

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held via Zoom on April 25, 2023, at 2:00pm with Deputy Warden Dauphinee in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1- Paul MacNeil

District #2- Perla MacLeod

District #5- Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden

District #7- Jackie Organ

District #8- Norman MacDonald

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Allan Bragg, Manager of Finance

Dan Coffin, Tourism and Recreation Manager

Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications and Marketing Coordinator

ABSENT

District #3- Bruce Morrison, Warden

District #4- Barbara Longva

Deputy Warden Dauphinee welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting is being held in Unama'ki, one of seven traditional districts of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw People.

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Warden Dauphinee called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. Councillor Patterson added FCM Board of Directors Motion to be made.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil seconded by Councillor MacDonald that the Agenda for April 25, 2023, be approved with the addition.

Motion Carried.

ECOLOGY ACTION CENTRE PRESENTATION – WILL BALSER AND KORTNEY DUNSBY

Who is EAC?



- Founded in 1971
- Community, Advocacy and Action
- Over 45 staff across 7 action teams
- 4,500 members and 250+ volunteers
- Funding of over \$3 million from over 40 funding agencies
- Strong reputation, profile and community reach

EAC's Vision, Mission & Values

Vision

A just and vibrant world of respect, belonging and ecological resilience.

Mission

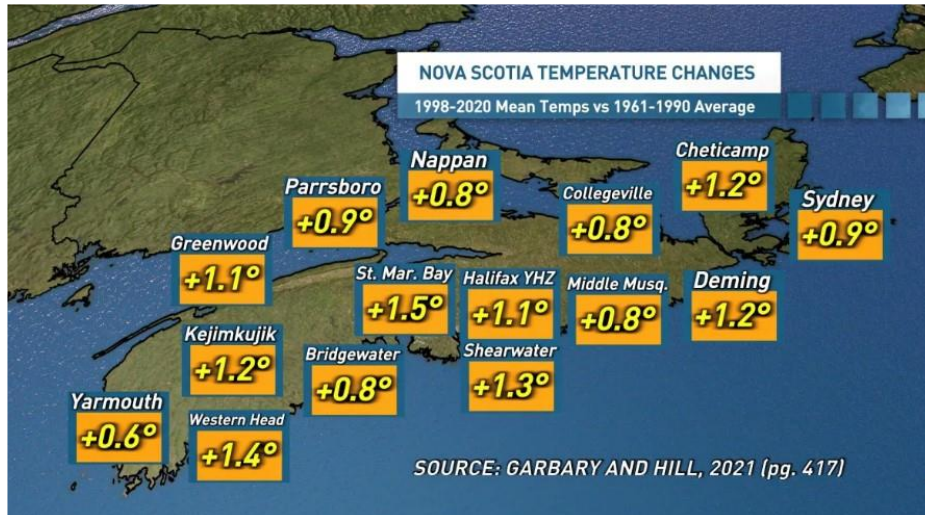
The Ecology Action Centre acts as watchdog, convener, mobilizer and incubator. We engage community to create systemic change in the face of urgent, complex environmental issues.

Values

We are creative, resilient, fierce and caring. We value relationships. We act with integrity.

What We Work On





[CBC News, 2021](#)

Why Take Action on Climate

For People and Planet

- Climate change has impacts on communities, ecosystems, and economies
- Sea level rise, coastal erosion, extreme weather events, flooding, heat waves & drought, and more
- Climate action is an investment, spending now will save money in the future



Mitigation vs. Adaptation



Recommendations for Victoria County

Actions

- Consider creating a local Climate Action Plan or ensure your Municipal Planning Strategy includes:
 - Clear, actionable measures to address the climate crisis
 - An appropriate level of funding for commitments
 - Accountability mechanisms

Lobbying

- Ask the Nova Scotia government for uniform Coastal Protection Act regulations for all municipalities

Recommendations for Victoria County

Coastal Development Policy

- Horizontal Watercourse and Shoreline Buffers
- Minimum Building Elevations
- Sensitive Ecosystem Buffers
- Region specific regulations
- Encourage Nature-Based Solutions

Thank you!

