

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF ANTIGONISH

Municipal Council Meeting- Minutes

Monday, December 9, 2019

5:30 pm

Councillors Present:

Warden Owen McCarron
Deputy Warden Hugh Stewart
Councillor Mary MacLellan
Councillor Donnie MacDonald

Councillor Vaughn Chisholm
Councillor Remi Deveau
Councillor Neil Corbett
Councillor Bill MacFarlane

Regrets:

Councillor John Dunbar

Councillor Gary Mattie

Staff Present:

Glenn Horne, Clerk-Treasurer
Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk

Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Tammy Feltmate, Director of Sustainable
Communities

Also Present:

Corey LeBlanc, the Casket
Matt Draper, 98.9XFM
Greg Morrow, The Hawk
Sgt. Warren McBeath, RCMP
Staff Sgt. Bill Mooney, RCMP
Gallery

Basil Pitts, Department of Transportation &
Infrastructure Renewal
Chief Allan Kennedy, Antigonish County Volunteer
Fire Department

Call to Order- Chairman, Warden Owen McCarron

Warden McCarron called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden McCarron called for any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Min # 2019-159

MOVED by Deputy Warden Stewart
SECONDED by Councillor MacLellan

That the agenda be approved.

Motion Carried

Presentations

Warden McCarron provided an overview of the agenda and introduced the presenters.

Chief Allan Kennedy, Antigonish County Volunteer Fire Department

Chief Allan Kennedy of the Antigonish County Volunteer Fire Department spoke on behalf of his department. He has been involved with the fire department for 27 years and has dealt with this intersection. 22% of their calls from January 1, 2016 to present have involved this intersection. The severity of the incidents at this intersection have increased from fender-benders to a fatality. The impact on the volunteer fire department was noted.

Comments from those who are on-site at incidents have indicated:

- Poor signage
- Intersection not suitable for volume of traffic
- Pressure from drivers given the volume of traffic queued
- Drivers assuming that it is a 4-way stop
- Lanes confusing
- Traveled speed on the highway

Chief Kennedy spoke further regarding driver distraction and traveled speed along roadways when emergency crews are at an incident.

The floor was then opened to questions from members of Council. A question was asked regarding timing of incidents; while mid-afternoon was at one time a common time for incidents, they have ranged anywhere from 4:45 am to after 11 pm. A question was asked about the impact of weather; the summer months saw more of the incidents occur.

Chief Kennedy was thanked for his presentation.

Sergeant Warren McBeath - Antigonish RCMP

Sergeant McBeath spoke regarding the intersection, with focus on the most recent two accidents at the site. Details of those incidents were shared for the benefit of Council. Sgt McBeath also shared his experience with the intersection following its reconfiguration when the through traffic flow was reinstated, up to the most recent incidents. The intersection is considered to be high risk because of the frequency of events there, and the speeds that are traveled along the highway in that location.

The floor was then opened to Council for questions. Warden McCarron thanked Sgt McBeath for his presentation.

Provincial Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Staff

Mr. Basil Pitts, Area Manager Antigonish-Guysborough from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal provided information from that department regarding the intersection. A study of the intersection has been completed, and design/planning is being done for work

2021/2022. The floor was then opened for Councillors to ask questions. Deputy Warden Stewart expressed concern with the delay in the study work being done, and the proposed timeline for any modifications to the intersection. Councillor MacDonald asked about whether there was any consideration of making the intersection a 4-way stop with rumble strips as a short-term measure. Mr. Pitts felt that all options were being considered at this time, and that further information would be coming from the department soon. Councillor MacFarlane thanked Mr. Pitts for coming and confirmed that any comments from tonight would be forwarded on to the senior members of the department.

Mr. Pitts was thanked for his presentation by the Warden.

Hon. Randy Delorey, MLA Antigonish

Mr. Horne read a statement that was received from Minister Delorey, MLA for Antigonish via email earlier in the day. Warden McCarron opened the floor for any questions/comments from Council regarding the statement; no questions or comments were received.

Council Discussion

The floor was opened to Council for general discussion regarding the intersection of concern. Councillor Chisholm reiterated the concern regarding the proposed timing of a modification, being two years out. Councillor MacFarlane expressed concern with any modifications considered having unintended impact on exits from Trunk 4 on either side and requested that the RCMP consider increasing their presence at the intersection with a zero-tolerance approach with traffic infractions. Councillor Deveau commented respecting concern with the posted speeds. Councillor MacLellan expressed concern with the general safety of the intersection, having witnessed several near misses there herself.

