

REES' Pieces

Let's develop a "Grassroots" plan

We need to change our attitude, accept change and do things differently, because Nova Scotia is on track to fail, because of mounting debt. We don't accept change easily, but we must. Most of the media is portraying the desperate situation we are facing, and the public is slowly understanding the message. The public would prefer political leaders sticking their necks out making massive changes rather than applying band-aids for fear of voter reaction at the next election.

Just when the public is warmed up, someone side swipes them with an unexpected left hook. I'm referring to the \$150,000 consultants report presented to Finance Minister Whalen. What a piece of garbage. The only accurate finding was funding of all programs and departments must be capped at current levels.

Since the report's release, I haven't determined if I have lost faith or confidence I may have had for consultants, or if my diminishing comfort level should be aimed at those who hire them.

As a comparison of what needs to be done and what would be accepted by the public, I challenge the government to ask for "grassroots" direction on what to do. If they take up the challenge, they must use the same guidelines, find another \$150,000, and divide the province into 10 specific areas. Within each area 15 community groups would be charged with bringing community and business organizations, business leaders and municipal representatives onboard to identify 10 key initiatives.

Knowing community groups as I do, and their ability to deliver, I'm positive the following 8 week timetable would produce great results:

Three weeks to get themselves organized,

One weekend to hold a workshop of community leaders, business owners, business organizations and perhaps some municipal representation. Each group to find its own local volunteer facilitator for the day long workshop.

One week for each of the 15 community committees in the 10 areas to compile their report.

Three representatives from each of the 15 community committees hold a one day workshop to reduce 15 individual reports to an area document. All 15 reports appended to the area report. (45 people, plus three workshop leaders).

Five members from each of the 10 areas assemble for a one day workshop, where 10 area reports would be compiled into a master document, with each report being included as an appendix. (50 people, plus a facilitator and three workshop assistants).

Three members from the central committee chosen to present the final document to cabinet - complete with Power Point Presentation. Each of the 10 areas should have one member of their committee there to answer questions from cabinet members. (13 people).

I'll bet a majority of the conclusions from 150 groups would be very similar.

As for the total costing: Items 1, 2 & 3 would be covered by the \$1,000 to each of the 150 community groups. For items 4 & 5, each of the 95 people, plus facilitator and assistants would be given a stipend of \$50.00. (Cost \$4,750.00)

The three member committee chosen to present the document to cabinet should be given \$1,000.00 to seek professional preparation, plus \$100.00 each towards travel expenses. (Cost: \$1,300.00).

Ideally cabinet would meet in some rural community (not a town or village) provide \$50 to \$100.00 toward travel expenses for the 13 committee members, plus cabinet should pay a community group to provide two coffee breaks and noontime lunch of soup and sandwiches. (Cost: \$650-\$1,300, plus lunch).

If they want broader consensus, the three presenters should present the final report to all 52 MLAs the next day.

Cabinet would have to come up with \$7,350, plus lunch, over and above the initial \$150,000.00 to 150 community groups. The 150 community groups would each average 20-30 people for their workshops. That's 3,000 to 4,500 Nova Scotians providing input and direction to all 52 MLAs on how the province should be administered to get us on the road to prosperity.

If accepted as a go forward "grassroots" plan for the future, one rule must apply. No elected politicians or staff attend any of the workshops or be on any area committee.

If McNeil's Liberals accept my challenge, I wonders: (1), which consulting report would provide the best roadmap to prosperity, and (2) which would be more widely accepted by 940,000 Nova Scotians?

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Dear Maurice

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank you for publishing my husband, John Sterling's picture while he was in hospital ICU wearing his Korean medal and displaying the certificate of appreciation from Korea.

I had gone to Westville to attend the ceremony to receive them from the Ambassador of Korea. Jack was so proud of them. I am glad I stopped by the hospital on my way home. I had Jack put on his medal and display the certificate as I took his picture.

Unfortunately, he passed away a few days later.

Always obey your instincts, they will never steer you wrong. I am very glad I stopped by the hospital even though it was supertime.

We had 19 years together. I experienced what it was like being married to an ex-military man, proud to have served and involved with the Legion. It made me more aware of what our military personnel experienced in the past and present.

Jack always said he experienced haunted feelings when

he was stationed at TOS Camp Hohne, Germany (Belson Camp). He went to the remains of the concentration camp each day. He said it was like nothing he ever felt in his life. He had no words for it.

Jack was knee deep in military research which he gave to the Debert Military Museum and the Truro Museum last summer.

He wrote a book on the HMCS Truro, a mine sweeper and he donated it to the Truro High School, because they have a few artifacts from HMCS Truro. After the war, it

was decommissioned and sold becoming the MV Miner, a BC coastal ship which delivered supplies up and down the BC coast. Jack worked as a deck hand for this company before he joined the military on May 7, 1951.

The book tells how the Town of Truro adopted the minesweeper and provided supplies like baked goods, knitted sweaters, sock, mittens, scarves, toques, letter and even a washing machine. That's just a little bit of unknown history about Truro.

Micheline Sterling, Belmont

Flooding Concern to Council

By Maurice Rees

There was a lot more on the agenda, but two items of particular interest to residents within the Shoreline Journal coverage were discussed at Municipal Council committee meeting on Tuesday, November 18th. The items were: an application by AIS regarding release of additional treated fracking fluids was added to the agenda and a request by Councillor Tom Taggart for a discussion on November 17th flooding.

At the start of council, a moment of silence was held for Anna Partridge a former councillor who passed away recently.

Under personnel policies some minor changes were made overtime for management and supervisory staff (non-unionized), which included management staff who work in excess of 48 hours shall be eligible double time if work is required on Sundays, holidays or they are called back from vacation which will entitle them to be paid double time. Another change was employees can only carry over a maximum of 40 hours into the next fiscal year.

Staff made a presentation to council on the Municipal Affairs requirement to review boundaries and population within each councillor district. Municipal Affairs requires a review every eight years and that population variance on average is within 10%+/- . In a survey on boundary changes sent to all households, out of 833 responses 547 suggested boundaries should remain the same, while 188 suggested smaller districts with larger districts suggested by 45. Fifty three survey replies indicated no response.

With regard to population variances, District 1 is 123 people over UARB's threshold of average 10%+/- while Districts 6 and 8 were under populated by 54 and 93 respectively. After discussion on motion by Mayor

Bob Taylor (who does not chair committee meetings) seconded by Councillor Christine Blair council decided not to change the boundaries.

An information item on Property Taxation Computation Errors was brought forward because of a previous insistence of Councillor Tom Taggart, when a resident in his area was overcharged because a building that had been demolished was not removed from assessment and tax payable calculations. After staff's discussion with municipal affairs, it was learned the Municipal Act does not permit changes to be made in assessment or taxes if the error is not noticed within the appeal period.

The Municipal Act further states it is the taxpayer's responsibility to ensure assessment amounts are correct.

The matter of releasing treated fracking water came before council again, because staff is studying new data received from Atlantic Industrial Services, Debert regarding possible release of 6-Million litres of treated fracking fluid. In January 2014 AIS had applied to discharge reverse-osmosis treated flow back water into the County's sanitary sewer system in Debert.

Currently AIS is discussing potential disposal of RO-treated flow back waters with the City of Dieppe, NB and Town of Amherst. HRM previously refused and Town of Windsor discussions have been inactive for some time.

In October 2014 AIS retained the services of Dillon Consulting to carry out third party sampling of the RO-treated flow back water. The information item presented to councillors stated: Staff are conducting a review of new October data, as well as all historic quality data. "Once the review is complete the Director of Public Works will make a final determination on the request for discharge of RO-treated flow back water into the Debert Sewer System".

Perhaps the one item with the most heated debate was Councillor Tom Taggart's request to discuss the second round of flooding in Great Village within the last two months. Heavy rains on November 17th caused extensive flooding again in Great Village and Debert River at Elm River Park in Glenholme. Taggart was upset that nothing had been done since the September 22nd flooding, yet remediation efforts had been added in other areas.

Some councillors claimed that clear cutting particularly on Belmont Mountain has been a contributing factor. Councillor MacInnes stated that what used to take three days for waters to reach Glenholme, prior to clear cutting, now occurs in three hours. Some provincial officials from Transportation and Municipal Affairs claim that a contributor the flooding in both Great Village and Debert Rivers is that the mouths of the rivers have in filled with silt and sediment from tidal action, which causes the water levels to increase because they cannot escape.

Councillor Ron Cavanaugh, who chairs the flood committee, stated that with siltation infilling it's almost pointless and I realize there is a business there but how far can we go. Taggart took exception to the statements saying the mouths of those rivers would not infill any quicker than the North or Salmon Rivers, where a lot of work has been done.

In consultation with provincial officials, staff claims the costs would be extremely large and it could take over \$250,000 to conduct the proper studies as to how to remediate the situations for the best long term results.

Taggart said his residents are demanding action and everyone is concerned that in the spring, when there is ice in the rivers. If infilling is part of the problem it will only be worse if flooding occurs, just as the ice is breaking up and then high siltation levels at the mouth of the rivers create even large ice jams. Should that happen we will have even worse

problems on our hands. While everyone hopes and waits no more flooding occurs staff will pursue the matter with provincial officials.

The Shoreline Journal

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Bayside Pharmacy
Dominion Chair Factory Store

BELMONT:
A & N General 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
MTM Retail Gas (Petro-Can)

NORTH RIVER:
Grant's Grocery

ONSLow:
Onslow Market

PARRSBORO:
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TRURO:
Atlantic Superstore
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