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QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

There were comments and questions about the presentation, some of those questions/comments made were:

Councillor MacDonald asked what more could the municipality do to push the Coastal Protection Act through, and Mr. Balsler said to keep contacting the province and work with NGOs like the Ecology Action Centre to push this Act through.

Councillor MacNeil added that with smaller municipalities, we need to get the people to administer the policies in the Act, we are all for the Act but smaller municipalities can't regulate this Act on our own. Mr. Balsler said he agrees and has brought these concerns forward in his recommendations.

Deputy Warden also agreed with Councilor MacNeil and added that the Act only includes rural areas not urban, and asked why that is and Mr. Balsler said he is aware of this and is unsure why.

DESTINATION CAPE BRETON PRESENTATION – TERRY SMITH

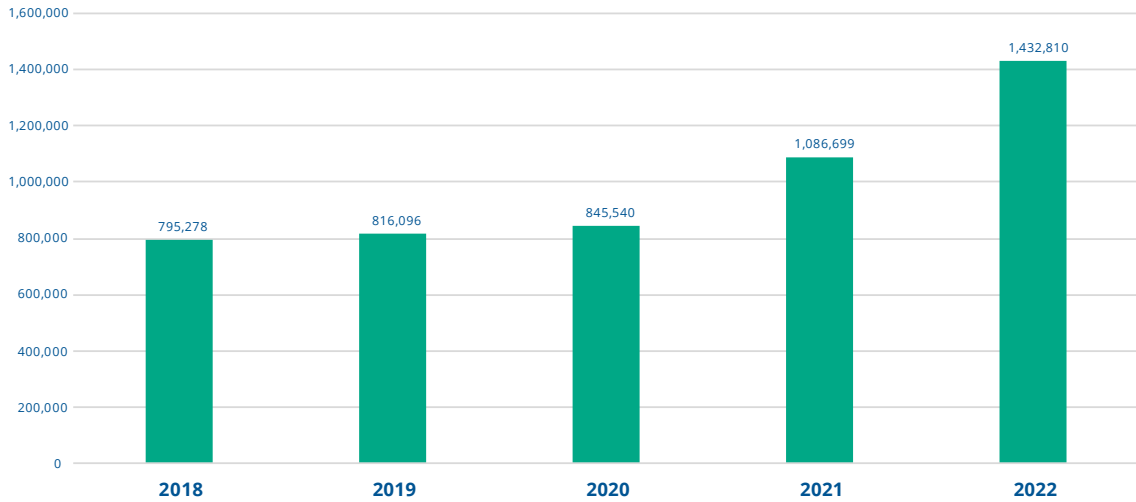
The following presentation was given:



Marketing Levy Update

- Legislature passed new amendments to establish new rules for levies in November 2022
- New By-law drafted and provided to each municipality – to be passed on or before November 9, 2023
- Recommended 3% rate applying to all fixed - roof accommodations to come into effect January 1, 2024

