

REES' Pieces

Reactions to my thoughts

In last month's column, I hope no one thought I was suggesting there was no co-operation between municipalities in this area. I wouldn't say that because I know better. The Municipality of Colchester area has been a leader in many areas for providing the best value for taxpayers.

We know the municipal units of County of Colchester, Town of Truro, Stewiacke, Tatamagouche, Bible Hill and Millbrook have joined forces to bring about some very important projects, including, but not limited to: Kempton landfill & balefill facility, new regional hospital, wastewater treatment plant, Rath Eastlink Community Centre and many other areas not quite so visible.

Sometimes, there is little reaction to my monthly column. Occasionally, I wonder if it is being read. Not the case last month. With reaction from two prominent people in the municipality, I know it was well read. Mayor Bob Taylor reacted with astonishment concerning my comments regarding municipal co-operation. He responded with a letter, which has been published as a letter to the editor. District 9 councillor Doug MacInnes drew reference to my comments in his column, which is printed on Page 5.

Maybe, I didn't make it clear enough, but main thrust last month was "there is not enough co-operation and some possible projects are moving slowly because the level of trust is not as strong as it should be". There are many things which could be done with benefits extending far beyond the boundaries of Colchester County.

I maintain if the level of inter-municipal trust had been higher, CoRDA would not have been disbanded. CoRDA was the province's leader on municipal movement regarding immigration. Even today, there are frequent media reports about CoRDA's successes on immigration.

If the situation was such "CoRDA must be dissolved", sobeit. With the feds cutting off one third of the funding, life for the RDA's was going to be difficult causing the provincial government to disband 12 RDA's to orchestrate six larger REN's.

With a stronger level of trust and co-operation, Truro, Colchester, Millbrook, Bible Hill, Tatamagouche and Stewiacke could have joined forces to jointly fund and reformat a county-wide economic development team which salvaged the best of CoRDA, but was designed to meet today's needs of county-wide economic development.

With trust and the desire to work together below desirable levels, there was no other solution other than Town of Truro and County of Colchester to separately hire their own economic development officer.

A county-wide thrust involving a level playing field and engaging support and input from Millbrook to include all areas is required. A sustainable co-operative effort from all concerned including the Aboriginal community would put Colchester in the forefront.

Here's what I think we need immediately:

Reactivate CoRDA's Immigration File.

Go full steam ahead on runway and infrastructure improvements at Debert Airport. With Waterville Airport closing and the number of small planes Halifax Airport prefers be located elsewhere, the opportunity is NOW.

Jointly work on Truro's solar panel project for a successful conclusion.

Wrestle the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and other departments to the ground demanding immediate action on new Highway 104 exit to Debert.

Volunteer to help Millbrook get the \$7-8-Million it needs to build the museum and completion of their plans for the aboriginal lands in Debert. (The museum would be an Icon for the entire area).

Actively seek the public's input as to what they think needs to be done and how to do it.

Create an "Ambassadors" program, whereby private citizens are rewarded for enticing or making the introduction for business or families locating anywhere within the boundaries of Colchester.

I know it's hard for elected officials to openly and actively promote economic activity for an area, which they do not represent. However think of the synergy for Colchester if all elected officials and municipal staff we directed to push and pull for the entire county. Cities all over the world look for a "twin" city. Could our councillors do the same thing and match themselves up with a councillor from another Colchester municipality?

That's what I would call a "Municipal-Trust" Development Program.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Dear Maurice:

In the last edition of the Shoreline Journal, I was astonished to read your comments in your Editorial with regards to Municipal Government, especially Colchester County Council. I am surprised that you would comment on a response that I frequently use "We are already Co-operating in many areas". This response is not made without the facts to back it up. Following is the information that you were looking for. I hope you can share this with your readers.

First of all, I am Chair of the Rural Caucus for the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM), which makes me a member of the UNSM Board. Attending and taking part in the Board and various committee meetings, I get to know what is going on in other municipalities throughout the province. I am proud to say that the County of Colchester is a model for this province in the areas of infrastructure, regional cooperation and internal cooperation (within our Council).

This did not happen overnight. There has been a lot of planning and vision in this county over the past 20+ years, which has led us to where we are today, where we enjoy many shared services, projects, programs and inter-municipal agreements.

One of the first joint projects in the County was the construction of the Central Wastewater Treatment Facility in Lower Truro. This facility was built by the County over 20 years ago to accommodate urban Colchester County, the Town of Truro, and Millbrook. The County invested \$14 million recently in expansion and upgrades to this facility to handle increased volumes and improve efficiency. The Town of Truro shares in the capital and operating costs of this facility.

Recently, the Town of Truro established a new sewer by-law which mirrors the County by-law. The Town and County will work together to enforce these by-laws.

It is nearly 20 years ago that the County constructed a Balefill Facility in Kempton to handle the garbage from the County and Towns of Truro and Stewiacke. The County also constructed a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) which not only serves the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, but also the Counties of Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough and West Hants.

Also over 20 years ago, the Town of Truro expanded their

Water Treatment Plant to service the central area. This facility now serves Truro, Millbrook, Bible Hill and part of Salmon River.

Another more recent accomplishment of the County and the Town of Truro working together was the construction of a new \$50 million community centre. Again, the construction and operating costs are shared between the County and Town. Through our regional cooperation on this project, we were able to attract \$10 million funding from the province and another \$10 million from the federal government.

The Town of Truro is now in the process of refurbishing the old Normal College to become the new library. This project was made possible through a partnership with the County's funding contribution of \$2.25 million. This new library will serve many County residents.

Another success story of regional cooperation is our flood mitigation projects. The County of Colchester has been involved in flood mitigation projects for years. In 2012, a Joint Flood Committee was formed with the Town of Truro and Millbrook First Nations. This Committee, through its regional approach, attracted the cooperation and funding from the province, allowing flood mitigation projects to proceed in the Salmon and North Rivers and McClure's Brook. With the approvals of various provincial departments, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and millions of dollars in funding from the province, work is in progress that hasn't been possible for over 40 years. Another plus of this project is a great working relationship between the Public Works staff of the three municipal units.

There are a number of services which are shared between the County and other municipal units:

The Colchester's Animal Control Officer also serves the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke.

The Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) is comprised of the Mayor, a Councillor, and CAO from the County and the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke.

The Special Hazards Unit is housed in Colchester County and serves the whole area.

In the area of recreation, although the County, Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, and the Village of Bible Hill each have their own recreation departments, they all work very closely together on projects

and programs.

In policing, the Colchester RCMP Unit and the Truro Police Service work very well together. Their joint project, Boots in the Street, has had great success in addressing criminal activity in the area.

In fire service, the County is supportive and works closely with the CFFA and individual fire brigades. Mutual aid works amazingly well and is a model of regional cooperation. Fire brigades from the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke are members of CFFA. The County of Colchester has 15 volunteer fire brigades and has service agreements with three other brigades: Stewiacke, Shubenacadie and Cook's Brook.

In economic development, CoRDA was established in 1992 as a joint effort of the County and the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke. Due largely to the end of funding by ACOA and the province, CoRDA has been dissolved. The County has hired its own Economic Development Officer (EDO), as has the Town of Truro and Millbrook First Nations. There is however, a will to continue to work together. In fact, our EDO is committed to work with her fellow officers and works on the basis that there are no borders when it comes to economic development.

As Mayor, I have open communication, not only with Mayors of Truro and Stewiacke and the Chief of Millbrook First Nations, but the Wardens of Cumberland and Pictou counties, which we will cooperate with on an informal basis. In addition, our economic development office has had discussion with the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce and is in the process of reaching out to the business community for their input and developing a working relationship.

The County is presently developing a new Taxi By-law, which may mirror Truro's By-law. This is one of the many agreements that we will continue to work with and share with our neighbours.

The County and Town also have inter-municipal agreements in place, one being the Walmart development. This facility is partly in the Town of Truro and partly in the County. Through this agreement, the development was made possible and the Town and County share services and the tax revenue.

At the County, we are also very proud of our internal cooperation. The County is made up of a number of urban

communities and a large rural area. Through mutual respect of our urban and rural Councillors, our Council has been very successful in supporting communities and organizations throughout our County.

Regional cooperation is very important to our Council. It is something that we feel is very important. It takes a lot of patience and dedication and it doesn't happen overnight. It is always a work in progress. We make every effort to work with our three MLA's and have great working relations with our MP.

Maurice, as a County, we are very supportive of the Ivany Report and will continue to do our part to implement all of the recommendations in the report. In our opinion, we are well on our way. However, as a County, it is apparent that we do not do a good enough job of "Blowing Our Own Horn". It would be great if you would do your own part in helping us out.

Yours truly,
Bob Taylor
Mayor

The
Shoreline
Journal

Here's where
to find us:

BASS RIVER:

Bayside Pharmacy
Dominion Chair Factory Store

BIBLE HILL:

C.W. Fraser Pharmacy
MacQuarries Pharmacy

DEBERT:

Barnhill's Superette
Debert Mini-Mart

FIVE ISLANDS:

Masstown Market Five Islands

GLENHOLME:

Double "C" Truckstop
Glenholme General Store

GREAT VILLAGE:

Wilson's Gas

MAITLAND:

Frieze & Roy General Store

MASSTOWN:

Masstown Market

NORTH RIVER:

Grant's Grocery

ONSLow:

Onslow Market

PARRSBORO:

CrossRoads Co-op
Ken's Grocery
Wright's Pharmasave

TRURO:

Atlantic Superstore
MacQuarrie's Pharmasave
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