

Victoria County Municipal Council

June 11, 2018

A meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck on Monday, June 11, 2018 with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Perla MacLeod
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 - Norman MacDonald

Staff:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Jocelyn Bethune, Recorder

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order.

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

ASPY FAULT LINE TRAIL

Patrick Austin, Economic Development officer for Victoria County/Cape Breton Partnership introduced Andrew Stephenson and Ross Clothier to council to speak about the natural aspects and the potential that exists in northern Victoria County. Andrew Stephenson is a businessman with land in northern Victoria County. Ross Clothier is an adventure tourist strategist who works at Thompson Rivers University in BC.

Their vision is to create an adventure tourism industry in Victoria County. This includes back-woods hiking and skiing, rock climbing, mountain bike trails and camps for kite suffering. They believe such an industry could mitigate some levels of out-migration. He compared this area to the Gaspé peninsula which faced the same problems 15 years ago. That area worked to develop an adventure tourism industry which was supported by government partners. He believes the same could be done here – especially along the Aspy Fault. He also believes this industry could attract former military, especially survivors of post-traumatic stress. In order to create this new industry though, there needs to be an education of the industry first among the residents, then buy-in from residents and government. A strategic plan is required.

Ross Clothier commented on the strong physical assets in the area. Adventure tourism tends to work best in rural areas. The Strategic Plan would highlight the commercial opportunities on a national and international scale.

The Warden opened the floor to questions from the council. Councillor Budge asked what other partners are on board (none yet – in talks with others); Councillor MacInnis asked whether the proposed trail would be non-motorized vehicles (yes) and open year-round (yes).

Andrew Stephenson specified that he has spoken with Mark Eyking and the federal government, Rossingol reps and is planning to speak with ACOA; he is also looking at linkages between Thompson Rivers University and Cape Breton University.

Councillor MacLeod asked if there were any other partners to contribute to the \$30,000 ask for a strategic plan.

Patrick Austin responded that the group is in discussion with federal, provincial governments, as well as Inverness County, but Victoria County buy-in is key.

Warden asked what the group wanted from Victoria County and what is the timeline. Ross Clothier said the completion of a strategic plan would be April /May 2019, if he does it. The Warden said it would likely involve a tendering process.

The CAO asked if the group was specifically asking for \$30K?

Mr. Stephenson replied the group would like some level of funds as a commitment towards this strategic plan.

The CAO said there is interest in council, but the budget just passed and this was not part of it.

The Warden suggested the request be tabled and the group get other partners on board; then come back and speak to council. In the meantime, council will support the project in principal.

**It was moved and seconded that Victoria County Municipal Council support in principal the development of a strategic plan to look at adventure tourism for the area.
Motion carried.**

CANNABIS LEGALIZATION:

Courtesy of council was extended to Beth Gillis, Consultant, Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA), Christine Villneff, Health Promoter, NSHA and Gina MacQueen, Mental Health & Addictions, NSHA to speak on the upcoming legalization of Cannabis and what it may mean for municipalities.

Beth Gillis began by providing a snapshot of cannabis – who is using it in our communities. What can municipalities do as it is legalized? What do you see your community looking like in 5 years and what role does cannabis play in that vision? She discussed what non-medical cannabis is, how it is used today and who is using it.

- Most commonly used illicit drug in Canada
- Nova Scotians are #2 in the country (just below BC) in usage.
- 50% of Nova Scotians have used cannabis
- The average age of first usage is 15.

Cannabis does carry harm, especially in young brains. It creates impairment if the user is driving, shouldn't be used if the user is pregnant or breast-feeding, etc. so there are a number of public health concerns regarding the legalization. Legal age in Nova Scotia will be 19; it will be sold online and through specific NSLC outlets.

Municipalities have a role to play in how cannabis comes to our communities and can use the following tools to manage cannabis:

- Land use and planning
- Municipal owned buildings and services
- Amending and establishing Bylaws

The following will be permitted once legalized:

- Production of cannabis
- Packaging & Processing can occur in any type of building
- Sales – NSLC or others designated by NS government
- Cannabis cafes could emerge (similar to craft breweries)
- Community Gardens – cannabis plants will be legal to grow
- Waste Disposal/Composting – concerns regarding cannabis in waste and compost

Municipalities can implement policies that can address cannabis – workplace policies, where public consumption is allowed, land use bylaws, etc.

