

Council Meets to Review Strategic Priorities

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rather than during the quarterly update reports.

One item on the agenda included Community Engagement which included Building a Municipal Brand that residents and communities want to engage with; Developing new channels of engagement such as E-Newsletter, website and social media; and, Promoting engagement options.

On another matter, minutes from the meeting revealed council discussed the lack of media attention on 'good news' stories such as the recent trip to Jordan for the Jordan Municipal Support Project; opportunities to self-promote; and, mechanisms to handle social media during adverse matters. CAO Simonds indicated "Staff are investigating options for promoting ourselves rather than relying on

media, and having processes in place to have one spokesperson for media relations and Facebook and Twitter platforms".

Other items discussed included:

Economic Development

- Secure and build on strengths including Debert Business, diverse economy with key sectors, location, excellent amenities and events, collaboration with Truro & Colchester Partnership (TCPEP);
- Strive to improve on weaknesses such as internet and transportation, healthy communities, environmental protection, and policy advocacy; and,
- Attraction and Placemaking such as smart marketing, tourism with intent, and welcoming and inclusive



places and events.

Community Engagement

- Building a Municipal Brand that residents and communities want to engage with;
- Developing new channels of engagement such as E-Newsletter, website and social media; and,
- Promoting engagement options.

Debert Airport

- Listed as one of the top five priorities of Council;
- Community asset with potential for economic benefits;
- Compliment Debert as a

whole; • Need to reignite the development of new hangars; • Reports commissioned - Land Use Plan and Airfield Pavement Assessment; • Events held - Mud Hero and Car Show; and,

• Future possibilities such as monthly drive-in during summer months and large music festivals.

Debert Business Park (DBP) - Marketing / Business Relations / Land Development

- Completion of branding, website development and refacing existing signage;

NSTIR to redo highway signs this Fall; Directional signage and highway billboard - project tentatively scheduled to take place during the Winter;

- Continue to receive business inquiries on a regular basis; explore options for warehouse and small business start-up space; expansion of Kohltech and Tim Hortons; and new business, Lumina, on Ventura Drive; and,
- Continue to clear and prepare land for development; and time to consider a Land Use By-law for DBP.

Fundy Discovery Site

- Washroom building, landscaping at washroom and VIC, phase 1 of playground, upgraded highway signage, and raised dyke with trail completed;
- Entrance signage, security audit, and website development underway;
- Next phase of development includes playground phase

2, amphitheatre, road improvements, power and communication line management, interpretation planning and bridge design.

Possible amenities for the Fundy Discovery Site were discussed including a quality restaurant. Concern was raised regarding the issue of security at the site, specifically sufficient lighting. It was noted that timing is of the essence for proper security. The CAO advised that the building is wired for high resolution cameras, conversations have taken place with the RCMP to do walkabouts on the property. Also, staff would look into having Commissionaires available for security on Halloween night.

Additional items under review are included in separate stories, below and on page 23.

More Strategies Priorities Discussed

By Maurice Rees

The following is the remainder of the strategic priorities discussed by Colchester Council in a special committee meeting held on October 22nd. The media was not advised in advance of the meeting. This information is garnered from minutes which were presented to committee meeting on November 15th for approval.

Community Services (Recreation)

- Trail Head Design/Build - staff are waiting on NSTIR for construction specifications and weather permitting, the goal is to start this Fall.
- Truro Heights Playground (Anita) - equipment is on site but waiting on NS Power for right-of-way to proceed with installation.
- Arena Association Collaboration - proving difficult to get all parties together; recent meeting held on October 17th with next scheduled for November 19th; working on ice times but still have some gaps; major event coming up in Debert; meeting with minor hockey to take place after their schedule is set.
- Truro Heights Playground (Parkwood) - plans for initial property not feasible so staff seeking alternative properties. An inquiry was made about progress for trails being utilized as multi-use/bike trails. Mr. Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, advised that he

will set up a meeting to explore this opportunity.

Engineering and Public Works

- Snow Plow Levels of Service - operational changes were made last winter season resulting in recognized improvements. As such, this item can be being removed from list but can be brought back if need arises.
- Asset Management - significant progress made identifying assets, however, condition assessment will be an ongoing operational requirement. Staff suggested this item be moved from the Strategic Priorities list to a general operational item.
- Review/Update Engineering Standards - current document approx. 20 years old. Standards require updating and will include better specifications for stormwater management. This project will be undertaken in the next year or so.
- Debert Business Park Infrastructure - upgrades are ongoing; the roundabout is scheduled for 2019.
- Tatamagouche Source Water Protection - staff is currently looking into having the area designated as a protected watershed.
- Biosolids - staff provided an update at the last Council meeting and will continue to work on alternative options such as composting in-house with more information in the coming months. Brief discussion

was held regarding the Debert Roundabout and biosolids. Referring to biosolids, the CAO advised that council directive was to also utilize political resources to aid in moving this item forward.

Corporate Services

- Long Term Financial Plan - created to consider financial opportunities and challenges; used as a guide for future decision making; creates financial forecasts; and uses performance indicators to measure financial results. The goal is to present to Council in December.
- Website Redevelopment - on hold pending the completion of the branding exercise.
- Collective Bargaining - Local 3945 completed with five-year agreement; Local 4106 in progress.
- HR Performance Review - completed.
- Onboarding/Offboarding - scheduled for April 2019.
- Fee Review - ongoing.
- Alternative Revenue - staff seeking other sources not taxation related such as events (Mud Hero) and solar opportunities. Discussion was held regarding monthly financial reporting. Mr. Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services advised that the aim is to provide quarterly or monthly reports.

Solid Waste

- Waste to Energy - recently approved a feasibility study

by Price Waterhouse Cooper which is currently underway.

- Collection Contract - recently completed with new contract beginning November 1.
- Expand MRF Contracts - included in with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). The MRF is experiencing storage capacity issues and the Municipality may need to be looking at an expansion possibly with Joint Cumberland Services; unsure of provincial direction at this time; necessary to keep EPR top of mind.
- Thrift Store - explored options with other municipalities; looking to reduce materials going into the landfill rather than a revenue generator; staff to look at collaborating with other organizations.

Advocacy

- REN Start-up (now TCPEP) - completed;
- REN Strategic Plan - completed with presentation to Council in the near future.
- Debert Archaeology - work in process; advocacy role with provincial and federal levels of government; partnership role with Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq.

Following the completion of the staff updates, Council began discussion on topics to be removed from and/or added to the list of Strategic Priorities. The CAO advised that he would like to have motions of Council on changes to the Strategic Priorities Chart.

Physician Recruitment was discussed with the CAO advising that the Committee, comprised of various community members, has met on a few occasions and is making good progress. Council may see a request for a financial commit-

ment coming forward in the near future for consideration.

On the topic of Asset Management, staff suggested this item be removed from the Strategic Priorities as it is an ongoing operational function. Moved by Councillor Stewart, Seconded by Mayor Blair: "That Council Committee recommends to Council that Asset Management be removed from the Strategic Priorities Chart and changed to an operational function." Motion Carried Unanimously.

Other items discussed for addition to the Strategic Priorities Chart included the Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Watershed Designation and Rural Broadband. Further discussion was held on the Debert Airport and whether this should remain as a 'Now' Strategic Priority.

Debate was held on the process for having items added to or removed from the list, and if a ranking system would be required.

The remainder of the Strategic Priorities were finalized in a special unadvertised committee meeting held on October 29th and are printed elsewhere in this issue.

See also "Council Finalizes Priorities review" on page 23.

Deadline for the January issue of The Shoreline Journal is December 11.



BILL CASEY
Member of Parliament

Amherst Address:
5 Ratchford Street
Amherst NS B4H 1X2
902-667-8679

Truro Address:
40 Inglis Place
Truro NS B2N 4B4
902-895-2863

Email: bill.casey@parl.gc.ca

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