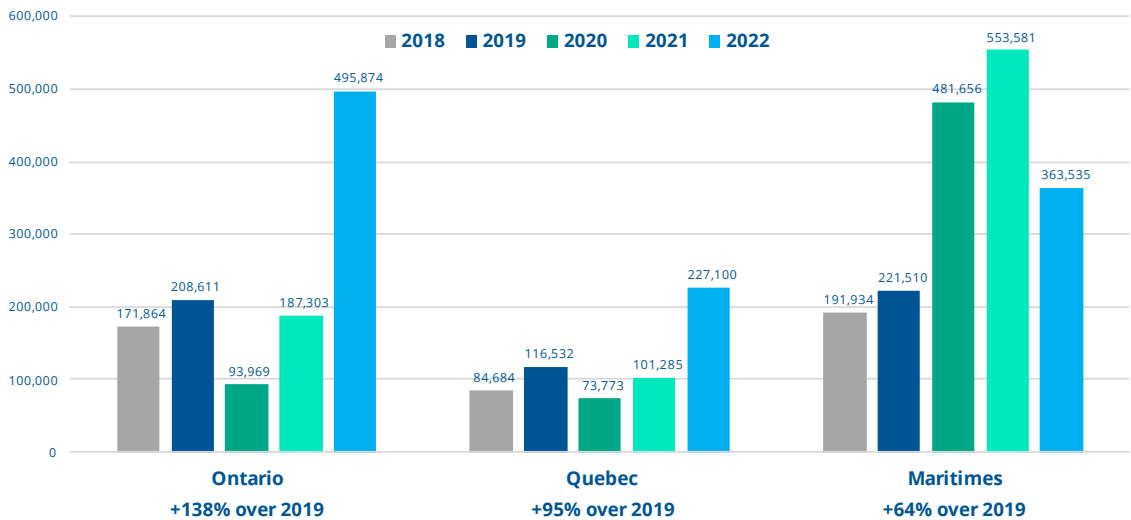
visitcapebreton.com Sessions
2018-22



Source: Google Analytics

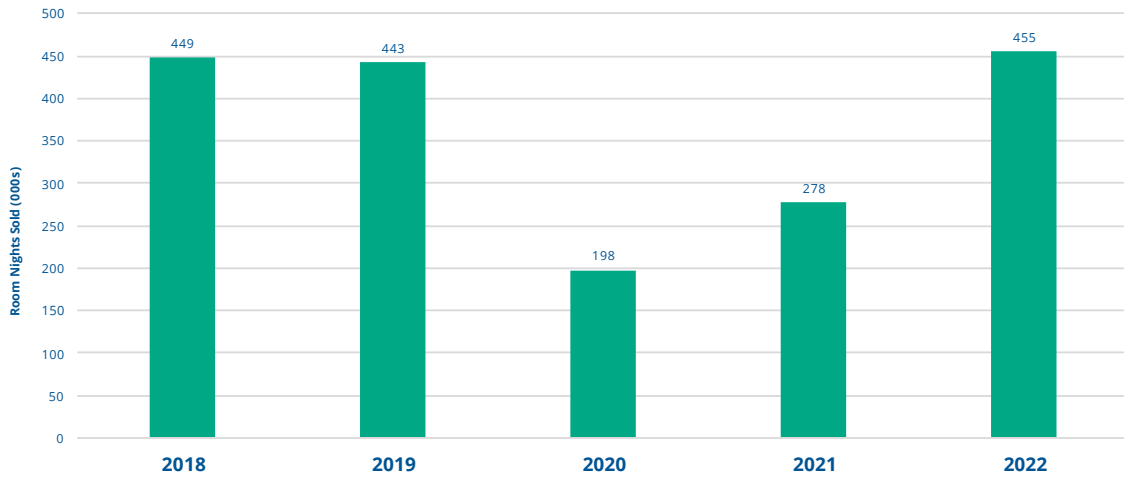
- Sessions in 2022 were up 32% and reached a record 1.43 million

visitcapebreton.com Sessions by Market
2018-22



Source: Google Analytics

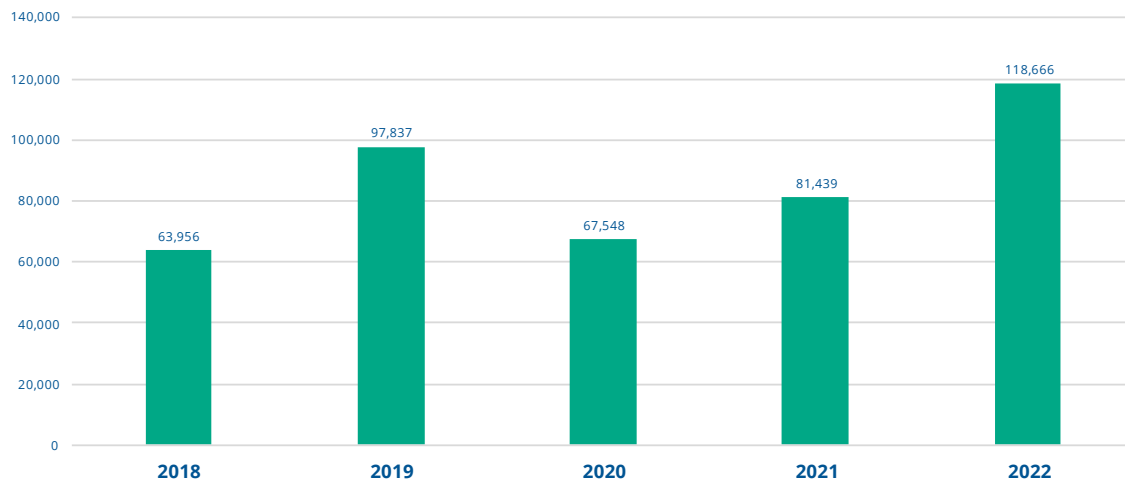
Registered Room Nights Sold 2018-22



Source: Nova Scotia Tourism Indicators

- Room nights sold were up 5% over 2019

Short-term Rental Unit Nights Sold (Airbnb, VRBO) 2018-22



Source: AIRDNA

- STR unit nights sold were up 21% over 2019



Tourism Forecast

- Economic growth projected to be 0.7% in Canada and 0.9% in the US in 2023
- *TD Economics*
- While inflation and geo-political issues will hinder the speed of recovery, a resilience in travel will lead to full tourism spending recovery in Canada by 2024
- *Destination Canada's Fall 2022 Tourism Outlook Report*



Goals

- Enhance the brand of Cape Breton Island
- Optimize domestic visitation for the greatest possible impact in all periods of the year
- Work with partners to mitigate supply side constraints
- Make strides to become a sustainable and inclusive destination



📍 Cape Breton Highlands

Research

Psychographic

Authentic
Experiencers
+
Cultural Explorers

Demographic

Empty nesters
Travel as couples
45+ and young
adults
Female planners

Geographic

Ontario
Maritimes
Quebec
Western Canada



📍 Flying Kite Artisan Shop, Baddeck

Research Highlight

- Collaborate with CBU on Cape Breton Island specific research



Product Innovation Highlights

- Support Mi'kmaw partners in their continued development
- Elevate the overall experience to meet the expectations of the target audience
- Continue to grow winter and shoulder seasons
- Develop niche markets with growth potential

The Path to Purchase

DREAMING	PLANNING	BOOKING	EXPERIENCING
Digital Marketing* Display Video Social	Digital Marketing* Category search Re-marketing Social Email	Digital Marketing* Branded search Re-marketing Social	Digital Marketing App
Content (Hero) Hero video Influencers Travel media	Content (Hub) Locals Know blogs Experience videos List-style content Local ambassadors	Content (Help) FAQ blogs Itineraries Packages Operator listings	Content User-generated (UGC) Reviews
Collateral Material Digital Lure Piece	Collateral Material Digital Lure Piece Seasonal Guides	Collateral Material Seasonal Guides	Collateral Material Map
TV Regional	Specialty Print Motorcycle Guide Sno Trails (SANS Guide)	Travel Trade	
Artist Ambassadors	Travel Trade		

* Digital marketing is largely conducted in partnership with Tourism Nova Scotia through their Digital Marketing Content Program.