Villneff provided booklets and pamphlets on cannabis legalization. She suggested a committee be formed to address cannabis issues in the municipality.

The Warden thanked them for the presentation and opened up the floor for questions. Councillors asked about policing and added costs that have now been downloaded onto municipalities. There still remains a number of questions and no clear answers, a number of councillors felt. Can Municipalities raise the legal age to 25? Can you smoke a joint as you walk

down the street? How does this relate to smoking by-laws? How will Victoria County's policing cost be affected?

Council felt a committee would benefit and help answer many of the questions that have and will arise. A cannabis committee that includes other players like RCMP, addictions services, mental health services, feels necessary. NSHA said they will facilitate creating this committee.

Councillors felt such a committee is essential and that there should be representation from the north and south sections of the county. NSHA contact information will be provided to the CAO with the goal of establishing such a committee.

RAISING THE VILLAGES UPDATE

Courtesy of council was extended again to Ms. Villneff as a representative of the Raising the Villages organization. She presented a framed declaration to council that highlighted that various regions on Cape Breton Island would work together to address issues related to our youngest citizens.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 28, 2018 meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as circulated.
Motion carried.**

OLD BUSINESS

- CAO has been in touch with Brian MacIsaac (Highland Manor); waiting to set a meeting.
- Plastic bag group – having a meeting June 19
- When setting a meeting for planning commission? Hoping to set one for this summer.

NEW BUSINESS

- Group of 9 looking into IT project, to develop a proposal of inter-municipal sharing of services in regards to IT

It was moved and seconded that Victoria County support an IT needs assessment or inter municipal agreement with the Group of Nine municipalities on IT needs.

Motion carried.

- The recent fire at the Inverary raised questions about our Courthouse building. Council asked about operations if something catastrophic should happen here. Our accounting system is in a cloud and that service would not be interrupted. Our info on our own computers in the building is stored on a separate server, which unfortunately is in the building. Two students have recently been hired to conduct records management of our files and this includes digitizing all files this summer. Once digitized and stored off-site we should be fine.
- The ReUse Center – first group completed their 4 weeks. Raised \$1100 for their group. Process is still being tweaked as this is a pilot project – so far, good positive comments from public. Next two groups were chosen: Sea Cadets and Baddeck Cat Rescue. Applications are available on line or contact Jocelyn. Hours are Saturdays from 9-1.
- CBRM issued a discussion paper on the equalization gap between what they collect in payments from the federal government and what they pay back. CBRM is at 12-15%; they collect \$17 million and pay back \$19 million. The CAO calculated Victoria County numbers and we are netting -\$1.3 million, which is 20%. We are in a \$1.3 million short fall.
 - 2016-2017 – Victoria County received \$1.8 million and paid out \$2.4 million in federal payments.
 - 2017-2018 – Victoria County received \$1.4 million and paid out \$2.5 million in federal payments.
 - 2018-2019 we are projecting to receive \$1.2 million and will pay out \$2.6 million

Discussion took place regarding other municipalities' numbers, specifically HRM. CAO will look into getting them.

It was moved and seconded that Victoria County respond to CBRM and agree that equalization should be part of the next One Cape Breton meeting.

Motion Carried

TAXATION UPDATE

Currently - \$1.179 million is outstanding; \$583,000 is current, \$595,000 is in arrears. This time last year, \$1.362 was outstanding. Year over year we are down \$183,000. The Tax office has collected \$27,000 since last council session. Megan Cooper returned to her position in the Tax Office today following her maternity leave and so now Cathi is focusing solely on Tax Collection. Tax bills will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Notice Of Motions

FCM have developed a package to help rural and small post offices to offer more services. Councillor Patterson would like to bring the package to Council to discuss in the future.

Bylaw Review – none

Correspondence – done.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5 Age Friendly Committee was successful in getting a grant for a senior safety position. Details to be worked out.

District #6 Councillor Dauphinee requested \$1000 from his district budget be provided to Ski Cape Smokey for their operations. It was a tough year for them last year with lack of snow.

It was moved and seconded that \$1000 from the District #6 budget be given to Ski Cape Smokey for operations.

