

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on March 26, 2024, at 2:00pm with Warden Morrison in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1- Paul MacNeil

District #2- Perla MacLeod

District #3- Bruce Morrison, Warden

District #4- Barbara Longva

District #5- Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden

District #7- Jackie Organ

District #8 – Norman MacDonald

STAFF PRESENT

Alix Redden, Acting CAO

Steff MacLeod, Recorder

Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications

ABSENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

9 members of the public were present, including Ross MacDonald, Municipal Advisor for Victoria County.

Warden Morrison 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

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

On Motion of Deputy Warden seconded by Councillor Organ that the Agenda for March 26, 2024, be approved.

Motion Carried.

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESMENT PRESENTATION – AZAD HAIDER & BABATUNDE AWOYIGA

The following presentation was given:

Project Overview

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- ▶ First of its kind in Nova Scotia
- ▶ Stemmed from Key recommendation (2022) of NS Affordable Housing Commission set up in 2020
- ▶ Part of the Commission's 17 recommendations and 60 actions
- ▶ Turner Drake contracted to deliver provincial housing needs assessment & 49 Municipal Reports
- ▶ Report was released Monday, Oct 23, 2023

Context

- ▶ Needs Assessment data is a tool to support municipal decision-making.
- ▶ Estimates housing need and supply *if all conditions continue and assumptions remain valid.*
- ▶ Based on several data sources (e.g. custom Statistics Canada data extracts; Census information; PVSC data; FTB growth scenarios) that is collected at a point in time.
 - ▶ Has its limitations – period, local geographical availability
 - ▶ From secondary data sources
 - ▶ Public survey for some context
- ▶ We recognize that municipal context may change
 - ▶ E.g. future migration patterns are unpredictable and may change due to economic situations
- ▶ Engagement with municipalities will start in coming weeks to inform planned updates to housing needs assessment data
 - ▶ Will include opportunities for local level data collection

MOC Victoria Population Growth

Between 2016 and 2021 (Census)

- ▶ Pop. increased by 3%, vs provincial growth rate of 5%.
 - Strong growth among 65 to 84 -year-olds (18%)

Recent – From 2021 to 2022

- ▶ Victoria population increased by **0.9%** from 2021 to 2022 (6,745 to 6,805)
- ▶ Projected 3.0% increase between 2022 and 2027

- ▶ Nova Scotia had a population growth of **2.9%**
 - between 2021 and 2022, from 991,117 to 1,019,725.

Provincial Housing Market Change Factors

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NS

- ▶ **Population growth** of about 5% (2016 – 2021)
- ▶ **Vacancy rates** very low at 1.0 %
- ▶ **Rapid inflation is reducing individual / household purchasing power**
CPI rose 7.6% in NS (Dec. 2021 and 2022) - Faster than avg hourly wage.
- ▶ **Cost of materials and labour is reducing the viability of development**
 - Material costs rising since 2017 and construction trades projected to be at risk over the next decade
- ▶ **Pace of construction is rising, not quickly enough to offset the Population growth**



Local Housing Market Change Factors

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MOC of Victoria

- ▶ Population increase of 0.9% between 2021 and 2022,
- ▶ 5% increase in Households (2016 – 2021)
 - ▶ Between 2021 and 2022, number of households increased by 1.3% (3,115)
 - ▶ From 2022 to 2027, there will be a 4% increase in Households (3,240 households).
- ▶ Vacancy rate stayed around 7% from 2018 to 2020, a slight decrease to 6.2% in 2021.
- ▶ Permits trend (2022) higher than historical levels



Census Data – Core Housing Need

Those in Core Housing Need are

- Those that do not have alternatives.
- They are faced with unaffordability, suitability (overcrowded housing), inadequacy (housing in bad conditions)

Household Characteristic	Total Households (HH)	In Core Housing Need (CHN)	CHN as Proportion of Total HH	%Δ in Core Housing Need
	2021	2021	2021	'16-'21
Total-NS	413,315	41,470	10%	-16%
Owner	280,050	13,885	5%	-18%
Renter	133,260	27,585	21%	-15%
Total- Victoria	3,030	290	10%	9%
Owner	2,685	210	8%	5%
Renter	350	75	21%	0%



Affordability

- Victoria Census Division data - No MOC Victoria data
- In 2022, 61% of all local households earned incomes below \$81,800, the income needed to purchase a median home.

Shelter costs are rising faster than income

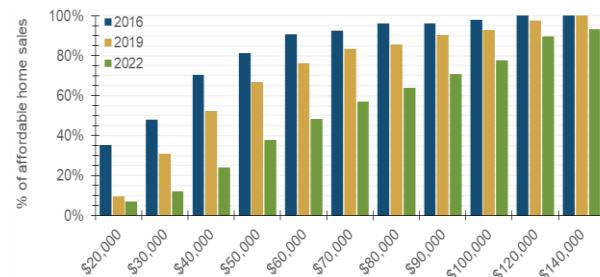
Median home sale prices are \$244,500 (a 69% increase between 2016 and 2022).

- \$70,000 income could afford 83% of homes sold in 2019.
- In 2022, this fell to 57%.

Average rent was \$605 in 2021

- About 19% of local renters earning below \$36,100 could not afford the average rental unit.

