

Schools to Receive Automated External Defibrillators

By Maurice Rees

On March 16th, the provincial government announced a \$700,000 investment to equip all public schools in Nova Scotia with automated external defibrillators. Defibrillators are used to help those in cardiac arrest. The portable electronic devices analyze the heart's rhythm and deliver an electric shock to help it return to a more effective rhythm. Defibrillators include audio and visual prompts, making them easy and safe to use.

To ensure each school in the province has a device, the province will purchase up to 350, for a total investment of about \$700,000. About 70 schools already have a defibrillator - most of those have stu-



dents with specialized health-care plans requiring access to a defibrillator, while others have one as the result of fundraising, donation or based on a school community decision.

Once school-based automated external defibrillators are installed, they will be added to the provincial reg-

istry - a database linked to the Emergency Health Services (EHS) Medical Communications Centre software that allows EHS staff to direct people who call 911 to the closest defibrillator during a cardiac emergency.

Automated external defibrillators cost about \$2,000 each for the device and storage cabinet. There are more than 1,300 automated external defibrillators registered in the province. The Nova Scotia Volunteer Protection Act protects individuals from liability or damages if they use a defibrillator, provided they do not do so in a grossly negligent manner.



Image courtesy iheartradio.ca

Ritcey Seeks Answers on \$2-Million TAAC Funding

By Maurice Rees

MLA, Dave Ritcey recently asked Hon. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Minister of Communities,

Culture and Heritage, why in the last four years the government has not funded The Truro Amateur Athletic Club (TAAC) requires significant upgrades after 130 years of being very well used and requires about \$2 million in contribution from the province to build a premier sports facility in the hub of Nova Scotia

The TAAC Grounds, located in Truro, includes a quarter-mile, five-lane running and walking

track; field event facilities; football field; baseball field; and playground for kids. Several years ago when the decision was made to build a playing facility capable of accommodating all sports activi-

ties while encouraging and promotion healthier lifestyles for community members, a group of dedicated volunteers created the TAAC Ground Revitalization Project.

In response to Ritcey's claim of four years inaction, Lohnes-Croft replied I have only been the minister since October, so I cannot speak to

the last four years. I do know that this has been a file that I have been kept up to date on, and we will remain committed to working with the stakeholders. As you know, I visited you in Truro, and I did go on-site. I have met with your group, and we will continue to be committed to your stakeholders.

Excellence in Private Woodlot Management

By Maurice Rees

Nominations are being accepted until April 15 for the Woodland Owner of the Year Award, which recognizes excellence in forestry techniques and methods on private land.

Private woodlots are vital to maintaining healthy forests and a strong economy. That's why the province recognizes private woodlot owners for outstanding stewardship and management practices.

Lands and Forestry Minister Chuck Porter said, "This award is one way to recognize best practices and raise awareness among landowners." Nominations are evaluated based on criteria including the quality of integrated resource management practices, en-

vironmental standards and the owner's efforts to improve the condition and health of the woodlot.

The Woodland Owner of the Year award program has honoured private woodlot owners for outstanding resource stewardship for more than 30 years. Nova Scotians who own between 20 and 2,000 hectares (50 and 5,000 acres) of woodland are eligible to be nominated

The nomination deadline is April 15. Nominations can be made by mail, fax or online through the Department of Lands and Forestry website: <https://novascotia.ca/natr/woodlot/woya/applications.asp>

Colchester Noise By-Law "Muted"

Continued from page 1
sequently "Muting" the by-law for the time being..

During discussion prior to the vote on February 25th, it was agreed permitting for fireworks as presented in the draft by-law was acceptable. Also by majority, Council was not in favour of grandfathering existing businesses. Staff proposed a few additional changes to the draft by-law (discussed February 11th). The proposed changes include a clause specific to fireworks during a ban on open fires issued by the Province; a clause permitting up to two additional occasions for fireworks with time restrictions; delegation for exemptions; modified penalties; and, time restrictions for the detonation of fireworks.

Lengthy discussion was held on the draft by-law as presented. Deputy Mayor Stewart outlined a number of concerns with various clauses in the draft by-law. Nearly all councillors reported receiving a number of calls and emails with the majority not being in favour.

Deputy Mayor Stewart indicated that what was proposed is not acceptable; he is not against having a by-law that controls noise during certain time periods and one that does not restrict what people

in rural communities have become accustomed to.

After the vote to not approve, further discussion was held with a number of points being raised including dealing with fireworks separate from noise; safety being one of the major concerns with fireworks; unintended consequences of a noise by-law; potential adverse effects on existing businesses; misinterpretation of intentions of the draft by-law; lack of enforcement of other existing regulations; needing a mechanism to deal with repeat offenders; noise versus nuisance; and feedback and input received from the public.

A second motion was put forward by Councillor Boutilier, seconded by Councillor Sandeson "That staff come back to Council with options for dealing with fireworks and noise/nuisance, as two separate issues." The motion was carried with opposing votes from Mayor Blair, Councillors Cooper, Johnson, Patton and Taggart.

Even though the noise has been "muted", that is only temporary. It is not determined when council will receive a further report from staff. Based on council's desires, it is anticipated the report will separate the two matters. Dealing will the fireworks issue will be an

easier task and with July 1st coming soon councillor want to avoid complaints similar to what they experienced the last couple of years.

The noise by-law will be a more difficult task. Councillors have expressed concern about pitting neighbor against neighbor with complaints about chain saw running at 6 am; someone mowing their lawn early in the morning resulting in unexpected consequences, where the municipality was put in position to be a "sub-division referee". Such actions could lead to constant flow of court cases and litigation where nobody wins.

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