At the recent FCM conference in Halifax, there was a national Pharmacare campaign that included a resolution that municipalities could pass to show support. Have we done this already? Staff will investigate.

There was a discussion on Strait Area Transit and whether there had been any new updates.

It was moved and seconded that council request an update on operations concerning Victoria County.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Dauphinee asked when Community Grant recipients would receive their cheques. CAO said they had been mailed earlier that day.

District #7 Wayne Budge requested a street light for 933 New Haven Road.

It was moved and seconded that a street light be installed at 933 New Haven Road.

Motion carried.

District #8 Councillor MacDonald requested that the street light at 29860 Cabot Trail be moved to 396 Capstick Road.

It was moved and seconded that the Street light at 29860 Cabot Trail be moved to 396 Capstick Road.

Motion carried.

District #4 Councillor MacInnis asked of a letter of support for the St. Ann's Time Bank. It was written and mailed earlier today.

District #2 Councillor MacLeod mentioned the Irving Meeting last week. Upgrades are coming and the meeting was a success. There were 50 people in attendance.

Councillor MacLeod asked that after events of Thursday (Inverary fire) can the municipality provide money to the five fire departments that assisted putting the fire out, to cover their expenses in coming to Baddeck.

There was discussion that some insurance outfits have a clause that will reimburse fire department costs for fighting a fire on your property (everyone should check their policy).

Discussion followed.

It was moved and seconded that Council send their thanks and a cheque for \$1000 to each of the fire departments that attended the recent fire at the Inverary Inn.

Motion carried.

District #1 Councillor Paul MacNeil requested that a letter be sent to Darren Blundon of TIR regarding patching required along on Route 223, there are some hole that require immediate attention. Also tree cutting along the roadside is required.

Councillor MacNeil also wanted it noted that the shoulder of the road by the Post Office in Iona had given away and he called TIR to see if it could be addressed before World Oceans Day on June 10. He noted it was fixed before that busy day in Iona and is thankful for the quick response to his request.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to TIR with the above information.

Motion carried.

World Oceans Day in Iona was a success. Lots of people attended. Councillor MacNeil expressed thanks to the Communication Officer who attended and provided reusable shopping bags to the attendees.

District #3 Councillor Morrison mentioned the recent Open House hosted by Districts 2 and 3 which was attended by representatives from TIR and Irving. There has been excellent feedback from those who attended. One recommendation that came from the public was that everyone should write a letter to the minister requesting a lowered speed limit along that stretch of road. As such, council should send another letter, informing the minister of the meeting and requesting the same.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to the minister of Transportation informing him that Victoria County hosted a meeting regarding the public safety issue on the Trans Canada 105 near exit 8 at the Irving station and the message from those attending was that, while all the changes are appreciated, it is a reduction in the speed limit that will have the biggest effect at this location. This is something council has repeated requested over the past 15 years, through successive governments and ministers.

Motion carried.

Councillor Morrison thanked Councillor MacLeod and MacInnis for hosting duties when the folks from Vietnam visited. The contingent visited many areas of the island including the Keltic Lodge, took part in a milling frolic at the Gaelic College, CBU hosted a reception for them, visited Glenora Distillery and went golfing in Inverness County. At Little River, Councillor MacInnis provided them with lesson in lobster which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

They also attended the Open House, where municipal government hosted a private company and a provincial government department to discuss an issue of public safety and felt they saw democracy in action.

He requested that letters be sent to CBU and the Cape Breton Partnership for their efforts in bringing the Vietnamese contingent to Cape Breton.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to CBU, the Cape Breton Partnership and Carla Arsenault of the Cape Breton Partnership recognizing their work in this effort and congratulating them on a job well done.

Motion carried.

Councillor Morrison said since our last meeting we lost one of our signature resorts and iconic buildings in town due to fire. The Inverary Inn Resort has a national and international reputation in the tourist industry. The loss of the main lodge has affected many this community. We recognize the loss to the MacAulay Family and their staff and we are pleased to see them rebounding and are up and operating despite this devastating fire.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Victoria County Municipal council will take place on **Tuesday July 3, 2018** at 5 pm at the Baddeck Courthouse. The summer meetings of the Municipal Council will take place on **Tuesday July 24** in Cape North (location TBD) and **August 13** in Indian Brook at a time to be determined.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:20 pm.

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden