

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
September 19, 2016

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 19, 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 #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 #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #7 – Wayne Budge

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

Warden Morrison offered congratulations to CAO, Sandy Hudson, on becoming a first time Grandfather recently.

INVASIVE PLANTS IN BADDECK

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Marian Whitcomb and David Quimby who were in attendance to present on Invasive Plants in Baddeck (copy attached).

Ms. Whitcomb thanked Council for the opportunity to present on this issue and explain the magnitude of a problem with invasive plant species.

Ms. Whitcomb indicated that she was brought up in the Florida Everglades and saw first-hand how invasive plants obliterated the area.

Ms. Whitcomb indicated that our ecosystems are being threatened with invasion by plants that overwhelm natural plant communities. This environmental pollution has the ability to reproduce and expand and is far worse than litter. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature indicates that invasive plants are litter that expands.

Alien plants are:

- Work – Visual quality of the landscape
- Visual barriers – safety
- Eliminates food supply for native species
- Forestry pests
- Physical harm to workers trying to remove them
- Disease risks

On the invasion curve the plants are late in development before a problem is noticed. She outlined the key stages in plant invasion.

Ms. Whitcomb provided visuals of invasive plant species in the area, including Japanese Barberry, Giant Hogweed, Angelica, Wild Parsnip, Rosa Multiflora, Japanese Knotweed and Purple Loosestrife. She explained each plant providing a detailed account of the magnitude of the problems with these plants.

Ms. Whitcomb indicated that everyone should be fighting these invasive plants. She indicated that she has set up a Facebook Page – Cape Breton Invasive Plants and a Pinterest site also for further information on this threatening issue.

Mr. Quimby indicated that the invasive plant situation is overwhelming and Ms. Whitcomb has inspired him to fight this invasion and her persistent work on this issue has proven that we can change the landscape. He brought samples of local invasive species for Council to view.

Ms. Whitcomb indicated that she is available to take any Council member on a tour to educate them on the invasive plant issue.

The problem with Wild Parsnip along the roads in District #1 was brought up. Ms. Whitcomb explained the management issues with this species and this plant is seeding this time of year. To assist in elimination this plant must be dealt with at peak of flower. They are challenging foes.

Councillor Grant indicated that he went on a tour with Ms. Whitcomb and Mr. Quimby and it was very interesting, scary and outlined the need for education on this issue.

How invasive plants affect wildlife and insects was questioned and Ms. Whitcomb explained this issue.

Whether hydro seeding done along the highways leads to an increase in invasive plants was questioned. This is unknown and will be monitored.

Ms. Whitcomb indicated that she would be more than happy to give an assessment of where the biggest problems are.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that there used to be Weed Inspectors employed in years past to deal with noxious weed issues.

Ms. Whitcomb indicated that early detection is key in the battle with invasive species.

Council members all thanked Ms. Whitcomb and Mr. Quimby for the presentation and education on this issue.

The disposal of invasive plants was discussed. They can be brought to waste disposal sites but are not to be put in compost. Ideally they should be placed in a very deep hole and buried. Education of residents to be able to identify the bad from the good plants is required.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you for the excellent presentation and increasing the recognition and awareness on invasive plant species.

MICHAEL AND YVONNE NUGENT – PROPERTY MATTER

Courtesy of Council was extended to Michael and Yvonne Nugent who were in attendance with regard to a property matter on Yetman Lane, Little Narrows.

Mr. Nugent indicated that he is looking to purchase the property on the end of Yetman Lane in Little Narrows. He presented a history behind this matter, indicating work he has done and his attempts to obtain the land at the end of Yetman Lane which he wishes to purchase.

He indicated that there are only two residents on Yetman Lane and the ownership of other property in the area was outlined. He outlined his plans to improve the property if he can purchase same which will increase the property value and taxation received by the Municipality.

The property was offered as surplus to their needs by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and was offered to the Municipality. The Municipality have a policy to obtain properties with access to the waterfront for future use and expressed their interest in obtaining this property. Mr. Nugent also expressed an interest in obtaining this property at that time.

Mr. Nugent felt this policy should be looked at on a case by case basis as there are 3 access points to the waterfront in a 4 km section of highway in this area.

Mr. Nugent presented a plan of the property in question and Sandy Hudson advised that he also had a copy of this plan.

Mr. Nugent indicated that he is requesting the Municipality to release their interest in the property.