Marketing Highlights

- Continue strong digital marketing program with a focus on increasing engagement
- Leverage technology for increased effectiveness
- Reduce investment in printed materials
- Enhance our brand identity



Events Highlights

1. Evolve Events Cape Breton program to focus of attraction, creation and innovation of events
2. Continue community festivals and events program
3. Position the Island as a premier small meetings (500 people or less) and corporate retreats destination



Destination Development

2030 Vision:

Cape Breton Island is a four-season, sustainable and smart tourism destination that provides positive benefits and wealth creation opportunities for residents, tourism operators, stakeholder organizations and ancillary businesses, the public sector and visitors. Through nurturing and celebrating cultural expression, authentic experiences, culinary offerings, events and the abundance of natural beauty and outdoor adventure opportunities, the Island's position as the #1 Island in North America is continually fortified. Education and training, research and innovation support the development of dynamic tourism clusters that support and leverage our tourism industry's growth.



Destination Development Highlights

1. Work with partners to address the labour shortage
2. Develop a sustainable tourism plan for Cape Breton Island
3. Enhance the position of Cape Breton Island as a marine tourism destination

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

There were comments and questions about the presentation, some of those questions/comments made were:

Councillor MacNeil asked about the cruise ships and asked if the industry has returned and Mr. Smith yes, and this year looks like it will be a record number of cruise ships.

Councillor MacNeil also asked if there was more signage and marketing to get more visitors to the middle of the Island and not just visit the Cabot Trail. Mr. Smith said the Trail is the hook and we use that to get more traffic to the website where we then highlight all the other tourist areas on the Island. Mr. Smith also praised the new addition to the Highland Village and how important it is for tourists.

Councillor Patterson mentioned the number of website visits and asked if there was a way that Destination Cape Breton can message those people to follow-up and Mr. Smith said it works as re-marketing because then Cape Breton will continue to appear on other websites and social media they visit.

Councillor Organ asked if the stats are broken down by County and asked if campgrounds are included and Mr. Smith said he doesn't have a County breakdown but will try to get one and said campgrounds are not included.

Councillor MacDonald asked if Destination Cape Breton has any partnership with Build Nova Scotia (formerly Develop) in particular when it comes to cell service and Mr. Smith said they have a member on the board from Build Nova Scotia, but Destination Cape Breton typically works with Build on a project basis, like the Seawall Trail and not necessarily with cell and internet services but Council should continue to advocate for better services.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee thanked Mr. Smith for Destination Cape Breton's work with the Keltic Lodge and mentioned that the marketing was a little late and requested marketing be done a little earlier next year.

Mr. Smith acknowledged the work of our Tourism Department and what Mr. Coffin and Ms. Whalen Smith have done.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the March 20, 2023, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was presented for approval.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacDonald that the Victoria County Municipal Council Minutes of March 20, 2023, be approved.

Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION

- Municipal Fee Policy, there are no new fees, there is just not a policy in place for these fees.

Councillor Patterson confirmed that the policy is just consolidating all the existing fees and CAO said correct but there is an increase request for tipping fees and interest rate on property tax, currently it is 10%, it is recommended it go to 18%, keeping in line with other municipalities across the province.

Councillor Patterson agreed 100% with the higher interest rate on the property tax and wanted to confirm that there are no other new fees, the Policy is just to have all the fees in one place and CAO confirmed.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacDonald that Victoria County Council approve the Municipal Fee Policy.

Motion Carried.

- Fish plant tipping fee increase. The County is not charging enough for what it is costing the County to process the fish offal.

Deputy Warden requested to see what other municipalities are charging and CAO said there aren't many doing it but will come back with some numbers.

- Village of Baddeck request for Gas Tax release. The Village is putting in new smart meters for the water utility and are requesting \$450,000 be taken from their gas tax funds in which the County holds on to for them for approved capital work.

CAO said that Victoria County does have that money in a reserve for the Village of Baddeck. Deputy Warden Dauphinee wanted to confirm that the Village's smart meter project meets the criteria to use that funding and CAO said it does.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacDonald that given the importance of smart meters in the Village of Baddeck, I move that the Village Commissioners of Baddeck get approval to withdraw \$450,000 from the Canada Building Community Fund, formerly Gas Tax Fund, to be used to provide smart meter upgrades in the Village of Baddeck.

