

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

January 21, 2019

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 21, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

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

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recorder

Absent was:

District #4 – Merrill MacInnis (Out of Province)

CALL TO ORDER

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.

PARKS CANADA PRESENTATION

Deputy Warden Dauphinee declared a conflict of interest as he is employed by Parks Canada. He left the meeting at this time.

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Robert Howey, Resource Conservation Manager, Cape Breton Highlands National Park (CBHNP).

Mr. Howey introduced other Parks Canada staff in attendance, including:

Eric LeBel, Superintendent, CBHNP

Maria O'Hearn, Manager of External Relations, CPHNP

Darlene Doucet, CBHNP

Mr. Howey then provided a presentation on the Boreal Forest Project conducted in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park (copy attached).

A healthy boreal forest is home to many plants and animals like moose, bears, snowshoe hares, birds, coyotes, lynx and the American Martin. These animals all depend on the forest for survival. The *Bring Back the Boreal* project is trying to restore the health of the forest by planting trees and preventing the hyper-abundance of moose from eating them, especially the young trees that are trying to grow and provide food and shelter to the animals that depend on the forest for survival.

The four year project (2015-2018) is in collaboration with the Unima'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR). They are testing different techniques to find the most effective approach to restoring the forest. These include tree planting and fencing along a section of the Skyline trail to prevent moose from eating young trees and the removal of moose from a 20 km² (2% of the Park) area on North Mountain. To date there have been 2700 volunteers who have provided 2500 hours planting 57000 trees.

The moose population reduction was outlined. The Mi'kmaq harvest is within the same 20 km² area on North Mountain. The CBHNP and the UINR are collaborating on this project as they both share a common interest in restoring the health of the boreal forest for future generations.

The 2018 harvest was scheduled from November 7 to December 2, 2018. There were 12 Unima'ki volunteers and 3 Mi'kmaq coordinators on site and the CBHNP were there for harvest support. The hunt occurred over 5 days and the last harvest date, due to weather, was November 25, 2018. Fifteen moose were harvested.

A post-harvest survey was completed and Mr. Howey outlined the findings. The 4 year project is now complete and the next step will be to do a closeout report to review and analyze the data. More information will be obtained from the public and stakeholders to come up with a long-term sustainable approach to forest restoration.

The total number of moose harvested over the four years of the project was 138. He outlined how the harvest was conducted. Helicopters were used, but there was no shooting from the helicopter. The helicopter dropped the harvesters off, from where they would remain on foot for the rest of the hunt. On some occasions the helicopter was used to sling the moose out of the area. The CBHNP are committed to restoring the boreal forest in this area.

Councillor Budge mentioned the moose cull done 20 years ago and the upset it caused in the different communities in the northern area of the County.

Councillor Budge also made mention of the barbless fishing in the Park. He has heard that people have been charged for having flies in their bags, even though they are not using them for fishing. He feels it shouldn't be a violation if they are not being used. He would like to know if this is accurate.

Mr. Howey indicated he would check with the Park's Law Enforcement with regard to this matter.

Councillor Patterson questioned the percentage of the total moose population, the 138 culled would be. Mr. Howey indicated it is less than 10%. The bull to cow ratio was 2-1.

How far a moose could travel was questioned and Mr. Howey indicated that moose migrate to where they can find food. They are now seen in other areas of the County where they weren't before.

The Province has a moose hunt conducted annually. Hunters submit their names and a draw is done for the successful hunters.

The CBHNP is regulated federally and there is an arrangement in principle with the Mi'kmaq for the issue of hyper-abundant wildlife management.

The RCMP's involvement in the moose cull was questioned. The Municipality pays the costs associated with the RCMP.

Mr. Howey indicated that he could see the Municipality's frustration, but their involvement in the moose cull has been scaled back. They do maintain regular patrols during the hunt. The Municipality indicated that such RCMP costs should not be borne by the County.

Councillor MacDonald questioned whether there was a public consultation prior to the 2015 hunt. He was advised that meetings were held with specific people. If there is a Phase 2 of the project, it is hoped that public consultations will be held to inform the residents so they can be more knowledgeable in the future.

Eric LeBel, CBHNP Superintendent, outlined the education to the public on the boreal and the controlled burns. These burns are used to predict how fires can reach the next area and estimate how fast they can spread.

The snow removal on North Mountain this year was discussed. This has been a tough winter which started early and they are trying their best to build their capacity.

Warden Morrison indicated that there is a surplus trail groomer owned by the Park which has been taken out of commission. The Municipality is requesting that the groomer be transferred over to the County. A couple of organizations within the County are interested in obtaining this groomer.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the Parks Canada delegation for their excellent report.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

RETURNED TO MEETING

Deputy Warden Dauphinee re-entered the meeting at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 7, 2019

The minutes of the January 7, 2019, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of January 7, 2019, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

STRAIT AREA TRANSIT

The status of Strait Area Transit's (SAT) application for Victoria County was questioned. The application has been submitted and a meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2019 with Jessie MacDonald, SAT.

Warden Morrison indicated that he just received a letter from John Dowling, Chair of SAT, to Minister Leo Glavine,

It was moved and seconded that Victoria County Municipal Council support Strait Area Transit's letter to Minister Leo Glavine concerning funding to provide services to Victoria County and also contact the Minister on the status of the funding applications submitted for extending the services to Victoria County. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison indicated that a note should be sent to John Dowling, Chairman of SAT, for their support.

COUNCIL STIPENDS

Warden Morrison indicated that as Victoria County Municipal Council has made a decision on the Council stipends, a motion is now required to reinstate the motion that Council increases be tied to Union negotiations.

It was moved and seconded that future Council stipend increases be tied to the increases received during CUPE Union negotiations. Motion carried.

The NSFAM is presently asking municipalities what they did in regard to the Council stipend. The CAO will advise of Victoria County's decision. The province-wide results will be compiled by NSFAM.

It was felt that in future, the direction for Council stipend raises should come down from the Province.

PROVINCIAL GRANTS

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the MLA's assistant contacted him with regard to the lack of provincial grants received the last two years in Victoria County.

It was moved and seconded that the list of organizations that applied for provincial grant funding from Victoria County and those that received funding be brought to the floor of the Legislature by our MLA, Keith Bain. Motion carried.

CAO REPORT

The CAO indicated that Tom Wilson agreed that funding can be available for the Bay St. Lawrence outdoor rink.

Contact was made with Debbie Nielsen, NSFAM, regarding the Re-Use Centre. Applications for the Carbon Surcharge Fund don't come out until August of this year. This will be kept on the radar.

The rejection numbers for solid waste collection are decreasing. The past two weeks the numbers were 11 and 9 respectively.

A motion is required to approve the submission under the ICIP for the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Water Treatment Filtration upgrade and the Little Narrows Backup Well Development Project.

It was moved and seconded that Victoria County Municipal Council support in principle the investment in the Canada Infrastructure (ICIP) application for funding for the Neil's Harbour Water Treatment Plant upgrade and the Little Narrows Backup Well Development project. Motion carried.

An infrastructure priority list will be identified in the next round of budget talks.

A letter was received from CEPI for funding from the 2019/20 budget in the amount of \$5,000.00.

It was moved and seconded that the CEPI funding request be referred to budget talks. Motion carried.

The lease for Smokey Recreation Society is up for renewal. A motion is required to lease the property for less than fair market value, under the *Municipal Government Act, Section 51(1)* and that the leased space is not to be used by a business or profit-making enterprise.

It was moved and seconded to lease the property to the Smokey Recreation Society for less than fair market value and that the leased space not be used by business or profit-making enterprises. Motion carried.

The CAO outlined the meetings she has attended since the last Council meeting.

TAXATION UPDATE

The CAO reported that the current taxes owing is down \$4,184.00 and arrears are down \$117,000.00 from the same period last year.

Collections are going in the right direction and will continue.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he spoke with the Manager of Little Narrows Gypsum about zoning and he is willing to meet to discuss this issue.

Meetings will be taking place this week with the Central Cape Breton Community Ventures and members of the CB Partnership about the Iona Port Project.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod presented correspondence from CBRM regarding the health care crisis in Cape Breton and their resolution opposing the closures of the New Waterford Consolidated Hospital and the Northside General Hospital.

It was moved and seconded to support CBRM's resolution in opposition to the closure of the New Waterford Consolidated and Northside General Hospitals. Motion carried.

District #8

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, with a copy to Keith Bain, MLA, indicating that as there is nothing in TIR's 5 –Year plan regarding the paving of a section of the Cabot Trail from of Effie's Brook, the Municipality would like to inquire on the status of this project. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that a street light installation order be approved for 28862 Cabot Trail, Cape North. Motion carried.

District #7

It was moved and seconded that \$1,000.00 be approved for St. John's Church Anglican Church Hall, Ingonish; St. Andrew's Anglican Church Hall, Neil's Harbour; and St. Francis of Assisi Church Hall, Smelt Brook, from the District #7 budget. Motion carried.

DISTRICT #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the issue of the condition of Roper's Bridge in Ingonish.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Department of TIR questioning on their plans for Roper's Bridge in Ingonish. Motion carried.

Correspondence was received regarding the Ingonish Barrier Beach from the Department of Lands and Forestry. Deputy Warden Dauphinee will respond to this correspondence tomorrow.

District #5

Councillor Patterson advised that three individuals were interviewed for the Senior Safety Officer position today and further information will be available early next week.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister, Deputy Minister, District Manager and Area Manager, of the Department of TIR expressing concern that the Kempt Head Road is not included in their 5-Year Plan and as it is part of the Bras d'Or Lake Scenic Drive, questioning on their plans for this road. Motion carried.

District #3

Warden Morrison advised that an "Open House" on the multi-use overpass will be held on February 28, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. Various officials will be in attendance and this will be a good venue for asking any questions or outlining any concerns there may be.

The overpass abutments are being installed this week and the bridge will be put in place the end of February, 2019.

Gordon McIntosh, LGL Institute, will be in the area on February 17 and 18, 2019, to conduct planning sessions with Council and senior staff.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis sent in a district concern with regard to Victoria County joining HRM on their ban of plastics bags.

It was moved and seconded that Victoria County support the leadership of HRM regarding banning the use of plastic bags, but it is felt that the leadership on this ban should come from the province, as it is a provincial issue. Motion carried.

FCM

Councillors attending this year's FCM Conference in Quebec City are to set up their profiles so registration can be completed.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next meetings of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held at the Court House, Baddeck, on February 4 and February 25, 2019.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, CAO