Figure 5.2: Estimated % of Households that can / cannot Afford Sale Prices, Victoria Census Division



Source: derived from Statistics Canada Custom Census 2021 Tables, Bank of Canada, NSAR MLS*

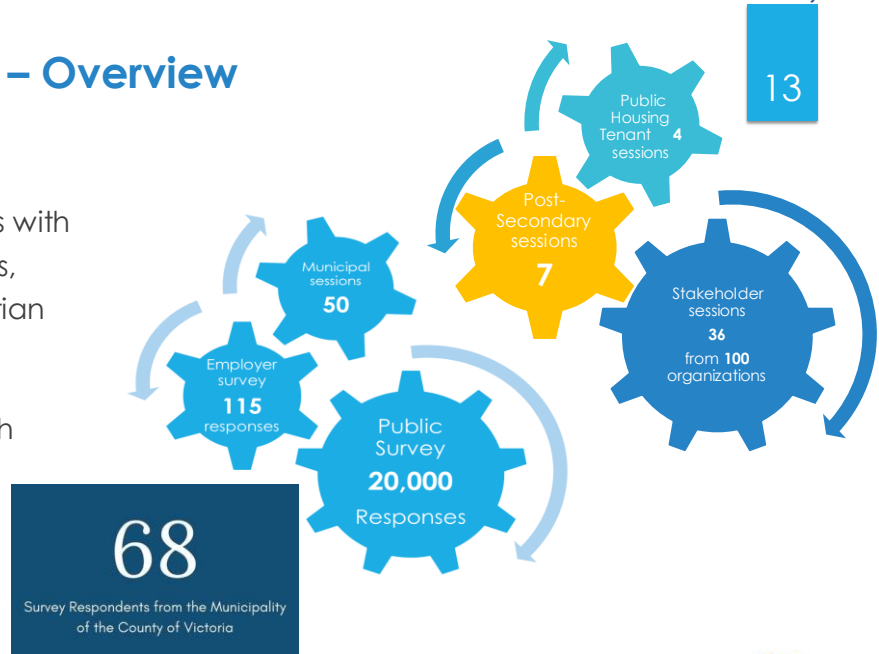


Engagement – Overview

Post-secondary questionnaire for administrators

First voice workshops with

- Indigenous groups,
- African Nova Scotian community
- Newcomers, and
- Nova Scotians with Disabilities.



Engagement Themes – What We Heard

Housing supply **shortage across the spectrum**

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Availability

- **98.5% not confident finding housing** if their situation changed
- **41% considered leaving** their community due to housing issues

Affordability

- **46% spend more than 30%** of their income on Housing
- **33% saw their rent/mortgage increase** by \$185/month in 2021

Suitability

- **74%** live in housing in **need of repairs**

Data & Indicators

Housing demand

- ▶ **Population** - Finance & Treasury Board projections (FTB)
- ▶ **Households** - Household projections produced from FTB projections
- ▶ **Dwelling totals** - Based on historical ratio btw total households and dwellings

Housing supply

The pace of construction is represented by the annual total units permitted, units started, and units completed.

- ▶ **Permits** – anticipated future housing to be built
- ▶ **Starts** – how many permits led to a shovel in the ground
- ▶ **Completions** – number of units added to the occupiable supply



Projected Demand- 2023-27

Current & Anticipated Unit Shortfall by 2027 and Additional Units Required Above Status Quo Unit Production, Demographic Model (Base Scenario) Results*

What We know

- Existing shortage of 420 units in MOC Victoria (end of 2022).
- Population growth scenario suggests there may be a demand of 505 units by 2027 and 475 units by 2032.
- If recent permitting trends continue, 45 new units could be completed annually, leaving the remaining gap of 280 units by 2027.
- If population growth is higher than projected, housing demand would be higher.

	Nova Scotia	Victoria
A: Current shortfall (end of 2022)	27,300	420
B: Total units required by 2027 (incl, current shortfall)	71,600	505
C: Estimated annual pace of construction (status quo)	6,080	45
D: Estimated total units to be build by 2027 at status quo pace (Cx5 years)	30,400	225
E: Remaining units not built based on status quo pace (B-D)	41,200	280
F: Estimated annual units needed to meet 2027 shortage (E/5 years)	8,240	55



Data Collection Plan - Municipal Level

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- For future updates we plan to engage with municipalities to obtain more detailed local information such as housing starts, completions and demolitions.

Next steps:

- ▶ Engage with municipalities to:
 - ▶ help guide discussions about what information is available and in what form before formal update process launches.
 - ▶ Understand what format for data updates would be most useful for municipalities
 - ▶ Planned information session to discuss proposed data collection template/document
 - ▶ Provide input on the data collection process.

QUESTIONS

Councillor Patterson asked about the number of households, can you find out how many people that live in each household? Tunde said that would be tricky to find, I will follow up if we can get that number.

Councillor MacDonald wanted to confirm that there were only 68 households who responded to the survey and wondered if it was a communication error as to the low turnout. And Tunde said it was open for 2 months.

Councillor MacNeil said in rural areas we have issues getting contractors, asked was that a factor looked at and Tunde said it was not, but this is a good point, and we will look into this.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said one of the main issues we have here with developers is lack of infrastructure, so maybe we can show these numbers to other levels of government to try and get infrastructure funding to encourage developers to build in our County.

Councillor MacLeod, we don't have a lot of land to build houses, we have lots of Crown land, so how do we build houses if we don't have the land?

Acting CAO Redden can you comment on Victoria County results in comparison to other municipalities of comparable size, Tunde said it is very difficult because of all the different sized municipalities, so it is hard to compare. The only thing that is consistent is the aging populations across all the municipalities in the province.