Presentation from the Gallery

The floor was then opened to the gallery

Paula Delorey

Ms. Delorey is an emergency responder and expressed concerns with the speeds and the configuration of the intersection. The busyness of the intersection, the inability to clearly see oncoming traffic without angling a vehicle, and the signage being insufficient was noted as a concern. General driver impatience was also noted. A suggestion was made to look at the speed on the highway and investing in flashing signage to increase visibility of the intersection.

Chris Smith

Mr. Smith noted that he is a resident of Beech Hill and has lived in the area for 40 years and traveled the road for 52 years. He has both employees and family that travel the road on a regular basis and had a family member who witnessed one of the crashes. He noted concern with the issues that have been happening since the highway was re-opened. He also expressed concern with the lack of response from the Province to make a change at the intersection, and asked Council to push the Province to make a change. Suggested that the Province hire a consultant to come up with a short-

term solution instead of waiting the two years proposed by the Province. Feels that driver confusion is an issue at the intersection.

Richard Gilbert

Mr. Gilbert made note regarding the posted speed at the intersection to correct a statement made earlier in the evening, and expressed visibility concerns at the intersection due to the hill. Concern was also noted regarding the proposed intersection coming further up the hill with the new development, and the fluctuations in the posted speed along the stretch from St. Andrews through to the intersection. Many people are avoiding the intersection and going down to Highway 7 and doubling-back.

Adrian Van de Sande

Mr. Van de Sande is a volunteer fire fighter who has been involved in several responses to accidents at this intersection including the accident on the 2nd. He expressed concern with the speeds posted, the signage causing confusion and no signs indicating that there was a 2-way stop ahead for traffic approaching the intersection on Beech Hill.

Brian McLean

Mr. McLean was the third party in the fatal accident on December 2nd. Mr. McLean shared his experience in the accident with Council, and the impact that it continues to have on him after the incident.

Bernie Falkenham

Mr. Falkenham shared that he felt that the proposed timeline for changes is too much of a delay if the Province is looking to wait until 2021/2022. He spoke regarding rumble strips, sharing examples of when they were used at the Cobequid Pass and signage was increased. Speed, signage, and lighting was mentioned as suggested upgrades to the intersection.

Michael Power

Mr. Power shared that he drives extensively for work, and often travels through this intersection. The accidents that happen at this intersection don't just involve those who are in the accident; it impacts their friends and families too. Drivers seeing upcoming passing lanes often speed up in anticipation, especially with the upcoming intersection. Travel speeds, stacked traffic at the intersection were noted as a concern. Mr. Power has had seven drivers pull out in front of him at the intersection and had a close call himself despite being cautious. He called for the passing lanes to be removed on that part of the highway and to reduce the speeds along that section of road. He feels that this intersection is an issue in the community and is causing fear in the community, and two years is too long to wait.

Bill Kelly

Mr. Kelly lives adjacent to the intersection and has seen an increase in traffic in the area. He feels that something needs to be done quickly until a long-term solution can be found, including stopping traffic using lights and changing the posted speed. Two years is too long for changes to be made.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of the gentleman who died at the accident that occurred at the intersection on December 2nd.

Resolution of Council

There was some discussion about the number of calls noted in the resolution; an edit was made to change the number of accidents to 18 and to change the date to January 1, 2017 in the resolution.

Min # 2019-160

MOVED by Councillor MacFarlane

SECONDED by Councillor Corbett

That Municipal Council approved the resolution as amended.

Motion Carried

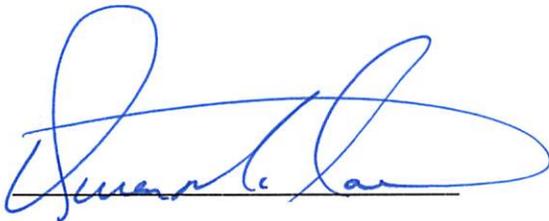
Adjournment

Min # 2019-161

MOVED by Councillor Deveau

That the Council meeting adjourns at 6:24 pm.

Motion Carried



Warden Owen McCarron



Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer