

Committee of the Whole

Committee Updates February 16/21

Mayor Chisholm-Beaton

Raising the Villages Port Hawkesbury:

Janelle Loader-Keough resigned as chair, and the group is presently seeking a new chair. The last set of meetings were held in the Fall of 2020 to plan and implement a Covid-safe Halloween event for kids.

One Cape Breton

The County of Victoria has agreed to host the next Island wide event in Baddeck – however, plans are on hold due to Covid 19. Will keep council apprised of any plans going forward.

Ceilidh Market

No meetings have been held yet in 2021. Covid 19 caused the 2020 season to be cancelled. Any future meetings will be reported to Council.

Chair – Kevin MacEachern.

Strait Richmond Housing Matters Coalition – Joint Richmond/Port Hawkesbury Group

We have a new chair and vice chair of this group now – Amanda Mombourquette (chair) and Celeste Gotell (vice chair). This group continues to discuss challenges and opportunities for housing, including housing gaps and housing needs for both communities, and of note, our group now gets regular updates from Chloe Fox, who works to house persons who presently find themselves with little or no housing options (and relays the severity of homelessness in our Town). This group meets monthly, consists of several housing stakeholders (Municipal, Public sector, private sector, community) and has recently updated the Terms of Reference.

Chairs – Amanda Mombourquette (vice Chair Celeste Gotell)

Cape Breton Local Immigration Pilot

We continue to discuss Island-wide topics important to the attraction and retention of new comers to Cape Breton. Councillor Jason Aucoin and I have attended virtual meetings, and this group has also formed many sub-committees to work on CBLIP initiatives. I sit on the “welcoming” sub-committee.

(Chairs: Trina Hall-Samson/Perla MacLeod)

One Nova Scotia – REAP Project

We have officially launched this project in January of 2021. Our team needs to raise \$30K contribution towards the MIT REAP program – the bulk is being sponsored by other government sources. We have the bulk of this sponsored. We've submitted our first assignment as a team this past weekend – which was to identify our team members, as well as their roles/responsibilities. We also participated in a 5-team program launch with MIT faculty for which we prepared a brief presentation outlining our region, its comparative advantages, and introducing our team members. I am happy to share more information with Council and/or give a presentation in the near future.

Cape Breton-wide Conference Calls (Cape Breton Partnership)

Virtual meetings continue with other Island leaders (from the 5 First Nation Communities and 5 Municipalities of Cape Breton / Unama'ki) via Zoom to discuss issues around Covid 19, as well as present circumstances of our municipalities and First Nation communities. These calls are attended by elected officials, senior First Nation and Municipal staff, MLAs, as well as our two Island MPs. It is hosted by the Cape Breton Partnership. We've met virtually in January and our February meeting was delayed due to power outages during a past winter storm. The February virtual call will be rescheduled.

Allan J MacEachen Regional Airport

We had a virtual meeting on February 9th - Minutes of last meeting were approved, topics reviewed were: updates regarding managers' report, marketing/branding strategy items (signs), work completed at the airport (new lights), work needed at the airport (new paint lines for runway) and review of the budget for the Allan J MacEachen Regional Airport.

A quick note on the determination of chair: it is Inverness County's turn to chair, however, both Councillors are new and has requested that I remain as acting chair until they are able to become more familiar with this committee and the work required. I've agreed to remain as chair for the short-term.

We will need to elect a vice-chair at the next meeting.

We will hold our next meeting in March 2021.

(Temporary Acting Chair: Brenda Chisholm-Beaton (Town of Port Hawkesbury))

Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health Committee

Maggie MacDonald continues to do great work as our Navigator. Maggie presented to Richmond County Council recently and can present at a future Public Meeting should Council

wish it. We are welcoming a new doctor to our Town in the next few weeks, and we continue to see that “housing” (lack thereof) has presented challenges for this new doctor, as well as other medical health professionals either seeking locum positions and/or relocating to the Strait and to Port Hawkesbury. We have our new website now live – I invite Council to check it out!

<https://capebretonrecruiting.com/>

(Co-chairs: Trevor Boudreau and Juanita 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.

One topic that has been discussed readily has been the request to the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing to have a representative from NSFM sit on the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission. We were denied a seat at this table. We were offered a seat at a sub-committee, however, NSFM supported the stance that we are a significant stakeholder and belong at the decision making table. We will continue to stand firm that Municipalities are closest to the people in our communities and we are “more” than just another stakeholder. We will continue to pursue this issue.

Our next NSFM Board meeting is not yet scheduled (date to be determined). These will continue as virtual meetings for the foreseeable future.

(Chair – Mayor Emily Lutz Vice Chair – Amanda MacDougall).

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

We are launching a new project and designing a mentorship program for women and girls in Eastern Nova Scotia. I am happy to update council as more details are determined regarding this project.

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

Waterfront Advisory Committee

At the last meeting, we reviewed and prioritized the Waterfront Development plan document.

We will need to continue to hold discussions about this plan, and what we'd like to move forward to Council for consideration.

The next Waterfront Development meeting will take place tomorrow.

(chair Joan MacDonald - vice chair Blaine MacQuarrie)

Media and Other work

In addition to regular media interviews after our public sessions, here are some other media activities I've participated in:

Shop Local Day – I did a morning spot on 101.5 The Hawk to promote shop local day in February.

Housing Survey – I will be working with the Cape Breton Partnership and Kevin MacEachern, and senior staff to schedule a morning spot on 101.5 the Hawk to discuss out housing survey and complete and circulate a press release. We will also implement the marketing/communications strategy that was shared with Council at our housing meeting most recently.