Warden Morrison in Victoria County since COVID we have had a great demand in property, so values go up and it makes it challenging for locals to afford houses. It will be interesting to see if

there will be a downward trend post COVID. With growth comes challenges. It would have been nicer if more people took part in the survey. Each district has their own unique housing challenges.

PITUPAQ PRESENTATION – RON NEWCOMBE

The following presentation was given:



Pitu'paq
is the waterway that connects the 5 Unama'ki First Nation Communities with the 5 municipalities around the lake.

PITU PAQ
flowing into oneness

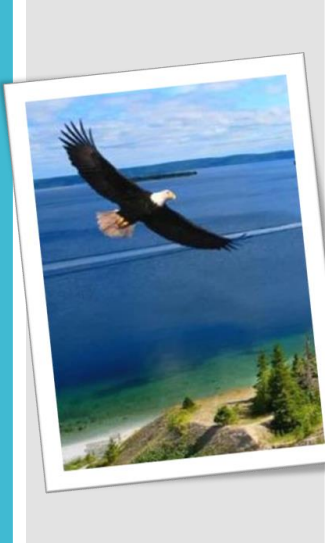
United through a common vision – Unama'ki

The Bras d'Or Lake is the largest inland saltwater Lake in the world.

The elders of Unama'ki came up with the name **Pitu'paq** which translates to "flowing into oneness" as a way that the Board of Lakes have been perceived.


Pitu'paq is a unique partnership that brings leaders from First Nation Communities and Counties in Cape Breton to the table on a monthly basis.

The shared goal is to preserve and enhance the social, economic, and environmental prospects in (Unama'ki) Cape Breton for seven generations



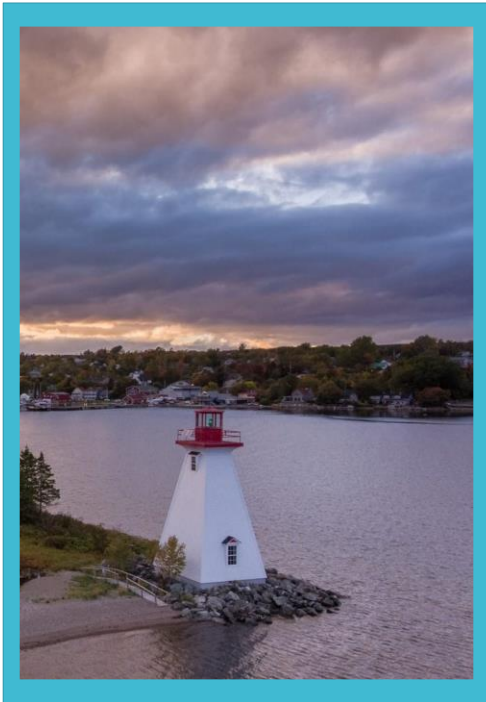
Why Pitu'paq?

Impacts of sewage from:





 overflow from treatment plants during storms

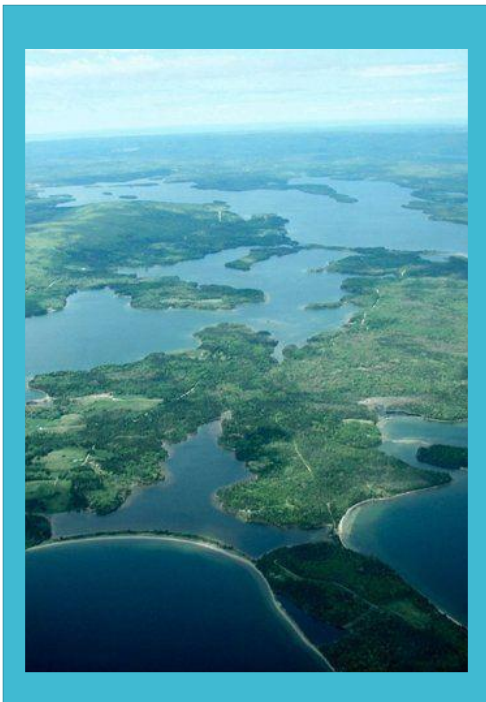
 discharge from recreational boaters

 inadequate sewage disposal from some cottages






Impacts of sewage include:

-  Oysters / other fisheries operations
-  Increased eutrophication (algae growth)
-  Health risk to recreational activities
-  Loss of ecosystems and traditional Mi'kmaq medicines



Pitu'paq took action on sewage pollution:

-  Installing pump-out stations for boat discharge in addition to education and surveillance
-  Upgrading outdated sewage treatment plants (Whycocomagh)
-  Mapping coastlines where climate change models predict inundation of public works infrastructures



Pitu’paq took action to address the impact of climate change



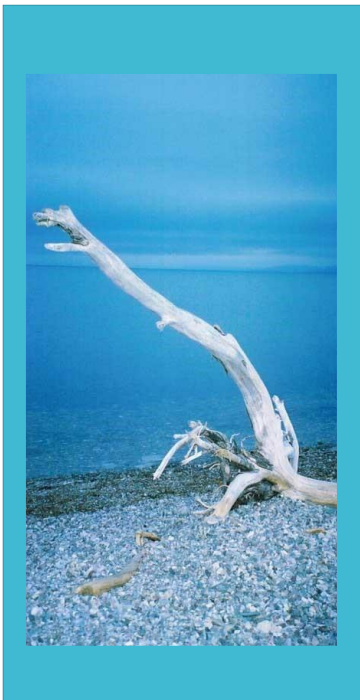
Climate Change Conference (2013 - Wagmatcook)