Further discussion took place and Warden Morrison advised that Council would have a discussion on this matter at a future meeting after consultation with the CAO and Solicitor.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for five minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 29, 2016

The minutes of the August 29, 2016, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of August 29, 2016, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

A follow up on housing issues addressed at the August 29, 2016 meeting is to be requested from the Cape Breton Island Housing Authority,

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he forwarded an email to the Minister of TIR, Gerard Jessome, Darren Blunden and Pam Eyking with regard to the roads in District #1. The gravel roads are at the point that they cannot be travelled on. It was indicated that the grader is to revisit the area next week.

Warden Morrison advised that the Minister of TIR has advised that he will be unable to meet with Council prior to the sitting of the Legislature.

A reply has not been received from Pam Eyking, MLA, with regard to the request that she meet with Council.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council is adamant in their stance to have the speed limit reduced to 70 km per hour in the area by the Irving/Tim Hortons and this will be again addressed with the Department of TIR.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he forwarded an email to Council last week with regard to the rebranding and possible name change for the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. This matter has been suspended until after the Municipal Elections.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he has received calls from residents with regard to the change to Paymentus for credit card payments. Whether Council could be informed of who is using this service was questioned and whether it is affecting seniors and low income residents.

Accepting credit cards cost the Municipality \$60,000.00 last year and led to the change to Paymentus.

Leanne MacEachen, Director of Finance, indicated that usage can be tracked in receivables, but this would not identify those using Paymentus.

It was felt this should be monitored for a year to see if the change is successful and warranted.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on the requested right-of-way for the Rasmussen's on Water Tower Road. The surveyor has just completed his survey in this regard.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan indicated that they used to receive a tax receivables print out last year and wondered how tax receivables are at this point compared to last year. Sandy Hudson advised that receivables are down and an update will be provided in the near future.

Councillor Buchanan requested that an update on the status of the Englishtown/Little Narrows bridges be requested from the Minister of TIR.

It was moved and seconded that a street light order be approved for lights to be located at 149 Dingwall Road, Dingwall, and the Old School Park, Dingwall. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor Grant indicated that he has been in contact with Mike Eddy, Snowmobile Association of Nova Scotia, with regard to corporate sponsorship. The \$500.00 bronze level sponsorship would provide ads in their Snow Trails publication as well as other promotion materials.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality be a bronze level sponsor of \$500.00 to the Snowmobile Association of Nova Scotia. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant indicated that sometime ago, Council agreed to advertise the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve on their welcome signs. Whether this could be accomplished on the existing signs was questioned.

Sandy Hudson advised that he is in discussion with Mike Peters, TIR Sign Shop, to see what would be possible and is awaiting his reply.

Councillor Grant indicated that this may be his last Council session, and he wanted to thank Council on behalf of his constituents and himself for the support provided from Council to projects he brought forward. He offered his congratulations to all Councillors acclaimed in the upcoming election and wished Councillor Buchanan good luck on his campaign for re-election.

Warden Morrison acknowledged Councillor Grant's contribution over the last four years and indicated he did an excellent job representing District #2 on Council and will be missed.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil felt that a meeting should be held with bulk water users in Little Narrows on the water rate issue. A meeting was tentatively scheduled in Little Narrows on Monday, September 26, 2016, at 5:00 p.m. in Little Narrows.

District #8

Councillor Grant questioned if anything was received from Bruce Hatcher since he met with Council in Iona. To date nothing has been received.

District #3

Warden Morrison brought up a letter received concerning the request for Gladue Court services in Wagmatcook. Council has supported this in the past.

It was moved and seconded that a letter of support be forwarded to the Department of Justice reinforcing Council's support for Court Services in Wagmatcook. Motion carried.

The Annual General Meeting of the Cape Breton Partnership will take place on October 6, 2016, at the Keltic Lodge, Ingonish. Councillors wishing to attend are to contact the Municipal Office to be registered.

Any Councillor member able to volunteer during Celtic Colours is to let Warden Morrison know and he will advise Gail Montgomery at the Gaelic College.

TAX WRITE-OFF

Sandy Hudson advised that a write-off of taxes is required for property located in Baddeck Bay owned by Constance Kerr. Tax bills were sent out and subsequent to that the house on the property was torn down. He indicated that \$891.00 is to be written off this tax account.

It was moved and seconded to approve the write-off of \$891.00 on Constance Kerr's tax account. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Sandy Hudson, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden

