

Bleacher War – Further Update

By Maurice Rees

(Although, I will try my best to be unbiased. Mentioning certain things which seem to be factual are still rumours, because nobody will say so on the record. However, one knows there is a lot of truth there, when those close to the situation and municipal officials don't want "to comment". I promise not to editorialize, but will report to the full extent of confirmation or knowing there is strong semblance of truth).

With all the various situations involving the RECC, which is owned by County of Colchester and Town, it's hard to determine what is "the flavour of the day". Lots of rumours, many not substantiated, but many full of fact. The problem in flushing them out is it's hard to get anyone to discuss on the record.

Although very problematic, the bleachers costing \$1.2-Million when purchased last year are minor in comparison to the cost of "righting" all the RECC's problems. By the time it's over (4-5 years) the legal, repair, catching up on mis-use, lack of a proper maintenance program, additional energy and emission solutions the cost in dollars could range between \$6 & \$7-Million.

The real cost is going to be fracturing and division between the public (taxpayers) and municipal leaders. The war of personalities is going to be long, dirty, outlandish and probably irreparable cresting with the next municipal, election.

In a phone conversation with Truro's Mayor Kathy Hinton on a variety of subjects, she put her best spin on the matter suggesting the RECC is very important to the area and she's working for a quick solution. When I mentioned the public outcry for public representation on the RECC society board of directors she acknowledged the outcry and Town of Truro council felt the same way.

I was successful receiving as return call from RECC board chair,



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Tim Johnson, one of three Colchester councillors on the six member RECC board, who mentioned a walk through the RECC by board members with the consulting firm awarded the contract to develop a report on required work to rid the facility of its poor state of repairs. A few of the major flaws were quickly mentioned, but as chair Johnson commented its going to be a long painful process taking 4-5 years and probably \$5-Million.

Others whom I attempted to contact were Colchester Mayor Christine Blair and Dan Troke, CAO, Municipality of Colchester. As of press time, they had not returned my call. I will give them benefit of the doubt, because my call to each of them was initiated after 3:00 pm on Friday afternoon. Next month, if I am doing another story and remember. I'll update you, how long it took them to return my call.

Other people have contacted me about a number of RECC related matters, because they have questions and want us to check and report so the public knows. I have not been able to substantiate but will put on the table because they have been brought my attention. I will follow up on each matter. One called to say RECC is literally sinking....stating in men's washroom in a corner an area has dropped about four inches and there is a letter in existence, because during construction an engineer resigned because he had ordered / suggested a particular type of backfill in a bog area, only to find out his

engineer requirements not been followed.

The list goes on and on because an insider has leaked information - apparently there are legal suits and claims received at the municipal office in November 2025 which have not been brought to council. Another source, who wishes to remain unnamed, has informed the Shoreline Journal one of the suits and claims letters that was sent last Nov 2025, warned council of a potential lawsuit. It has never been brought forward to council. I have not been following, but sources tell councillor Lisa Patton has been publishing a transparency series.

This being production weekend for the August issue, I haven't had time to source a link to Patton's series. I will as soon as the August issue is delivered. On Saturday late afternoon, I was alerted to the fact Patton's transparency series has posted details that one of the items from November 2025 which had not been brought to council was data from Stephanie Jones warning of a potential lawsuit.

Wishing for more information to be made public, earlier in the week, while researching the RECC situation, it was suggested I attempt to interview Matt Moore, while another suggested Kevin Bushey could provide lots of insight.

I had already added Stephanie Jones and Andrew Lake, Former Chair and Vice Chair of the interim board who were also dismissed by RECC owners prior to formation of the six councillor board, three from Colchester and Truro. Now that Jones' November 2025 submission, previously undisclosed, to Municipality of Colchester has been revealed, I will be hot on her trail.

With Premier Tim Houston in town on August 4th to address Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce, I expect two things: heavy pressure on the 3 local MLA's, Tom Taggaert and two cabinet ministers Hon Dave Ritey and Hon Scott Armstrong asking for provincial government oversight on the matter of the RECC governance and I expect someone will organize a public protest as the public becomes more enraged about the RECC situation. If a protest evolves, let's hope its peaceful and not get out of hand like Wolfville.

Bleacher war & RECC update, see also page 1 and 3

Sell Each Other's Products, Open More Stores

The Province is making two changes that will support local wineries, cideries, breweries and distilleries and offer consumers more choice. Nova Scotia alcohol producers will soon be able to cross-sell other local alcohol products at their locations. For example, a vineyard in the Annapolis Valley could partner with a Cape Breton distillery to sell each other's products.

The other change will allow local producers to set up secondary retail stores separate from production facilities. Currently, a vineyard, cidery, brewery or distillery can have more than one retail store only if each one is attached to a production facility.

There are about 120 licensed alcohol producers in Nova Scotia. In 2025-26, sales of local products at the NSLC totalled \$150.9 million, an increase of \$15.2 million over the previous year. Recent support for the local industry includes a March agreement between Nova Sco-

tia and Ontario allowing direct-to-consumer sales.

On March 2nd, Premier Tim Houston and Ontario Premier Doug Ford signed a direct-to-consumer agreement that will allow Nova Scotia producers to sell their wine, beer and spirits directly to Ontarians. Nova Scotians will also be able to order alcoholic beverages directly from Ontario producers.

"Nova Scotia is committed to dismantling internal trade barriers, piece by piece, but my goal is to have free trade, nationwide," said Premier Houston. "This agreement is a stepping stone that will give our local producers more access to Ontario markets and open a broader customer base. We will continue to work with other provinces and territories to reach agreements so that our companies have more opportunities and customers have more choice."

Consumers must be 19 or older to order alcohol, and the beverages must

be for personal use. Nova Scotia is one of Canada's leading winemaking regions and produces a variety of beer, coolers, cider and distilled products.

"Local producers have been asking for these changes. We've listened - these changes will strengthen their industry and allow them to sell more products here at home," said Premier Tim Houston. "Nova Scotians love supporting local, and these changes offer them more choice."

There will be limits on how much product one producer can sell that is made by another local company. Those and other details will be part of discussions the Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. (NSLC) will have with people in the industry this summer to ensure the regulations reflect their feedback.

The Province intends to allow cross-selling by early August and secondary retail locations by fall.

Also see 'Nova Scotia Signs Direct-to-Consumer...' story on page 3.

Rushton's Statement on Wildfire Season

By Tory Rushton

Nova Scotia is entering a period of hot and dry weather, and I want to remind everyone that we all have a role to play in preventing wildfires. So far this year, about 100 wildfires have been recorded across the province, including a significant fire near Mooseland Road in Halifax County that crews are working hard to manage. That is more than double the number we had at this time last year. While our crews are managing current wildfire activity, conditions are becoming drier, and the risk is increasing.

Most wildfires are caused by people, and that means many can be prevented. Please check the BurnSafe map every day, follow the restrictions in your area, and be careful when having a fire or disposing of cigarettes.

During wildfire risk season, no domestic brush burning or campfires are allowed between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Burn restrictions are updated daily, and when burning is not allowed, do

not burn. The fine for not following the daily burn restrictions is \$25,000. These rules are in place to protect people, communities and our natural resources.

If you see a wildfire or someone violating burn restrictions, please report it.

By being cautious and making responsible choices, Nova Scotians can help reduce the risk of wildfires and keep communities safe.

Tory Rushton, MLA Cumberland South is also Minister of Natural Resources.



Colchester
be centred here.

Presentations Meeting
Tuesday, August 4 @ 6pm
Colchester Planning Advisory Community Meeting
Wednesday, August 5 @ 6pm
Council Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 13 @ 6pm
Council Meeting
Thursday, August 27 @ 6pm

Municipality of Colchester, 1 Church Street, Truro
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