Climate change community workshops in First Nation communities to gain traditional knowledge and understanding and to collaborate on action plans



Assisting some municipalities with drafting climate change action plans



Potable water and water conservation projects include:



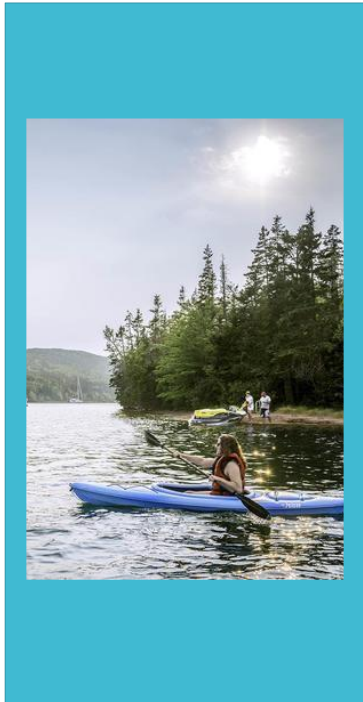
Creation of Potlotek Water Rangers to clear debris in and around the freshwater supply watershed.



Water balance project – Membertou



CBRM / Membertou runoff diversion



Other notable projects include:



Dredging silt that was hampering boat navigation (Partnership with Environment Canada - Inland Waters)



Facilitating dialogue between Inverness County and Wagmatcook leading to the memorandum of understanding (broader than just sewage treatment)

**Pitu'paq:
2024 &
beyond**

Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) and the Collaborative Environmental Partnership Initiative (CEPI) are just some of our partners

Pitu'paq has acquired resources to expand and engage with partners on timely projects

Currently drafting a 5 year Concept and Action Plan



New Projects Include:

Maliamu'kik msit Ko'kqmanaq Project - Species at Risk. Develop and deliver workshops to woodlot owners on how to protect species using a combo of Traditional Mi'kmaq Knowledge and current research

Unama'ki Watershed Data Collection and Stakeholder Engagement March 31, 2024 – Sept 2025

Shoreline Erosion control – Malagawatch, Potlotek

Working towards a low-carbon economy



Pitu'paq aims to combine Traditional Mi'kmaq Knowledge with current scientific research in its approach to projects an Etuaptmumk approach (Two-Eyed Seeing)



Pitu'paq seeks to partner and work with federal, provincial, and First Nation communities, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

For more
information
on Pitu'paq:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Pitupaq-256100354435059/>

Website: <https://www.uinr.ca/pitupaq/>

Contact:
Stan Johnson(Chair)
Stan.johnson@brasdorcepi.ca
902 – 549 2304



QUESTIONS

Councillor MacNeil commented on the importance of Pitupaq work.

NORTH HIGHLANDS NORDIC PRESENTATION – PAULA MICHAELS AND KATIE FOUGERE

Ms. Fougere went over an update with the following highlights:

- We are very proud of the fact that we are a non-profit that successfully operates in the dead of winter in Victoria County, and we are contributing to the economy by creating a multi-day experience for travelers who are spending time and money on food, fuel, and accommodations therefore contributing to the tax base of the county.
- We are asking for **\$124,000.00** from the Municipality towards the purchase of a new groomer.
- The current machine is 22 years old and becoming increasingly more expensive, difficult and time consuming to maintain. Sourcing parts, increasing cost of parts and shipping and finding mechanics trained to handle this specialized machinery is taxing on the volunteers.
- For the long-term sustainability of NHN the purchase of a new 2024 Piston Bully 100 Euro Stage V groomer is a necessity. The machine from Mohawk Industrial Werks Canada will cost \$443,380.00.

What does a new groomer mean for our facility?

- NHN will continue to have the expertly groomed, high caliber trails our visitors have come to expect for a more enjoyable experience.

- Higher fuel efficiency, we are mindful of our carbon footprint.
- The new groomer is more environmentally friendly; it runs at a lower temperature, Stage 5 in Europe - tier 4 in Canada, lower emissions, lower CO₂, NO (nitrous oxide) less unexpected breakdowns, more easily sourced parts and runs remote diagnostics.
- Faster trail maintenance.
- Quieter machine less sound pollution.
- Volunteers can focus on other efforts beyond fundraising for repair costs.
- More time can be dedicated to developing programs, special events, coach development and more.
- The last several years of active engagement and the future we are growing towards is in jeopardy without a new groomer.
- The Municipality of Victoria County has invested in NHN every year to help us grow as we relocated to our new building site for the Nordic Center and Cafe. You have invested \$50,000.00 over the last 4 years. By supporting this funding request for the groomer, you are ensuring that your \$50,000 will continue to make a return on the initial investment. And thanks to your past investments the Nordic Center has an indoor heated garage to house the equipment allowing for easier maintenance.
- We have letters of support from a variety of friends of NHN that we would like to share with you. They are skiers, coaches, teachers, senators, community leaders. Their words of support are so important to share. It helps to showcase how valuable the service NHN provides to our local communities, Counties, Cape Breton as a whole, all of NS and the Maritimes.
- NHN is the first Nordic facility to open and the last to close every year in the Maritimes. We have consistent snow and are open daily from Jan 2 to the end of March or early April. We can boast about our snow because of the unique microclimate where we are located enjoying ocean effect snow.
- This season our total visitation was just under 3,000 people.
- Ms. Fougere listed off many achievements of the past season as well.

