

Christina McCarron

Colchester North - Christina McCarron, NDP Candidate

(EDITOR'S NOTE: All candidates in Colchester North were asked to complete a questionnaire unique to the Colchester North. This reply is from Christina McCarron, NDP Candidate).



Christina McCarron

1. What topic is raised most frequently while campaigning "door to door"?

On doorsteps, we often speak with people who are concerned about the cost of living, housing, and finding health care. With both the Fundy Shore and the Northumberland Shore in our district, many residents are also concerned about the abandonment of the Coastal Protection Act and what that means for the future of our coastlines.

2. The electorate is demanding a higher rate of accountability to their concerns. Nation-wide there is a significant increase of complaints elected officials I staff do not return calls promptly. Do you promise "you personally" or "a senior member of your staff" will return a call to constituent within 24 hours?

We are committed to serving our constituents and will respond to inquiries as quickly as possible.

3. The lack of suitable affordable housing has become a major problem. Remote rural areas face even great challenges with lack of infrastructure such as: conditions of roads, cellphone, acceptable internet and government service. What will you do to ensure infrastructure to these areas is improved to levels consistent with other areas in order to retain current populations or to attract new families to the area?

As Nova Scotia grows, it's important that our housing and infrastructure grows with it. New Democrats are committed to catching up where the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals have lagged behind. We will invest deeply in housing that people in Colchester North can afford to ensure people can live and raise their families here. We also know that many people are struggling with spotty internet service, including small business owners who are trying to conduct business online. We will work to improve connectivity for the people of Colchester North.

4. What is the most promising asset / resource to achieve economic growth or population growth for Colchester North?

In Colchester North, we are lucky to have beautiful natural resources like our forests and coastlines. We can grow economically and attract people by making the most of these resources through eco-tourism, sustainable farming, fishing, and forest management and by using our resources to green our own electrical grid.

5. With changes in the labour supply market, there is a visible increase in service sector employees from other countries. How extensive is "racism and bigotry" a basic and systemic problem in Colchester North? How will you help change it?

Everyone deserves to feel safe in Nova Scotia, but we know that people here do unfortunately experience racism and bigotry. New Democrats are committed to promoting an inclusive society where people can learn from one another and build a more welcoming community in Colchester North.

6. What steps should be taken and how will you assist in making Colchester North among the "least racist" and "most welcoming" constituency in Nova Scotia?

Societies work better when everyone has a seat at the table. New Democrats understand there's important work ahead to make our communities safer, and where everyone feels they belong. We encourage open conversations within communities and more cultural celebrations and events to help people connect and learn from one another. We believe that overcoming racism and bigotry of all kinds requires continuous education and action.

7. In which sectors in Colchester North should government prioritize its efforts of leadership and funding assistance to achieve a high rate of economic and population growth?

We know it's important to support small businesses which is why New Democrats will cut the small business tax to 1.5 per cent and investing more in training and apprenticeships. Improvements in rural transit and help for families and workers with the costs involved in operating vehicles would also bolster the rural economy.

8. ScotiaPort projects 4,600 jobs within a 20-year development period. Proponents of the project insist a new Highway 104 / 102 interchange, costing upwards of \$50-million, is essential. How hard will you work to ensure the new interchange is built as soon as possible? How soon might you be able to announce progress on the interchange?

Road conditions in Colchester North, and all over the province, need work. High-quality roads are necessary to connect communities and allow safe travel. We will work to better understand how this project will help the residents of Colchester North.

9. How can you assist all three levels of government to ensure the best decisions will be made regarding expanding the "green energy" footprint and

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CN rail line, both parts of our national transportation system. Nearly \$100 million of trade every day, and \$35 billion each year pass along this corridor.

For three years, I have been pushing for the federal Liberals to provide the millions of dollars required for the project, and I am thankful that since late last year, Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston has added his government's weight to the landscape.

As it stands, Ottawa sees fit to provide 50 per cent of the ever-increasing cost of the project. This is unacceptable given that two major Quebec bridges - both part of the Trans-Canada Highway - have received 100 per cent federal funding.

Home Ownership

Along with our four pillars of change - Axe the Tax, Build the Homes, Fix the Budget and Stop the Crime - is a commitment by the Conservative Party to make new home construction a possibility for Canadians.

The fifth pillar is Axe the Sales Tax on new homes valued under \$1 million. This federal tax cut (GST) will save \$40,000, or \$2,200/year in mortgage payments on a \$800,000 house.

This initiative will create 30,000 more homes built yearly.

Common Sense Conservatives will also push provinces to remove their sales tax from new home construction, which

would save homebuyers tens of thousands of dollars more.

Remembrance Day

Despite the rain and hail, I thank staff members that represented me at Remembrance Day ceremonies in Middle Stewiacke, Bass River, Amherst, Economy, Great Village and Londonderry. I attended the observance in Truro. It is heartwarming to see that Cumberland-Colchester folks continue to remember the sacrifices of our war heroes, that to this day ensure us of our freedoms.

Meet and Greet

Parliament will rise for the Christmas season, enabling me to partake in one of my favorite duties. That is, to host our annual festive meet and greet. There is always a good turnout.

Our Amherst office Christmas Open House will take place December 18 from 1 to 3 p.m. at 35 Church Street. Our Truro Open House will be open December 19 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Truro Fire Hall (165 Victoria Street).

I know it is a busy time, and if you would circle the applicable day on your calendar, my staff and I would like to spend a slice of Noel time with you.

There will be coffee and treats for everyone!

Dr Stephen Ellis is MP for Cumberland Colchester. He can be reached at: 902-895-2863, or E-mail: stephen.ellis@parl.gc.ca

NSRC Floor Replacement Nearing Completion

By Maurice Rees

The North Shore Recreation Centre (NSRC) in Tatamagouche has been in desperate need of having the cement floor, refrigeration piping and boards replaced. The floor has had several line breaks over the past few

years, was extremely cracked and had a very uneven surface area across the entire floor. Additionally, the boards have become unsafe and rotten.

Lindsay/Higgins Construction quoted \$1,767,890 for the project. They started in mid-April

to remove the old floor and start the reinstall of the new floor and boards. The floor was poured at the end of August and ready for the install of the new boards in September 2024. Ice was installed in early October.

NSRC applied to the provincial government through the "RINK Revitalization" Program and Planning and Assistance Program in February of 2023 and 2024 and received \$157,769. On October 27, NSRC received a notification of an additional grant in the amount of \$276,000, bringing the total amount from the province \$433,769. \$50,000 annually has been included in the Municipality of Colchester's budget for the last 12 years (since 2012) and it was being held in the NSRC Arena floor reserve fund. With this \$50,000 annually being put aside and the interested accumulated, the total in this reserve was \$818,666 for the project.

The fundraising committee has raised approximately \$326,152.07 (including interest in GIC) and are expecting to receive more funding in grants and donations in the coming months. Currently, the committee is short approximately \$70,300 to complete the project. The NSRC currently has \$98,769 in a GIC as of August 2024. This GIC is locked until March 2025 and the GIC would also receive some interest over that time (approximately \$10,000). This funding would then be submitted back to the municipalities arena floor reserve. This would help with current costs but is still leaves the project a shortfall of approximately \$70,300.

The NSRC does receive 100% of their HST in return and does

submit that source of funds back to the municipality arena floor reserve fund. Currently, waiting on a \$136,000 HST return that was submitted in September 2024, and will receive additional funds once the remaining HST expenses have been filed. At present, there are three invoices submitted totalling \$635,115.02 (including HST) to complete the project. As noted previously, the NSRC will be receiving additional provincial funding in the amount of \$276,000 which will be directly put on that balance, bringing total to \$359,115.02. The NSRC would then submit those HST returns and give back to the Municipality for the fund.

The NSRC is looking for assistance to help cover the overage and current shortfall costs of the project (\$359,115.02), tax included, with the understanding that: the HST return for the current payments will be submitted back to the Municipality; the GIC of \$98,769 (plus interest) would be returned to the Municipality once it has matured and additional funding grants, donations that are anticipated would be returned to the arena floor reserve. This would leave a balance of approximately \$70,300 to be covered by the Municipality, providing no additional donations are received.

Arena capital request in the upcoming year would be reduced once this major floor repair has been completed. For the last 12 years funding has been included in the County budget for the floor repair at \$50,000 annually. Council could opt to continue to pay \$50,000 per year until the floor is paid out.

(The above article was completed using notes from the November 14th committee meeting media package.)

possible production of hydrogen from "wind and emptying landfills sites"?

It's important for all levels of government to work together on and carefully evaluate any project that impacts Nova Scotians and our environment. New Democrats welcome an open dialogue and a collaborative working environment with municipal and federal governments.

10. What existing provincial government program or planned policy is least beneficial to businesses and general population in Colchester North?

Nova Scotians love our coast, especially in areas like Colchester North where people live, work, and play along the shore. The Progressive Conservatives' failure to protect our coastlines by proclaiming the Coastal Protection Act will have devastating impacts in the communities along the Fundy and Northumberland Shores. It's critical that we protect our people and infrastructure by immediately proclaiming this important act.

11. Many people are of the opinion the provincial government is directing too much attention to HRM and larger urban areas. What would you do to change the pendulum to place more emphasis on rural Nova Scotia?

Many of the issues that affect people in Colchester North also affect Nova Scotians right across the province. That being said, there are many issues unique to rural Nova Scotia and we are committed to listening to Nova Scotians and seeing how we can do better.

12. Normally MLAs are expected to "toe" the party line. If you are elected on November 26th do you promise to place a higher priority on "constituents wishes / needs" ahead of "party policy" except in "non-confidence" situations? Myself and the New Democrat team will always fight for everyday Nova Scotians and the well-being of our rural communities, and work with our constituents to create a better community for everyone.

13. If you are elected on November 26th what actions will you immediately undertake to achieve economic growth and lifestyle enhancements for the constituency of Colchester North?

We will immediately protect our coastlines by enacting the Coastal Protection Act. Additionally, our measures to cut costs by taking the HST off essentials, offering a gas tax holiday saving you 15.5 cents at the pump, and reducing the cost of heat pumps will provide immediate financial relief to the people of Colchester North. In the longer term we will continue to focus on increasing the housing stock so Colchester North can continue to grow and thrive.

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