



# Town of Port Hawkesbury

## *Report to Council and Community*

**Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) Spring Convention – Yarmouth, NS**

**Submitted by: Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton & Councillor Paula Hart**

**Date: May 5<sup>th</sup> 2026**

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) Spring Convention held in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and to highlight key takeaways, discussions, and opportunities relevant to the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

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### **Overview of the Convention**

The NSFM Spring Convention brought together municipal leaders from across Nova Scotia to discuss shared priorities, emerging challenges, and opportunities for collaboration. The event featured keynote presentations, panel discussions, and engagement sessions with provincial representatives and sector experts.

The convention continues to be an important forum for municipalities to:

- Advocate for local priorities
  - Share best practices
  - Strengthen relationships with provincial partners
  - Collaborate on province-wide initiatives
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### **Key Themes and Discussions**

#### **1. Housing and Infrastructure Pressures**

A major focus of the convention was the ongoing housing crisis and the strain on municipal infrastructure. Discussions emphasized:

- The need for increased provincial and federal investment
- Streamlined approvals and planning processes
- Support for municipalities to expand servicing capacity

## **2. Municipal-Provincial Relations**

There was strong dialogue around strengthening the relationship between municipalities and the Province of Nova Scotia. Key points included:

- The importance of predictable, sustainable funding models
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities in service delivery
- Continued advocacy through NSFPM as a unified voice

## **3. Climate Change and Energy Transition**

Sessions highlighted the role municipalities play in advancing climate action and clean energy initiatives:

- Opportunities in renewable energy development
- Adapting infrastructure to climate impacts
- Leveraging regional strengths, particularly in coastal and rural communities

## **4. Economic Development and Workforce Challenges**

Municipal leaders shared concerns and strategies related to:

- Labour shortages across sectors
- Immigration and population growth as key drivers
- Supporting local business growth and investment attraction
- Astro tourism as an economic development tool

## **5. Community Development and Success Stories**

Municipal leaders shared success stories related to:

- Re-purposing buildings into community centres
- Community Active living projects (biking program)
- Communities in Bloom – Yarmouth success story

Note: David Sollows who presented the Communities in Bloom success story for the Town of Yarmouth was asked by Councillor Paula Hart to present at the upcoming Community Development Advisory Committee – since we both see huge potential to use their success story for Port Hawkesbury.

## 6. Matters of Municipal Interest

Sessions highlighted the issues important to municipalities:

- Provincial Updates : Municipal Affairs, Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage (Museums and Libraries), Policing, Emergency Management
  - Strong cities reflections
  - Harnessing AI for local government
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### Key Takeaways for Port Hawkesbury

- **Alignment with Local Priorities:** Many of the issues discussed—housing, infrastructure, energy transition, and workforce development—closely align with ongoing priorities in Port Hawkesbury and the Strait of Canso region.
  - **Advocacy Opportunities:** Continued engagement with NSFM is essential to ensure the Town’s priorities are represented, particularly around infrastructure funding, economic development, and regional growth.
  - **Partnership Potential:** The convention reinforced the importance of collaboration with neighboring municipalities, Indigenous communities, and provincial agencies to advance shared goals.
  - **Clean Energy Leadership:** Discussions around renewable energy and community-scale projects highlight opportunities for Port Hawkesbury to build on its leadership in the clean energy sector.
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### Meetings and Engagement

During the convention, we had the opportunity to engage with:

- Provincial ministers and staff
- Municipal leaders from across Nova Scotia
- Sector stakeholders in housing, energy, and economic development
- NSFM Advocacy updates – CEO – Juanita Spencer
- President of NSFM Update – Mayor David Mitchell – Town of Bridewater

These discussions helped strengthen relationships and provided valuable insights into funding programs, policy direction, and partnership opportunities. For example, having one

of the presenters (success stories) willing to provide a presentation to the Community Development Committee is one example of the value of attending NSFM, and being able to take critical information back to help enhance our town.

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## **Conclusion**

The NSFM Spring Convention in Yarmouth was a valuable opportunity to engage with municipal colleagues and provincial partners on the issues that matter most to our community. The sessions reinforced the importance of strong advocacy, collaboration, and strategic investment to support sustainable growth in Port Hawkesbury.

We will continue to bring forward relevant information and opportunities identified through NSFM to support Council's priorities and decision-making.