QUESTIONS

Councillor Patterson mentioned that Council held a meeting there last year and the food was fantastic, especially the crab sandwiches and commented on accessibility. They are working toward that, and they have some Paralympians that train at their facility.

Councillor Organ commended the groups work and thanked them for running such great programs and a big thank you to the volunteers. She said she is behind this group 100%.

Councillor Longva loves the facility and thanked them for their work.

Councillor MacLeod said she was very moved with all the volunteer work and looks forward to visiting the facility.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said groomers are very critical to this operation. Getting the kids out and involved is amazing. Really appreciate the work of this group. Deputy Warden Dauphinee had concerns with the timeframe of how long it takes to order a new groomer but made a motion to write a letter of support and defer their request to budget.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor MacDonald to write a letter of support to North Highlands Nordic. Victoria County is happy to be a financial partner along with provincial and federal governments. Amount to be determined through the Budget process.

Motion Carried.

Councillor MacNeil said it was great to see the volunteers and the support.

Councillor MacDonald said the importance of the facility is shown, acknowledged Linda Murray and gave his support.

Mr. Dan Coffin acknowledged the volunteers of this group. The support from the Tourism side, this group is a key anchor to the winter readiness program and the Cabot Trail 100. It's important to identify the funds for groomers, this group doesn't receive those fees back.

Warden Morrison said you never disappoint when you present and thank you for the great work done.

RECESS

Warden Morrison called for a 10-minute recess.

DOG PARK REPORT – DAN COFFIN

The following presentation was given:

Introduction

At the request of Council in 2023, Victoria County Staff completed an overview of current Off-Leash Dog Parks in Nova Scotia. The review included gathering specific information from other municipalities to gain a strong understanding of the whole process of establishing a dog park from initial concept idea to overall management and key learnings. The review keyed in on five dog parks due to the variety of information each provided as well as the ability to connect and gather the specific information our review was requesting. The following parks were explored and covered in more detail through this report.

- Amherst– Dickey Park Off-Leash Dog Park
- Annapolis Royal– Paddy's Park Off Leash Dog Park
- Bridgewater– South Shore Vet Dog Zone
- Kentville– Eaves Hallow Off Leash Dog Park

Through these reviews and discussions, many valuable information resources were identified that were utilized in other municipalities for Best Practices and overall considerations and guidelines to include in the planning process. From this information, Staff was able to identify suggested best practices for Placement, Design and Management considerations.

Overview and Benefits

A Dog Park is:

- A (typically) fenced in public park
- Offers off-leash play area for dogs
- Provides opportunity for owners and dogs to socialize in a safe setting

Benefits to Community

- ◆ Allows dogs to exercise and socialize Safely
- ◆ Promotes responsible dog ownership
- ◆ Provides an outlet for dog owners to socialize
- ◆ Makes for stronger community through promoting public health & safety

Nova Scotia Dog Parks Examples

Dog Park Operation Models

- **Partnership Model**
 - Created / Maintained by society, financial support from municipality
- **Municipally Owned & Operated**
- **Society Owned & Operated**

Nova Scotia Dog Parks

- **Amherst**– Dickey Park Off-Leash Dog Park
- **Annapolis Royal**– Paddy’s Park Off Leash Dog Park
- **Bridgewater**– South Shore Vet Dog Zone
- **Kentville**– Eaves Hallow Off Leash Dog Park



Amherst – Dickey Park Off-Leash Dog Park

◆ DETAILS

- ◆ 1.1 acre fenced green space
- ◆ Built on town owned land
- ◆ Mix of open green space and trees
- ◆ Managed and maintained by Town of Amherst
- ◆ Cost \$30,000 to build

◆ ESTABLISHMENT

- ◆ 3 public input sessions – 2016, 2017, 2018
- ◆ 2016 Amherst Master Plan identified community desire
- ◆ Recreation Department led the initiative
- ◆ 2017 / 2018 Pilot Project at underused baseball field
- ◆ 2018 Build permanent Dog Park



Annapolis Royal – Paddy’s Park Off Leach Dog Park

◆ DETAILS

- ◆ 120 ft x 65’ Fenced in Area 0.1 acre
- ◆ Built on town owned land
- ◆ Council assisted with site selection and budget
- ◆ Partnered with local School to design, build & install equipment
- ◆ Facility maintained by town public works
- ◆ Cost to build \$25,000 ~ \$8,000(\$10K donated fence, Public works did install)

◆ ESTABLISHMENT

- ◆ Initiated through several residents requesting the park
- ◆ Council committed \$1,000 towards the project
- ◆ 2016 - Recreation employee started a Go Fund Me account with a goal of raising \$19,000
- ◆ 2017 - Funding goal was achieved
- ◆ Recreation Department managed the construction
- ◆ November 2017 Dog Park opened



Bridgewater – South Shore Vet Dog Zone

◆ DETAILS

- ◆ Partnership with Town, committee, private business
- ◆ 1 acre fenced in area
- ◆ Mix of Green and treed space
- ◆ Cost to Build \$105,000

◆ ESTABLISHMENT

- ◆ 2011 Active Park master Plan was completed identifying priority for construction of a dog park
- ◆ 2012 Detailed design and drawing concept of park completed
- ◆ 2014 Terms of Reference for a dog park Advisory Committee was approved by council
- ◆ 2015 Council approved formal naming rights for 10 years to a local veterinary clinic in exchange for a \$10,000 investment in the project.
- ◆ 2017 Park Opened – Continued fundraising by selling dog bones at the park.



