

REES' Pieces

Pride in self, then Community

I was always taught if you didn't have pride in who you were; what you have accomplished and what you are doing, there's not much of a future ahead. Words were never truer than today. With regional wars in the mid-East; global security threats from ISIS activity; the insecurity about food safety; a slow growing economy where the rich get richer and the poor fall father behind and worries about climate change, it takes a lot of resilience to keep a smile on our face.

Before we start to smile broadly, we need to stop and think. In order for Nova Scotia's economy to get back on track and to run smoothly, a lot, lot more changes are necessary. Naturally, we don't like changes, but if we wish to have our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to have a future in Nova Scotia, it is important we take notice and work with government and them with us to affect the necessary changes.

As bad as things are, they are not as bad as they were in 1993. On one occasion, at that time, government officials were informed they did not have enough money to meet payroll due three hours later. Yes, today's debt load is much higher, but today's interest rates are at an all time low. If we would have had \$15-Billion in debt in 1993, we could have never recovered. Our only salvation so far is lower interest rates. Our future will not be good, if all Nova Scotians don't work together to reduce costs, improve efficiencies, expect less and learn to live within our means.

Premier McNeil has been steadfast, he will not sign any agreements which we can not afford. Later this year lies negotiations with nurses, teachers and others in the public service. What he can not do is "cave in" like the previous administration did.

His government was elected to right these wrongs and get the economy back on track. So far their decisions have been up to expectations, but they have fallen short on execution. Before he and cabinet get mired deep in negotiations, they need to review procedures to ensure there is no stumbling when hard decisions are implemented.

A lot of political capital was expended earlier this winter, when executing did not go smoothly. The public voted for change, and although it's not their favourite topic, they will accept if there is thorough consultation and decisions are implemented according to plan if it's in the best overall interests of the province.

If there is turmoil and focus is placed on bickering in the media, taxpayers lose confidence. Once confidence sags, it is much more difficult to continue the plan of making hard decisions and obtaining public support.

Voters across Canada are harbouring a distain for politicians or parties, who appear arrogant, portray "right of entitlement" or don't appear to be listening to the taxpayer. Just look at the orange tide which swept across Alberta. Politicians of all stripes and all levels need to understand, if you don't instantly do it the way the taxpayer wants, "the impossible" can happen.

Which brings me back to where this column started having pride in all that is around us. Nova Scotians have not been proud of the results of how students have fared in Canada-wide testing. Karen Casey is taking steps to restore pride with new initiatives on math and literacy and putting \$65-Million back in the education budget, which had been removed by the previous administration.

The other level of Pride, I wish to mention: We need to take pride in the appearance of our communities. As a result the Shoreline Journal and t-shirtsrus.ca, with the support of Colchester Waste Management, the Clean Foundation, Big Dog & Cat Country, are asking you to clean up the ditches along your property frontage on June 13th. If you do it before, that is great. Make it a family event, or get your community involved. (See story on Page 1 of this issue).

If we start showing pride by cleaning up along the highways of our own property, maybe it will be the start of many positive things we can accomplish. If we care, we can do it!

Maurice

Canada Celebrations in Great Village

By Maurice Rees

For the past few years Canada Day has been too quiet and unsettling in Great Village. In 2015 several community groups and interested citizens are going to change that. They are going to bring back Canada Day Festivities in the community.

The day's events will begin at 10 am with a parade from Great Village Elementary

School to the Faith Baptist Church field. Children are encouraged to decorate their bikes, trikes, wagons and strollers and participate in the parade! (Participants need to be at the elementary school at 9:30)

Proceeds of the event will be going to: The Londonderry Community Association, The Great Village Elementary Home & School, The Great

Village Fire Department and a Local Family in Need. Activities will include: old fashioned carnival games, local businesses and organizations setting up displays, fire trucks for the kids to explore, food, local music, a dunk tank and a jailhouse where you can jail anyone you'd like for a fee. The day will end with a baseball game.



May 14TH Council Committee Meeting Notes

By Maurice Rees

Municipality of the County of Colchester council committee met in council chambers on May 14th with Deputy Mayor Bill Masters in the chair. Following approval of the committee meeting of April 16th council spent considerable time under business arising from the minutes discussing rental rates charges at Rath Eastlink Community Centre.

The matter was raised by Councillor Stewart following concerns from management at the Brookfield Arena. Councillor Masters said if there is concern about rate variances, then council representatives to RECC should be informed. Taggart mentioned is was his understanding discussions from some time ago assured RECC rates were to be higher to avoid hurting other arenas; while Councillor MacInnes said that the area in Debert suffered a weekly loss of 35 hours minor hockey ice time to RECC, but most of that was a preference to play at RECC and not attributable to rates.

Recreation director, Craig Burgess stated rates at RECC are higher. Discussion concluded with an agreement to check with current RECC management and to enforce the previous agreements RECC rates must be higher than other arenas.

Council quickly moved to a long list of Action items.

A funding request for \$2,000 to help support Stewiacke Valley and Brookfield 4-H exchange trip to Manitoba was approved on motion by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Mayor Taylor.

A second appearance of the RCMP Musical Ride in the municipality during the 2015 season brought a request for funding from the Tatamagouche area. Council approved \$1,500.00 for the September 1st event. Earlier in the year council approved \$3,000.00 for the event in Bible Hill. Tatamagouche was added to this year's musical ride schedule when a Pictou County community cancelled its event.

On motion by councillors Taggart and Gregory, council denied a request for \$3,000 from Tatamagouche Centre

for Festimagouche to be held at the centre August 22-25th.

In addition to the base rate, several area rates for additional services appear on property tax bills. Although the operating budget was approved in March, area rates are not finalized until the May meeting. Only those rates which have changed, since last year, are noted here: Street Lighting rates were changed in all areas. Debert increased from 7 to 8 cents; Masstown Road from 9 to 11 cents; Onslow's flat rate of \$64 increased to \$71., and Debert Park went from 10 to 11 cents.

The street paving rate for residents on certain streets which had been implemented in 1996/97, then increased from 7 to 8.5 cents per \$100 assessment last year, has been removed for 2015/16. The Winding River School enhancement rate has been removed because enhancements are paid in full.

The flat rate for Valley crossing guard has increased from \$29.00 to \$34.00.

The Tatamagouche Branch Library area rate of 2 cents per \$100, established in 2011 will be in place for 10-12 years to pay for the new library funding.

Source of funds to pay for the Palliser Property was next on the list. Sourcing the funding for the purchase by taking monies from the \$1.753-Million sitting in the Bible Hill Master plan fund was suggested, but councillors MacKenzie and Parker asked for the matter to be delayed at least until the end of May meeting, because Councillor Blair who represents a large part of the area was recuperating from surgery. After a significant discussion around the table, A motion to table the matter was made, but defeated with councillors MacKenzie and Parker voting nay. The original motion to source funding for the Palliser Property purchase from the Bible Hill Master Plan was approved.

Councillor Parker spoke on receiving several calls from area residents asking for weekly compost collection. Speaking on the matter, Wayne Wamboldt, Waste Management Director, said that changing to weekly col-

lection would cost \$8,000 per week, and if implemented for a four month period during warmer weather the total cost would be in excess of \$100,000.00. In the end council decided not to change to weekly collection, but to focus on education with residents in the area.

The board of directors at RECC will be increased from 10 to 12 members with community representatives from Town of Truro and County of Colchester each adding one member to bring the boards configuration to two council reps from each of Truro and Colchester with four community representatives. It was reported RECC's new general manager, Matthew Gallant, who is moving from Sussex, NB would be on the job on May 19th.

The long awaited decision as to whether to proceed with the Small Wind Turbines for Kempton area under the ComFit program was brought to the floor. According to Wayne Wamboldt, Waste Management director, the very conservative estimates indicate the project will turn a small profit commencing in the first year. The estimated capital costs of \$1.2-Million under a fixed term contract would be repaid in eleven years, and at the end of the 20 year contract, the County of Colchester would show a total profit of \$1.4-Million.

Wamboldt informed council that Pictou has 6 - 50KW turbines in operation, which were financing totally by using Gas Tax revenues. Various scenarios on how to fund the project were discussed, but in the end, council approved internal borrowing would be used. Councillor Gibbs voted nay on the motion.

An item to report on the development of the Palliser Property was removed from the agenda, with council being advised a report would be circulated a few days later. That update has been included in a separate story elsewhere in this issue.

In an information item circulated to council staff outlined various steps involved regarding a paving petition for McCallum, Hillridge and Hillvale. Based on an estimate

of \$375.00 per metre, the project is expected to cost \$380,000, which would be covered by an area rate for the 1018 metres of roadway. Staff anticipate having an open house meeting with affected residents before the end of June.

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