Motion Carried.

- Mawio'mi Friendship Gala Sponsorship request.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to sponsor the Mawio'mi Friendship Gala for \$2,500.00.

Motion Carried.

RECESS

Deputy Warden Dauphinee called for a 15-minute recess 3:15pm.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT 1

- Spring Grading will have to be done on all gravel/dirt roads.
- Culvert in South Cove has to be replaced.
- Some patching was done on Routh 223. Washabuck roads in dire need of work.
- Have been in contact with Steve MacDonald about all these issues.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacNeil that \$1000.00 be taken from District 1 budget for NS Highland Village to go towards sponsoring a youth music and Gaelic camp.

Motion Carried.

- Was in contact with BuildNS about the delay in FibreOp in the Washabuck area.

DISTRICT 2

- No district concerns to report at this time.

DISTRICT 3

Deputy Warden Dauphinee read the following motion on behalf of Warden Morrison:

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil that a letter be sent to the Minister of Public Works and the Deputy Minister, requesting areas of Victoria County be designated as approved locations under the Road Trails Act, Bill 273. Allowing access for limited motorized vehicles, as noted in the Act, to Provincial roadways. Presently, requests have been received for the needs of Ingonish and Baddeck with the option to add additional areas.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 5

- Looking into Fibre Op that appears to be happening on the north side of Boularderie Island.
- Picking a date and format for a Newcomers Night in District 5.

DISTRICT 6

- Getting lots of calls with provincial road concerns, in particular road shoulders around Ingonish, was told by Steve MacDonald that shoulders will be looked into in the near future.
- Request again to NS Power for replacement and repairs to the lights on top of Smokey that have been out since Fiona.

DISTRICT 7

- Contacted Provincial Department of Public works for a blocked culvert and the “No Parking” sign in White Point again.
- The streetlight for White Point has been put in place.
- Contacted the Municipal Water Utility on looking into some damage done to private land when repairs were being done to the water plant in New Haven. They are looking into this complaint.

On Motion of Councillor Organ, seconded by Councillor MacDonald that Victoria County provide funds for Highland Manor staff to travel to Prince Edward Island to review a new 24 bed manor recently constructed, similar to the proposed new Highland Manor. This will enable staff to be better prepared to make requests in the development of the new manor in Neils Harbour. Maximum funds allowed will be \$2,500.00 (plus hst).

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 8

- Calls from residents of Shore Road regarding the blocking of South Harbor channel, water levels have reached a high this peak season without proper drainage from channel to ocean. I contacted Morley MacNeil with these concerns. The channel has been a continuous concern from numerous years, and it needs attention/ solution. A meeting is proposed to take place with the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR), representatives from the Department of Environment and Victoria County sometime in April. The meeting is proposed to change the water exit from South Harbor channel.

On Motion of Councillor MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Organ that a letter be sent to the Provincial Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables and the Federal Department of Natural Resources requesting a public meeting with Victoria County representatives, residents of Shore Road and South Harbour to address these yearly concerns and propose a new exit to prevent future blockages.

Motion Carried.

- Received a few calls from residents regarding the federal funding assistance with Hurricane Fiona. All applications were filed with regard to monetary assistance that many received and many that did not receive correspondence, or any monetary assistance from damages that occurred. Councillor MacDonald has been in touch with MP Batiste's office regarding this matter.
- Councillor MacDonald has also been in contact with the supervisor for the provincial Department of Public Works with all road concerns.

MOTIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

CAO MacEachen explained that Ross MacDonald with Municipal Affairs said Victoria County Council has to do one more step with the transfer of ownership with the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department. Now that the public meeting regarding this has been had, Council now needs to make another motion to finish off this process of transferring the land.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacDonald to acknowledge that a public meeting was held November 21st, 2022, in accordance to section 446A of the Municipal Government Act hosted by the Village of Baddeck, to discuss the transfer of land co-owned by the Village of Baddeck and Municipality of Victoria County, to the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department (BVFD).