Kentville – Eaves Hallow Off Leash Dog Park

◆ DETAILS

- ◆ Partnership between the Towns of Kentville and New Minas
- ◆ Built in town of Kentville on town owned land used a green space and trails
- ◆ Town of New Minas Recreation operates the Park
- ◆ Town of Kentville Maintains the space
- ◆ Mix of open green space, paths and trees
- ◆ Cost to Build \$103,000

◆ ESTABLISHMENT

- ◆ Group of Local dog enthusiasts started the project through the town of New Minas
- ◆ Years of advocacy including a community facebook page
- ◆ Could not find land in New Minas that was suitable, Partnered with Kentville on location
- ◆ Costs were higher than anticipated
- ◆ Opened in 2021



BEST PRACTICES FOR DOG PARK PLACEMENT

- **Size Matters**
 - Larger is better (at least ½ acre) / Consider surrounding uses, facilities & proximity to residences
- **Buffer from Residential Areas**
 - Buffers may include vegetation, berms, or other items to aid in noise / visual attenuation
- **Water Source**
 - a source of drinking water is highly desirable within or adjacent to a dog park
- **Parking**
 - Sufficient in size to accommodate size of the park to reduce impact on local community
- **Land Suitability**
 - Relatively Flat / Permeable Soils / Water body protection / Visibility to all dogs is possible
- **Shade**
 - Shade is highly desirable. Good mix of mature trees and open space / grass
- **Employ Conflict Avoidance**
 - sufficient buffer between dog park and other recreational areas, trails, playgrounds, high traffic areas, courts etc.
- **Protect Natural Areas**
 - Should not be located in close proximity to natural areas where flora & fauna (nesting birds, small mammals and native plants) would be disturbed
- **Geographic Distribution**
 - Consideration should be given to being an equitable distance between communities of those that use the park.



BEST PRACTICES FOR DOG PARK DESIGN

- **Fencing Height & Type** - Min 4ft high chain link fence, galvanized or vinyl coated around perimeter of the site
- **Perimeter Plantings / Buffers** – vegetation (dog safe trees & shrubs) or other items to aid in noise / visual aesthetics
- **Entrance Design** – Entry Corral of at least 8ft x 8ft fenced area with two gates
- **Surfacing** –Crushed fines gravel in entry corral area / Grass or larger crushed fines (if concentration of dogs does not allow grass to grow)
- **Size Matters (Dogs this time)**– Separate small dogs area should be provided for dogs less than 25lbs.
- **Signage** – Rules, Code of Conduct, Hours, and Requirements for entry
- **Trash Containers** – Pet Waste removal bags / located with easy access for collection services
- **Site Furniture** – Ideally several benches should be provided throughout the dog park area
- **Shade / Water / Lighting** – Safety items for consideration. Lighting not required if park hours are dawn till dusk
- **Agility Equipment** - Planning for future additional amenities to be added to the site should user groups desire them
- **Ease of Maintenance** – Service gates and waste collection receptacles located for ease of entry from existing road or street frontage
- **Bulletin Board** – Community kiosk or bulletin board to provide a place for notifications for meetings, work days, and events



BEST PRACTICES FOR DOG PARK MANAGEMENT

- **Staffing**
 - Maintenance of grass, waste, gates / Monitoring staff during heavy use periods is recommended
- **Fines**
 - Warning tickets, followed by fines are recommended for repeat offenders / Park fee payment verification
- **Entry Fees**
 - Average park user fees range from \$35 - \$40 per year
- **Entry with Key FOB**
 - Allowing use with fees allows for better safety and increased revenue, fair system for all users, monitoring park use, vaccination verifications
- **Hours of Operation**
 - Most parks maintain dawn till dusk hours and for common consistency this has become the best practice for hours
- **Dog Park License**
 - Integrate the Dog Park Permit with municipal dog license procedure, and create online ability to purchase / update information
- **Rules**
 - Standardly accepted Dog Park Rules should be integrated with any municipal dog park. (See appendix 6 in written report)
- **Turf Maintenance**
 - design should permit resting turf areas to regenerate growth of turf when overused.
- **Volunteers**
 - Volunteer involvement encouraged to promote effective stewardship, and to help develop programs and events on the site
- **Education**
 - Program to educate users on dog etiquette, educate community about dogs and dog parks



Recommendations for Next Steps

- Currently Victoria County have issued 30 Dog Licenses
- Work to evaluate public desire for a dog park
- 3 Phased approach –
 - 1) Evaluate community desire / impact
 - 2) Establish detailed proposal and budget for Council approval
 - 3) Complete Build and Management plan
- Search out possible partnerships
- Establish search for location based on where public desire warrants
- Conduct Community Public Consultation prior to final design and site selection
- Follow Best Practices as noted to avoid challenges experienced by other parks

Municipal Park (Greenspace / Placemaking) **vs** Dog Park ?



Councillor MacDonald asked if there was a list of municipalities that have dog parks and Mr. Coffin wasn't able to obtain that information.

Councillor MacLeod thinks a dog park is important for residents and tourists and wanted to acknowledge that Council have had conversations about green spaces for children as well.

Mr. Coffin said next step is possibly reaching out to hotel operators to see if they want to participate in a program for a dog park.

Councillor Longva also has had requests for a dog park in Baddeck as well.

Mr. Coffin also mentioned that a lot of the Irving service stations have dog areas as well.

