

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
March 7, 2016

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, March 7, 2016, 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 #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden (Attending Silver Economy Summit)

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

The CAO indicated that Dale MacNeil, Bell Aliant, may drop in to the meeting later to introduce himself to Council.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

SEAWALL TRAIL PRESENTATION

Courtesy of Council was extended to Ray Fraser, Chair of the Seawall Trail Society.

Mr. Fraser thanked Council for the opportunity to appear. He indicated to date a lot of volunteers, from all over, have done a lot of work on the proposed trail.

Mr. Fraser began his presentation by showing Council three of the most famous long distance hiking trails in the world. All are amazing, bring in hikers who spend millions of dollars and he indicated that the Seawall Trail can be as good as or better than these trails.

The Seawall Trail Society proposes to build a multi-day (3 to 5 day) hiking trail along the coast and cliffs of Northern Cape Breton. The trail will be 50 to 100 km long. They believe that when completed, the Seawall Trail will attract hikers from around the world and will help establish Nova Scotia as a world class hiking destination.

Mr. Fraser indicated that this trail will expand existing trails, and along with being a coastal experience, will also provide varied scenery such as meadows, beaches, old growth forests, and everything else. It will be a single use trail for hiking only, with three entry points at Meat Cove, Red River and Cape North. There will be campsites and huts along the trail. The Seawall Trail will not be just a trail, it will be a product.

Mr. Fraser outlined the benefits which include:

- Employment and new businesses
- Nova Scotia Tourism goals
- Training and research
- Traditional activities
- Health and fitness
- Compliments existing products
- Brand recognition and identify
- Validation of the Physical Active Strategy
- Winter use – open year around

The Seawall Trail Society has a goal of 2000 hikers annually. It will provide a significant economic impact with direct and indirect jobs including:

- Accommodations and food
- Taxis and transport
- Hut staff and Rangers
- Interpretive Centre
- Supplies and maintenance

Revenue will be received from trail and hut fees and merchandise.

Stage One of the Trail planning will take place in 2016 and will include:

- Trail Development Plan and Document
- Marketing, branding, website, social media
- Trail mapping, routing, flagging and fieldwork
- Public consultations, presentations, liaison with consultants
- \$75k to \$100k

Stage Two: Trail construction and maintenance will hopefully begin in 2017.

Mr. Fraser indicated that the Seawall Trail Society is looking for financial assistance for Stage One route planning, legal assistance for land use agreements, and a letter of support.

Mr. Fraser concluded his presentation with a slideshow of photos of the area and contact information.

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether there were any issues with the owners of the privately owned Pollett's Cove area. They have been talking with the owner and everything appears to be satisfactory at present.

The safety issue was discussed and Mr. Fraser indicated that there are many areas where helicopters can land and there will be 24 hour manned stations. There will also be the ability to carry in gear on horseback and professional Sherpas.

Councillor Grant indicated that making the protected area economy work is what is necessary and he was involved in a lesser scale overnight camping, trail project in Humes Rear. He felt these two projects could complement one another.

Mr. Fraser indicated that the request from Victoria County is \$10,000.00 for Stage One. The same has been requested from Inverness County and he also identified other potential funding sources.

Mr. Fraser indicated that this is a three to five year project, with a longer range for cabin development. The public consultation meetings held to date were outlined. He indicated he was cautiously optimistic that the hunter guides are on board with the trail development and public support has been amazing.

Garnet MacLaughlin, Trails Consultant, has been contacted with regard to trail development in the area. Whether there were others that could provide this aspect in the northern area was questioned and can be considered as the project moves forward.

Mr. Fraser indicated that they met with Inverness County Council last week and they were 100% supportive of this venture.

The potential for training on trails development was discussed. Mr. Fraser indicated that CBU/NSCC Marconi Campus are interested in partnering in this venture and discussions have been ongoing (trail development and culinary).

Tom Wilson indicated that hikers spend money and it is not uncommon that a hiker would spend \$1,500.00 on a 3 to 5 day trek. He indicated that this is the biggest tourism project to hit Cape Breton in a long time. He advised that he will provide any support he can towards this project.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Ray Fraser for his excellent presentation.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality provide a letter of support to the Seawall Trail Society. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that the Seawall Trail Society request for financial assistance be referred to budget. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 22, 2016

The minutes of the February 22, 2016, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 22, 2016, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

STRAIT AREA TRANSIT

The question was raised as to whether Strait Area Transit has applied for the NS-TRIP funding on behalf of Victoria County. Whether the Municipality has the opportunity to review the application before submission was discussed.

It was felt that clarification was required on the NS-TRIP funding money and the budget request.

It was moved and seconded that the CAO contact Strait Area Transit for clarification on the NS-TRIP funding and financial request. Motion carried.

INGONISH BARRIER BEACH

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that Mark Eyking advised that the federal government has divested itself of the Ingonish Harbour wharf and is not responsible for the barrier beach.

Pam Eyking, MLA, is looking into this matter from the provincial perspective.

DESTINATION CAPE BRETON ASSOCIATION

Mary Tulle, Destination Cape Breton Association, is to be invited to an April Council session to update on the revenue and expenditures with regard to the Marketing Levy funding.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Grant gave notice of motion that he would be introducing a motion regarding tendering of legal services for Victoria County.

NEW BUSINESS

BUDGET MEETING

A Budget Committee meeting will be held on Monday, March 14, 2016, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil brought up the condition of the gravel roads in District #1.

District #2

Councillor Grant indicated that at a community meeting in his district the topic of a community forest was brought up. The Department of Natural Resources indicated that one was being developed in Western Nova Scotia and nothing further would be entertained until this one was up and running.

It is now up and running and Councillor Grant requested Council permission to attend the Nova Scotia Forest Technicians and Foresters meeting in Truro next week. The general manager of the Western Community Forest will be in attendance.

Council agreed that Councillor Grant attend.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis brought up the dismal direction of the crab fishery where the fishermen will be seeing a 45% decrease in their total allowable catch. He also mentioned the affect the Muskrat Falls project is having on the fishery.

On a positive note, at a recent meeting held at Dalhousie University, Victoria County was commended for providing the financial assistance toward the tracking of crab through the Ocean Tracking Network tagging program.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the status of the Fire Services Coordinator. The Province has released a new report on this matter.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the dates for the Ottawa trip. Warden Morrison advised that there are no definite dates.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan brought up the condition of the guardrail on Smokey. This requires immediate upgrade.

District #3

Warden Morrison indicated the Fire Chief of the Baddeck Department approached him with regard to high angle rescue equipment and training.

Two sets of high angle rescue gear were purchased a number of years ago to be used by all departments. One set is housed at Cabot Fire Department and the other at Iona Fire Department. If needed, this equipment can be transferred to any department for use.

The training aspect can be investigated through the Chief Fire Officers Committee.

POLICY REVIEW

A draft Records Management Policy was introduced to Council at the previous meeting for their review.

It was moved and seconded that the Records Management Policy be adopted. Motion carried.

Sandy Hudson advised that a Social Media Policy for the Municipality is presently be investigated.

TAXATION

An update on tax collections was presented and reviewed. The goal by March 31, 2016, is to get the current arrears down to \$800,000.00.

The CAO brought up a property matter of an unoccupied, derelict dwelling assessed in the name of Steve Bonaparte, MacKinnon Harbour. Mr. Bonaparte does not own the property on which the house is located.

It was moved and seconded that taxes in the amount of \$3333.66 be written off and PVSC be contacted to remove this account. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REQUEST

Warden Morrison brought up a request for financial assistance for KitchenFest at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's.

It was moved and seconded to refer the request for financial assistance for KitchenFest to budget discussions. Motion carried.

Due to the lack of snow, the Ride for Dad event was cancelled, although of number of those registered still came and snowmobiled in the Highlands. The Gary Ross Memorial Snowmobile Races scheduled for this weekend have also been cancelled.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal concerning the condition of the manhole across from 112 Old Margaree Road, Baddeck. Motion carried.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for five minutes

NORTHERN VICTORIA COMMUNITY CENTRE

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to David Fraser and David Fraser Jr. who were in attendance to make a presentation on the Northern Victoria Community Centre.

Mr. Fraser thanked Council for the opportunity to appear. He then provided a presentation to Council on the facility. The Northern Victoria Community Centre was built in 1979 and is a year around facility. He outlined the activities that take place in the Centre. They have a cost share agreement with North Highlands Nordic Ski Club who operate out of the facility. It will also be the new home for the North of Smokey Fishermen's Association.

Mr. Fraser outlined the two major fundraisers – Fire on the Hill and the OysterFest. There will also be starting bingo in the future and hope to have a wrestling club year around. They wish to upgrade their infrastructure. They had natural ice on the outside pad this year for a short time.

They have done construction on a 40' X 80' community room and are now at the point where they would like to install a drop ceiling in this room. The request from the Municipality is \$20,000.00.

The Northern Victoria Community Centre currently receives \$5,000.00 annually from the Municipality which is to be used for capital.

Councillor Buchanan indicated that he sees firsthand the great strides the Northern Victoria Community Centre has made.

Mr. Fraser indicated that they have applied to ACOA for funding for heat pumps and two emergency doors.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the bingo operation. There is no other bingo in the area as the Fire Department gave it up a while ago.

Discussion took place on the ice plant and other equipment received as a gift from Berwick some time ago.

The plans for the community room were outlined. Mr. Fraser was advised to formally apply for funding under the Municipality's Community Grants Application Policy.

Further discussion took place.

It was moved and seconded that the Northern Victoria Community Centre's request for financial assistance be referred to budget deliberations. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you for the presentation.

STUDENT GRANTS

The deadline for the Canada Summer Jobs Program is March 11, 2016, and Council requested that application be made for two Enviro-Depot students and two students to identify Municipally-owned street lights.

It was moved and seconded to apply for summer student positions under the Canada Summer Jobs Program. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

