

Colchester Parks and Trails update presented

By Paul Smith

On December 10th, Paul Smith, Director Community Planning presented an overview of activities in the Community Development Department since August, 2025. This section deals with Parks and Trails.

Parks and Trails - Solar PV on Municipal Park Buildings: A contractor has been hired to install solar panels on the washroom buildings at Nelson Memorial Park and Fundy Discovery Site this winter.

Bruce Moore Memorial

Park (formerly Halfmoon Park): With the renaming of this park, a new entrance sign is being installed prior to the Moore family gathering in December. Other upgrades include two new benches and a new steel garbage bin.

Five Islands Lighthouse Park: The accessible viewing deck was completed in September. Custom benches will be installed on the deck before May.

Stewiacke River Park: The park was closed to the public during the forest travel/activity ban due to wildfire risk

(Aug-Sept), but otherwise this beloved park was very busy again in 2025 with 25 reservations for use of the picnic shelters from early May through late October. Reservations included The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq Salmon Celebration, Winding River Elementary cross-country run, and many birthday parties and family gatherings.

Nelson Memorial Park: The Bayview Room (the multi-purpose room in the washroom building) was used by organizations several times this Fall. It is a bright and welcoming space for meetings and programs.

Fundy Discovery Site: The Visitor Information Centre was open May 5-Oct 17, daily 9 am - 5 pm. Visitor numbers were strong in the 2025 season, and similar to 2024. Visitors came from every province, all 50 US States, and at least 20 different countries. All washrooms will remain open until Dec 7, after which only the family washroom will be open during the winter. The Fundy Discovery Site Tidal Bore Times brochure continues to be the primary promotional item for FDS and a sought-after piece of literature in VICs across the province. The public enjoyed "Tidal Tunes Tuesdays", local music.

continued on page 4



Sustainable Colchester update presented

Continued from page 2 and ear-marked for medium-term residential development, the 45-acre property is large enough to accommodate both residential development and a solar garden, with a vegetated buffer that will also protect the wetland in the middle of the site.

In November, Council approved the site in Debert for ongoing solar investigation,

though there were some concerns about the opportunity cost of developing this land with solar instead of residential or business park use, especially where it has already been cleared for archaeology. Staff will ensure that the feasibility study evaluates the revenue potential and community benefit potential of the proposed solar garden compared to other possible uses.

Staff will engage the community in December and January to make sure the solar garden is compatible with adjacent residential areas and supported by residents and businesses of Debert.

Solar Colchester / Cozy Colchester: The Municipality has been approved for an extension from the Green Municipal Fund's Community Energy Financing program, which will allow the Solar Colchester and Cozy Colchester programs to continue with GMF funding until March 2027, rather than

the previous end date of March 2026. This is an important development, as the two programs still have a considerable amount of funding left, which would have otherwise needed to be returned to GMF in 2026. The funding from the Green Municipal Fund is a combination of a grant and 0%-interest loan, so no interest will accrue during this additional program year.

Staff are working with the Community Energy Association (CEA) to develop a low- to moderate income stream for Cozy Colchester so that the remaining program funds can be used to benefit residents that need it the most. The CEA is also helping staff to research and plan the next phase of Solar Colchester and Cozy Colchester, after the GMF phase ends in 2027.

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