Warden Morrison asked for public consultation and then come back to council and will proceed from there. Mr. Coffin said they will start with surveys and go from there.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the February 20, 2024 meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was presented for approval.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Longva to approve the Minutes of February 20, 2024.

Motion Carried.

The Minutes of the February 26, 2024 Special meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was presented for approval.

On Motion of Councillor MacLeod seconded by Councillor MacNeil to approve the Minutes of February 26, 2024.

Motion Carried.

CAO REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- One day Not for Profit Governance Training will be taking place April 9th at 9:30 am at the Inverary Inn. VC is sponsoring the program and full agenda and details will be coming out shortly. Open to all Not-for-Profit groups.
- Changing the water account numbers, they are going to start with a “W”, this will help distinguish online payments, banking changes will have to be made by the user.
- Have to start planning for heavy garbage, possible date is May 6th.
- Regarding to stockpile limits, we have a regulatory approval from NS environment that we have to adhere to. We did not receive any extensions, so our operations need to adhere to it. We do not want fines, and court orders.
- Strait Engineering will survey the new transfer station as soon as the snow clears.
- EV evaluation is proceeding, notification will be sent out next week. This is through the Low Carbon Communities Funding we received.
- Micro Loan Program for women in business, few VC businesses have applied, applications are still open.
- Another EMO Exercise is in the planning stages – it’s good to be ready. We know another EMO event will be happening.
- Tipping floor is getting industrially cleaned so the tipping floor will be closed next week, please use curbside pickup, if you can.
- Waterline extension in Ingonish.

Councillor MacDonald asked about the increase in water rates and who dictates those increases. Acting CAO Redden responded with the process, beginning with the rate study, based on those costs, the rates are set to cover the costs then we submit that report to the UARB and then we have a hearing with them and then they approved the rate increase. Council approves the rate study and the UARB approves the rates approved in the rate study.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT 1

- Road concerns sent to Provincial Department of Public Works Supervisor.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee for a streetlight request at the intersection of Neil’s Shore Road and Trans Canada Highway 105, Bucklaw.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 2

- Road concerns sent to Provincial Department of Public Works Supervisor.

DISTRICT 3

- Congrats to Baddeck Academy Curling Team, request to send a letter to the team.
- Acknowledged the businesses that stay open for the winter that accommodate visitors.

On Motion of Warden Morrison seconded by Councillor MacNeil to send a letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, expressing Council's disappointment of scrapping the Coastal Protection Act and reiterating that Council disagreed with the Municipality being asked to handle the administration and enforcement of the Act. Also to remind the Minister that many unanswered requests for a meeting with the Minister have been made.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 4

- Road concerns sent to Provincial Department of Public Works Supervisor.
- There is a new organization in Cape Breton, called Climate Change Task Force, their website is climatechangetaskforce.ca. They promote environmental awareness and concrete action to combat climate change through education, advocacy, community mobilization, and investment in local green initiatives. They desire to work collaboratively for a hopeful and environmentally sound future for us and for future generations.
- I have a zoom meeting with the N.S. Federation of Municipalities Climate Change Advisory Board tomorrow at 12:00, if there any messages from our municipality that anyone would like me to bring to the meeting.
- I would like to request a meeting with Gwen Jarabek to ask the status of the two remaining daycares that were slated for north of Smokey. It is my understanding that there was \$900,000 that she applied for and received for three daycares. There is one daycare in Baddeck, but we don't have the other two so just wondering what the next steps are or the status is. It would be nice to ask her to come in sooner rather than later, with the tourist season approaching quickly, the local business owners as well as their staff desperately need childcare.

On Motion of Councillor Longva, seconded by Councillor Organ to contact Gwen Jarabek requesting her to come to Council to provide an update on the daycares in Ingonish and Bay St. Lawrence.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 5

On Motion of Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacLeod to contact Dianne Timmins with MLA Bain's office to request them to present to Council on provincial programs available to residents.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 6

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Organ to request the Tourism and Recreation Department to look into the purchase of a track vehicle to be used for emergencies.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacDonald to take \$2,000.00 from District 6 Budget to the Ingonish Snowmobile Society.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 7

- Road concerns sent to Provincial Department of Public Works Supervisor.
- Busy with road and wharf repairs and the blasting has started for the new Highland Manor.

DISTRICT 8

- Road concerns sent to Provincial Department of Public Works Supervisor, Steve MacDonald. Residents would like a meeting with Mr. MacDonald and MLA Bain concerning the road near Capstick, will reach out to them with that request.

MOTIONS

On Motion of Councillor MacLeod, seconded by Councillor Longva to approve the Municipal Grants Recommendation Report.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor MacNeil to declare March 26, 2024, Purple Day for Epilepsy.

Motion Carried.

Warden Morrison read the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF VICTORIA With regard to the
Municipal Clerks' Pension Plan**

WHEREAS

***The Municipality of the County of Victoria (the "Municipality") participates in the
Municipal Clerks' Pension Plan (the "Plan"); and***

WHEREAS

***The former clerk, who was the only member with benefits in the Plan from the
Municipality, died April 27, 2023, without a beneficiary; and***

WHEREAS

***the Municipality wishes to wind-up its division of the Plan and to claim the remaining
assets in respect of its division of the Plan;***

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The Municipality's division of the Plan is terminated effective December 31, 2023.
All benefit entitlements to the sole member of this subdivision have been fulfilled
as of December 31, 2023, in accordance with the Plan rules.***
- 2. As provided under section 13.6 of the Plan rules, after any associated wind-up
expenses have been paid, the Municipality claims the assets that remain in the
Municipality's division of the Plan.***

***On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor MacLeod to accept the
Municipal Clerk's Resolution.***

Motion Carried.

