
MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 26, 2021, 6:30 pm
Council Chambers
Municipal Administration Building
285 Beech Hill Road
Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

Present were: Warden Owen McCarron
Councillor Mary MacLellan
Councillor Donnie MacDonald
Councillor Remi Deveau
Councillor John Dunbar
Councillor Gary Mattie
Councillor Bill MacFarlane
Councillor Harris McNamara
Councillor Shawn Brophy

Regrets: Deputy Warden Hugh Stewart

Staff Present: Glenn Horne, CAO
Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk
Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Allison Duggan, Director of Finance
John Bain, Director - Eastern District Planning Commission

Also Present: Ian Watson, Upland Planning
Jason Genée, Upland Planning
Andrew Fedora, Port Hawkesbury Paper
Allan Eddy, Port Hawkesbury Paper

Call to Order – Chairman, Warden Owen McCarron

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden McCarron, at 5:35pm.

Approval of Agenda

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

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Approval of October 12, 2021 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden McCarron called for any errors or omissions in the minutes.

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole minutes of October 12, 2021 be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

Mrs. Donovan provided an update on the meetings held to date to talk with residents as part of addressing the beach access concern that was discussed at a previous meeting.

Delegations

Andrew Fedora - Port Hawkesbury Paper

Mr. Andrew Fedora provided an introduction to Port Hawkesbury Paper's operations, and Mr. Allan Eddy provided an overview of the wind project that Port Hawkesbury Paper is exploring. Over the past year, wind data has been collected from prospective turbine locations, and other due diligence is underway. The project is expected to be the largest wind farm in Nova Scotia once completed, and will supply green power to Port Hawkesbury Paper.

The floor was then opened up for questions. A question was asked about where the project is located, and Mr. Eddy noted that it is proposed to be located on Crown Land licensed in Guysborough County. Comments were provided by the Committee complimenting the project and the public consultation measures taken by the company, and further discussion took place regarding timelines for the project, public feedback and the studies being undertaken to satisfy any environmental and regulatory processes.

The representatives from Port Hawkesbury Paper were thanked for coming in to speak with the Committee.

Ian Watson - Upland Planning - Comprehensive Plan Review

Mr. Ian Watson provided members of the Committee with an overview of the Comprehensive Plan Review that is underway to meet the requirements under the Minimum Planning Requirements imposed by the Province. The scope of the project, the project team, and the anticipated timelines were reviewed. The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions, and enquired about the community consultation, non-conforming status of uses, and the coordination of current plan reviews with this project.

Mr. Bain, Director of Planning with the Eastern District Planning Commission, provided clarification on the role of the comprehensive planning project with the existing plans in the County. Warden McCarron thanked Mr. Bain and the representatives from Upland Planning for attending the meeting.

Continuing Business

Consideration of a COVID 19 Vaccination Policy

Mrs. Schumacher provided an overview of the draft policy that was prepared at the request of the Committee outlining options for consideration. The different options were outlined, and an example of a policy, as well as the existing guidelines in place for staff, were reviewed. Warden McCarron suggested that Council could share their support for being double vaccinated by having Council show their proof of vaccination as well.

A roundtable was held, and each Councillor gave their input on what option should be considered. A majority of the members of felt that Option 3 as outlined in the staff report, which requires that staff be vaccinated or else face suspension/termination, be pursued. Staff was directed to amend the proposed policy to reflect this, and the revised policy will be attached to the Committee report that comes forward at the next Council meeting.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve Option 3 for a Municipal Covid-19 Vaccination Policy.

Motion Carried

Debrief of Queens Consolidation Presentation

Mr. Horne provided the opportunity for members of the Committee to discuss the meeting that took place with the representatives from the Region of Queens earlier in the week. Questions were asked regarding the details of the cost savings that the representatives from Queens identified following their consolidation, as well as the

amount of work that is done by their Public Works department as opposed to using external contractors. Mr. Horne noted that the staffing numbers referenced in the presentation included the staff at both the nursing home and the Queens Emera recreation complex.

An interest in learning more about fire protection and the methodology of establishing boundaries was expressed. There was also an interest in the report that had been prepared by volunteers in advance of the Queens consolidation and whether something similar would be done in Antigonish. Councillors shared that community members have approached them expressing concern with the unknown relating to future tax rates and the continuity of the grants programs offered by the Municipality. Councillors also emphasized the importance of the Province being on board to help with the consolidation process.

