

Committee of the Whole

Committee Updates May 18/21

Mayor Chisholm-Beaton

One Cape Breton: Gateway Project

The Cape Breton Partnership hosted a follow-up meeting to discuss the potential of a gateway project at the Canso Causeway rotary in Port Hastings. Present were Warden Cranton, Inverness EDO (Lynne), Warden Momborquette, Richmond/PH EDO (Megan), Carla Arsenault (CBP), Terry Smith (DCBA), Misty MacDoanld (SACC), representatives from ACOA, NSBI and Develop NS, and myself. Chief Annie Bernard was unable to join but will join future meetings. Future meeting will be held virtually in the coming months to discuss possible options for moving this project forward, funding opportunities around consultation and concept development, and reaching out to other leadership to build support.

Housing Advisory Committee (Port Hawkesbury)

Housing meeting (April 21) had a great level of engagement. The committee hopes to be able to invite a member of the Cape Breton Partnership to discuss the housing survey results. Members of the committee engaged in an open roundtable about housing ideas. These will continue to be fleshed out – and the consensus was that it's important that our committee is able to address the housing needs in Port Hawkesbury not currently being met and identifying innovative and creative ways to meet housing needs, attract new investment, and improve and retain existing housing.

Chair – John Ouellette

One Nova Scotia – REAP Project

Our 2-day team workshop (held at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre on April 13/14) continues to provide content for our team to focus on – in particular – to explore our inventory of Small/Medium sized enterprises and Innovation driven Enterprises, our region's comparative advantages, and some potential areas of focus we can take as a team. We continue to focus on the Strait of Canso – with our deep-water ice-free port – and our multi-modal transportation hub of air, port, road and rail as a huge comparative advantage to our region. As we continue to work with MIT and the Province, and determine our region's must-win battle, our next assignment is to survey 40 entrepreneurs/businesses in our region and 5 Venture/Risk Capitalists. This exercise will take us into the summer and to our next workshop (likely virtual). Date of workshop yet to be determined.

Cape Breton-wide Conference Calls (Cape Breton Partnership)

The Cape Breton Partnership hosted an Island-wide call with the Arts and Culture Sector (various reps from across the Island), along with Mayors/Chiefs/Wardens, MLAs, and MPs. The topic of discussion was economic recovery and the future of this critical sector on Cape Breton Island/Unama'ki. Minister Momborquette noted he'd take any ideas back to the Province regarding supports/programs, etc. for this sector. Other ideas brought forward by various Arts and Culture reps were the possibility of raising funds locally to help support the sector. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled (TBD).

Allan J MacEachen Regional Airport.

Amanda chaired the meeting – as I was unable to attend. Jason can provide report, as our Town rep on this committee.

(Chair: Brenda Chisholm-Beaton, Vice Chair: Amanda Mombourquette)

NSFM Executive Board Meetings

As Towns Caucus Chair, I attend our NSFM virtual executive board meetings – they are typically occurring by-weekly and/or monthly (as needed). We are continuing to monitor and advocate for Municipalities regarding the financial burden created by Covid, as well as continuing to pursue and advocate our main priority areas of: property tax CAP, extended producer responsibility (EPR), a new funding program for roads, municipal modernization, and municipal finances are still top priorities for NSFM and our members.

This past month we were able to secure some NSFM committee appointments by members, we successfully hosted our Spring Conference 2021 in a virtual format with 90+ participants. I chaired a few sessions and it seemed to go very positively. I also chaired our Town's Caucus session and the topics brought forward were update on "roads" (One of our overall NSFM strategic directions), caucus structure (should we be "regional" caucuses verses Town/Regional/Rural caucuses?), deer population, and general challenges. Of note – several members present were newly elected officials, and our Caucus offered them a warm welcome.

(Chair – Mayor Amanda McDougall-CBRM).

Government FOCUS (Female Objectives Cape Breton Unama'ki Strait)

Things have been on hold due to the Provincial Lock-down.

(Co-chairs Karen Bernard & Brenda Chisholm-Beaton)

Waterfront Advisory Committee

At last night's meeting (May 17), we reviewed the kiosk idea/pricing/timeline potential, we discussed updates regarding the Waterfront Development plan, potential to engage the community (post-lock-down) with waterfront beautification efforts, new businesses coming to the waterfront, the innovation centre/progress, and more.

Committee member Bert Lewis made a great contact re: Innovation Centre that we will explore to see if there might be some future synergies.

(Chair Joan MacDonald - vice chair Mark MacIver)

Housing Survey – The survey concluded last month, and I continue to work with the Cape Breton Partnership to explore the data outcomes, how/when the results can be reported to council, and how best (various options) for relaying this information to developers/investors and the public/stakeholders, as well as to our Housing committee. This file is ongoing.

Destination Cape Breton Association

We continue to work on our post-pandemic Tourism recovery plan, and we continue to focus on the online presence and opportunities to promote Cape Breton to the world. DCBA will be presenting to municipalities across the Island regarding our long-term Island Tourism strategy. The lock-down disrupted the launch of the strategy (virtual launch implemented instead).

Accessibility Advisory Meeting

Our meeting for April 22nd didn't have a quorum. The members on the call used the time to have a brief discussion regarding potential templates we might use to begin our own Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Plan. A new meeting will be scheduled that is a better fit with everyone's schedules. No chairs selected as yet.

Economic Development Advisory Meeting

Our meeting will be rescheduled as there were too many meeting conflicts.

(Chair) Kevin MacEachern (vice chair) Ashley Taylor