Warden Morrison gave the following Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC)
Appointments, effective April 1, 2024:

• Building Inspection:

Building Inspectors: **David MacKenzie**, and **Sean Donovan**

Alternates: Harry Martell, Jonathan Martin, André Samson, and Luke Ross

- Development Officer: **Wanda Ryan**

Alternates: John Bain; Andrew Jones; Kristen Knudskov and Mikayla Tait.

Assistant Development Officers: David MacKenzie and Luke Ross

- Fire Inspector: **David MacKenzie**

Alternates: A. Samson, L. Ross, S. Donovan; H. Martell; and J. Martin.

- Dangerous or Unsightly Premises

Administrators: **Sean Donovan** and **John Bain**

Alternate: Luke Ross, David MacKenzie, and André Samson

- Special Constables: Building/Fire Codes, Dangerous or Unsightly Premises, Land Use By-laws

Sean Donovan and **Jonathan Martin**.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil seconded by Councillor MacDonald to accept the EDPC Appointments for 2024.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Patterson read the following Resolution:

Federal infrastructure funding not keeping pace with population growth.

WHEREAS, Canada is experiencing record population growth, having welcomed 1.25 million new Canadians last year alone; and

WHEREAS, According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) we need to build at least 3.5 million additional homes by 2030, and municipalities need to build or expand the infrastructure to accommodate this growth; and

WHEREAS, FCM has estimated that the cost of the municipal infrastructure required support housing development is, on average, in the range of \$107,000 per unit; and

WHEREAS, According to Statistics Canada the cost of upgrade existing municipal infrastructure so that it is in a state of good repair is in the range of \$170 billion; and

WHEREAS, Non-residential construction price inflation has risen by 29% since the end of 2020 and municipalities are facing soaring costs for infrastructure project without a corresponding growth in revenue; and

WHEREAS, Unlike federal and provincial revenue, municipal tax revenue has not increased in recent years along with inflation, economic growth or population growth; and

WHEREAS, Municipalities are facing a gap in federal infrastructure funding as the 10-year Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program has come to an end, the Canada Community-Building Fund is being renegotiated and the Permanent Public Transit Fund is set to start in 2026;

WHEREAS, The Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF), which was formerly known as the federal Gas Tax Fund, provides more than \$2.4 billion in annual capital funding directly to municipalities through a predictable allocation mechanism, and municipalities of all sizes use the CCBF to deliver direct results for Canadians by building and renewing critical core public

infrastructure, including water infrastructure, local roads, public transit and community, and cultural and recreational facilities; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the federal government work with agreement signatories and municipalities to maintain the CCBF as a source of direct, predictable, long-term funding for local infrastructure priorities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the federal government commit, in Budget 2024, to the next generation of infrastructure programs, including a new program for water and wastewater infrastructure and an increase to the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the federal government convene provinces, territories, and municipalities to negotiate a “Municipal Growth Framework” to modernize the way that municipalities are funded in order to enable Canada’s long-term growth.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor Longva to pass the Federal Infrastructure Funding Resolution.

Motion Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

All forwarded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillor Longva mentioned again that she is attending a meeting for the Climate Change Advisory Board, and she is sure that the Coastal Protection Act will be discussed.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Athol Grant spoke about the proposed regulations from Upland Plan Victoria. He went over areas of concern, and he will be mailing all the Councillors his concerns.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee agreed with Mr. Grant and wanted to ensure that he is sending these concerns into Upland as well and Mr. Grant assured him, he has, and Deputy Warden Dauphinee hopes Upland considers them and make some revisions.

Councillor Patterson said Mr. Grant has valid points and reminded Council that this is a bylaw and will have to go through the bylaw process. Councillor Patterson said this was a provincial mandate and some residents are saying so what, they make mandates all the time that aren't followed.

Councillor Patterson mentioned the campground in Black Rock and there is a petition going around about that and encouraged Council to go through the Upland document thoroughly.

Councillor Patterson said he fought to have a meeting in District 5 and got it, but Upland would not budge on having a second meeting.

Warden Morrison mentioned the deadline for feedback is March 31, it doesn't come into affect on the 31st.

Councillor Longva agrees with Mr. Grant and said there needs to be more meetings in all the districts.

Councillor MacNeil said there is a disconnect between Upland and the Municipality as well.

Warden Morrison said let's go back and talk to Upland. We can have more community meetings, but I just don't know if we will get people attending but maybe Upland needs to advertise better too.

Mr. Grant said I think Upland should talk to builders and engineers as well about what makes sense.

Councillor MacNeil said its another item the Province is putting on the Municipality. Zoning wasn't on our radar, but we're told to do it and now we are getting the flack for it. Mr. Grant said Council can decide on how strict these zoning rules are. The Province only requested minimum planning standards, the Upland document goes above you can keep minimal, Council can keep that at a minimum.

Councillor Macleod mentioned the meetings, and some were cancelled or rescheduled due to storms but there should be meetings in each district.

Warden Morrison said once the feedback is sent and considered by Upland, we can decide to move forward or not, and possibly more public feedback will be welcomed.

NEXT MEETING

Council Meeting: April 23, 2024, at 2pm.

ADJOURN

Councillor MacNeil made a motion to adjourn at 4:51pm.