A question was asked about the next steps in the process, particularly regarding the community consultations and the role of District Councillors in that step. Mr. Horne emphasized the support that Councillors would receive when the consultation stage takes place. Discussion took place regarding the types of information that the Councillors are looking to receive to facilitate discussions with residents asking about the consolidation process, and the reasons for exploring consolidation of the municipal units at this time. Mr. Horne outlined the conversations and work done to date as part of the information gathering process.

Councillor Gary Mattie left the meeting at 7:50pm.

A question was asked about whether the process being pursued by the Town and County, where both units are coming to the table amicably and voluntarily, is a first in the province. Discussion followed about how that situation may help when it comes to seeking support from the Province.

Discussion of Safe Restart Funding

Mrs. Duggan reviewed the Safe Restart Funding that was provided by the Province, and the various expenditures that were made with the funding to date, and asked for direction from the Committee on how to spend the remaining funds. Alternatively, the funds can be carried over to be available if additional support is needed due to Covid-19. Several organizations and uses were suggested for consideration.

Request for Letter of Support for Town Point Oysters

Mr. Horne spoke to the request received for a letter of support for the Town Point Oyster operation. Discussion followed about the liaison committee and community consultations, as well as the role of the County in providing support letters for such operations. Members of Council were asked for their position on whether or not to

provide a letter of support. A majority of the group indicated that they would not support providing such a letter.

New Business

Holiday Activities 2021 Discussion

Mrs. Donovan provided an overview of the holiday activities that were held in 2020, and the plans that were underway for holiday celebrations for 2021. Based on a survey that was conducted after the 2020 activities, activities have been planned that incorporate some of the measures that were introduced in 2020 with events that have traditionally been held. Mrs. Donovan reviewed the tentative schedule of events in detail. Councillors then provided their comments and suggestions for the activities suggested.

Reports from Inter-Municipal Boards, Committees and Commissions

Antigonish Heritage Museum Board

The process for hiring a new curator is underway, and a meeting will be held in the near future.

Antigonish Arena Association

The next meeting is scheduled for November 4th.

Antigonish Crime Prevention

The next steps are being pursued to undertake a program review by the Town and County and report back to their respective Councils.

Eastern District Planning Commission

The Planning Commission will stick with Zoom meetings due to efficiency. Alfred Poirier is retiring, and a suggestion was made to send a letter to him with best wishes.

Eastern Regional Solid Waste Management Committee

The next meeting is October 28th.

Pictou Antigonish Regional Library

No meeting has been held this month.

RK MacDonald Nursing Home

Interviews are scheduled to take place on October 27th. The Acting CEO is doing a very good job. New residents are not being accepted due to a shortage of staff.

County Paqtnkek Joint Steering Committee

Nominations for Council and Chief were recently held, and engagements will be on hiatus until after those elections have taken place. Councillor McNamara provided an update about the school opening in Paqtnkek.

Consolidation Steering Committee

Mr. Horne noted the meeting pending with Windsor West Hants on November 1st. Staff is still working to coordinate a meeting with representatives from Guysborough. Five bids were received for the engagement RFP and are being reviewed. Funding application still under review, and discussions are in place regarding the RCMP contract costs. Staff is in the process of developing drafts of questions and answers for Council to use for reference, pending review by the communications team awarded the facilitation RFP contract. Finance staff from the Town and County have connected with the team at Windsor West Hants for information sharing.

Community Events

The following information about community events was shared:

- Warden McCarron shared the posting of local MP Sean Fraser to cabinet as the Minister of Immigration. A request was made to send a letter of congratulations.
- Sat Nov 6 at 2pm at Heritage Museum - launch of the 100th anniversary of 4H Nova Scotia - a year-long celebration
- Mobile pharmacy clinic in Havre Boucher being arranged on October 28th and in Aulds Cove on November 4th to provide access to the flu shot to residents who are not able to travel.
- The Legion's Poppy Campaign kicks off on November 4th.
- October 27th is Hospital Help Day
- 4H celebrations in Heatherton
- Discussion about Hallowe'en happening this weekend, and having an awareness and reporting any suspicious activities in the area

Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

In Camera Items

There were no in-camera items.

Adjournment

Moved

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 8:50pm.

Motion Carried



Warden Owen McCarron



Glenn Horne, CAO