That given the feedback from the public meeting was supportive of the transfer as described was positive, and that the BVFD is a registered non-profit and is conducting activity that is considered beneficial to the Village.

Be it therefore resolved;

That the Council of the Municipality of Victoria County agrees to convey the property at 520 Chebucto Street, Baddeck (PID #85019255), to the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department, at less than Fair Market Value and that the County will relinquish title to the property dependant on the following conditions:

If the Fire Department wishes to sell the property in the future, the County and the Village of Baddeck will be given first right of refusal.

Motion Carried.

*LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH
May 2023*

*WHEREAS Lyme disease is a serious illness caused by the bite of a black-legged tick infected with the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*: and*

WHEREAS black-legged ticks carrying a variety of diseases or illnesses can now be found in all parts of Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS awareness, education and practicing preventative measures, such as daily tick checks and proper tick removal, can help reduce your chances of contracting tick borne diseases;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Deputy Warden Dauphinee, on behalf of the Municipality of the County of Victoria, do hereby proclaim May 2023 as “Lyme Disease Awareness Month”.

Dated at Nova Scotia, this 25th day of April 2023.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Organ to accept that May 2023 is Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Victoria County.

Motion Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Received a letter from Provincial Department Economic Development related to healthy discussions regarding RENS, and the Provincial Department Economic Development would be in touch regarding go-forwards.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillor Patterson presented the following Resolution for Council approval and Deputy Warden asked Councillor Patterson the cost of this and Councillor Patterson said maybe \$5,000-\$6,000 and asked CAO to confirm and CAO MacEachen said it is about \$10,000.

Deputy Warden asked Councillor Patterson if being on the Board of Director versus on the committees, would there be more or less meetings and travel and Councillor Patterson responded that he thinks there may be one more meeting and added that not all meetings are live, they also have Zoom meetings.

Deputy Warden recommended that if Zoom meetings are available for some then proceed with Zoom rather than traveling and when traveling, the Travel Policy still has to be adhered to, and permission has to be given when requesting to travel.

*FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES –
ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) represents the interests of member municipalities on policy and program matters that fall within federal jurisdiction;

WHEREAS FCM's Board of Directors is comprised of elected municipal officials from all regions and sizes of communities to form a broad base of support and provide FCM with the united voice required to carry the municipal message to the federal government; and

WHEREAS FCM's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in conjunction with the Annual Conference and Trade Show, May 25 to 28, 2023, followed by the election of FCM's Board of Directors;

BE IT RESOLVED that Council of the **County of Victoria, NS** endorse Councillor Fraser Patterson to stand for election on FCM's Board of Directors for the period starting in May 2023 and ending **in June 2024**; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council assumes all costs associated with **Councillor Fraser Patterson** attending FCM's Board of Directors meetings, based on Warden or CAO approval as it relates to the Travel Policy. Attending virtual meetings are preferable and recommended if presented as an option.

The above resolution was approved by Victoria County Council on April 25, 2023.

OTHER

- Community Garden plots. Taking applications starting this week. Random draw for the spots. New rules and regulations for them.
- Heavy Garbage starts May 8, 2023.
- On May 2, 2023, at 1pm we will be raising the Scottish Flag in honor of Scottish Heritage Month.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

Councillor Organ reminded residents of “No Mow May”.

Councillor MacNeil said there would be a major announcement coming on May 2, 2023, regarding Little Narrows Gypsum.

Councillor MacDonald reminded Council and residents that the next Committee of the Whole meeting in Cape North at the North Highlands Nordic Centre.

NEXT MEETING

May 23, 2023, at 2pm.

ADJOURN

Councillor MacNeil made a motion to adjourn.