Roxanne Dunphy – Nominated by Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department
- Murdock Morrison – Nominated by Ross Ferry Stewardship Society
- Sandra Kay – Nominated by Boularderie MammoWarriors Dragon Boat Team
- Murdell and Larry MacNeil – Nova Scotia Highland Village

Councillors then submitted their votes for the four submissions. The votes will be tabulated following the meeting.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Victoria County Volunteer of the Year be announced following the tabulation of votes. Motion carried.

STEVE MACDERMID MEMORIAL HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

A request was received from Kim Cameron, Baddeck Women's Rec Hockey, for a \$500.00 donation for the Steve MacDermid Memorial Hockey Tournament held in Baddeck on February 23, 2013.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a \$500 one time donation be made to the Steve MacDermid Memorial Hockey Tournament. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

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

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO