

REES' Pieces

The Next Step

We have four months dealing with CoVid-19. Trudeau, McNeil and other leaders have been successful implanting forever the "do's" and "don'ts" in our minds.

I don't want to minimize any sector, or where we should prioritize our efforts, but we must prepare for the future. A lot of work is needed to help those at the bottom of the economic ladder. More assistance is necessary for employees in the service sector, hospitality and retail, who suddenly lost their livelihood.

Retail and the service sector, regardless of how much is invested will only come back in the proportions, which the general public is comfortable. One person I spoke with suggested within two years, there might not be much in the way of "fast food" sit-down restaurants. In fact it was suggested, as an example, McDonald's will have none.

CoVid-19 has forever changed the way we will shop; obtain medical, banking, other services and what we will deem necessary to fulfill our needs. As a throwaway society there are a lot of things we will decide we don't need and will not buy.

As terrible as the pandemic has been, upsides include: increased awareness for others; coming together of community, family and neighbours; greater appreciation of politicians; and what must do to help build stronger sustainable "local" communities. An equally important function of what must occur is develop go-forward plans to protect ourselves against food, medical shortages and build a stronger economy.

Yes, there were many jobs lost in Colchester in 2019. Recently Intertape Polymer and Stanfields have identified new product lines employing more people; Northern Pulp's closure requiring a new way of rebuilding the forest sector and rapid agriculture growth. CoVid-19 has caused us to view things differently to protect the environment and build local capacity. There are many positive things which can be done to provide sustainability.

There is an increase in gardening as Vesey's and Halifax Seed are having the busiest spring seasons in history. Gardening can be a family activity, and carried through to its fullest making jams and pickles will help reduce the grocery bill and ensure we are eating better. There has been a shortage of flour and yeast in grocery stores not because of raw product shortage, but capacity to prepare retail size packaging.

I spoke with Jason Dickie at Dickie's Meats outside Amherst and his 12 member crew is working dawn to dusk to fulfill orders and can't keep up. Their business has gone primarily from wholesale to retailers, to a significant increase in orders for \$50, 150 and more in family packs of meat products. In fact, they have a waiting list of orders. There is a shortage of abattoirs and meat shops. Laurie Jennings, Masstown had the vision to establish Masstown Butchery and Dairy to process local products for a demanding public. Maybe we should take some lessons from his vision.

The provincial government should immediately develop an initiative to encourage and provide "core" funding for clusters of farmers to establish greater capacity for provincial or federally inspected meat and dairy products. Department of Agriculture and Federation of Agriculture should be partnering to make it happen.

We need more capacity to process berries, field crops, apple juice, etc. Remember Larsen's, Graves, Scotsburn Dairy, Jones Bottling, or Cook's Dairy, Yarmouth? We could be providing "Made n Nova Scotia" juices, jams, pickles, dairy products, frozen fruits and vegetables. In terms of food processing, Atlantic Canada has McCain's, Cavendish and Oxford Frozen Foods as leaders. Localized clusters, of farmer co-ops could be providing jobs, market penetration; increase "food security" and be the economic engine to grow the rural economy.

Similarly, emphasis on research and technology sectors is needed; more processing capacity for the fish and seafood and forest sectors to develop new products.

CoVid-19 brought our economy to its knees. It has taught us a lot.

How we use that knowledge could be our path to get the economy back on track, increase capacity and take advantage of a new mindset of what we need and how to achieve it. Municipal leaders and councillors, in collaboration with local interests, must be advocacy leaders.

Maurice

Letters to the editor



This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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The following letter was sent on May 8, 2020 by former MP Bill Casey to the following three Government of Canada Cabinet Ministers.

Hon Bill Blair,
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A0A6

Hon Carolyn Bennett
Minster of Crown Indigenous Relations
House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A0A6

Hon Marc Miller
Minster of Indigenous Services
House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A0A6

Dear Honourable Ministers

No way to treat First Nations

Attached are copies of two RCMP documents that totally contradict each other. Also attached is a Public Works Canada document that confirms that contraction. They all refer to the exact same space in the Government of Canada building used by the RCMP HQ in Dartmouth. It took over two years under the Access to Information Law to obtain some of this information.

Document #1 is part of an internal RCMP report that says "for excess the space in the current HQ building the current rental rate is \$547 per square meter".

Document #2 is the Public Works Occupancy Instrument that says "Total Annual Rent" for this building is a whopping \$10,498,133.40 per year. That also works out to be exactly \$547 rent per square meter.

Document #3 is the RCMP "Estimated Costing Options" score card chart used to evaluate the proposals in the competition for a new location for the Nova Scotia RCMP 911 Emergency Call Center. For this "score card", the rental for that exact same RCMP HQ space is suddenly "free". Zero.

Clearly the RCMP and the Public Works documents confirm that the Rental Rate for that space is \$547 per square meter. The chart used to evaluate the Millbrook First Nation option is wrong. The HQ space is not free. In fact it is very expensive.

The same RCMP "Estimated Costing Options" score card chart shows a fabricated \$1,641,000 expense added to the Millbrook First Nation proposal. This expense has nothing to do with Millbrook and should not be added to Millbrook expenses. Again, the chart used to evaluate the Millbrook option is wrong.

By understating the RCMP HQ rental rate expense at "zero" and overstating the Millbrook expenses by \$1,641,000, Millbrook First Nation was denied the opportunity to compete fairly for this economic opportunity. The outcome of this "competition" was predetermined before the "competition" even started. No one can compete with "free rent".

The use of wrong information for this competition by an Agency of the Government of Canada has denied Millbrook First Nation of an equal opportunity to participate in this economic opportunity. Millbrook First Nation Chief Robert Gloade is just asking for a fair chance to compete.

It is a reasonable expectation that ministers of the Government of Canada should insist that federal agencies under their administration provide a fair and honest process to be used when dealing with any First Nation on any issue.

When Prime Minister Trudeau appointed his cabinet he said in his "mandate letters" to ministers "It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership."

It is hard to find "recognition of rights, respect, co-operation or partnership" in this unfair process. I urge you to agree with Chief Robert Gloade's request that this "competition" be done over again, but without a predetermined outcome this time. By any standard, this process needs to be corrected.

Sincerely,

Bill Casey
Former Member of Parliament
billcasey45@hotmail.com

See also: 'Letters to the Editor' below and page 14.

May 11, 2020

Hon Bill Blair
Minister Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Hon Anita Anand
Minister of Public Services and Procurement

Hon Jean-Yves Duclos
President of the Treasury Board

Hon Dominic LeBlanc
President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada

Good Morning Honourable Ministers:

22.1 Empty Nova Scotia Homes

The attached three paragraphs from RCMP internal documents indicate that the RCMP has 25,456 sq ft (2,365 sq meters) of vacant space in the Public Works Canada building in Dartmouth. These RCMP documents state that Public Works Canada has determined that the RCMP "is not entitled to" this space, and it is empty.

According to Statistics Canada, the median size of a Nova Scotia house is 1,150 sq feet. Based on these RCMP documents, the space that the RCMP has kept vacant is equivalent to 22.1 Nova Scotia homes. The area has been empty for seven years. This significant space is kept empty because the RCMP prefers to not follow Public Works advice and "share the work space" with other government departments, as outlined in the attached paragraph 2.

Paragraph 3 of the RCMP document states that the "current rental rate" for that building is a whopping \$50.80 Per Sq Ft (\$547 per sq meter). From a financial accountability point of view, the rental value of keeping this 25,456 sq

feet empty at \$50.80 per sq foot is \$1,293,655 per year. Over seven years that would be \$9,055,585 wasted already. This is not acceptable financial management.

22.1 empty new homes for seven years. That is the equivalent of a whole street of empty new houses paid for by the Canadian taxpayers... but sitting empty. At a time when there are homeless veterans, Nova Scotia hospital hallways filled with patients and crowded nursing homes are making seniors vulnerable to COVID 19, this new space lies empty for years and millions of dollars are wasted.

Public Works has offered to rent the vacant space to another department, but the RCMP prefers to hoard it. The RCMP even considered a number of plans where they chose to keep the space empty for ten additional years until 2030. That would be 17 years empty.

The decision to locate the RCMP 911 Emergency Call Center in some of the this vacant space was not based on the safety of Nova Scotians but was devised to relieve the "pressure" from Public Works to share this empty space with other government departments. See paragraph 1.

Although the RCMP has in their hands the 2004 RCMP Expert Panel Report that repeatedly says that the 911 Emergency Call Center should not be located in Dartmouth because the "risks" are too high to not have "geographic separation", they are doing it anyway.

The RCMP also has in their hands three other reports from the three leading recognized authorities in emergency communications: The

continued on page 5

The Shoreline Journal

Here's where to find us:

BASS RIVER:
Bayside Pharmacy
Dominion Chair Factory Store

BIBLE HILL:
C.W. Fraser Pharmacy
MacQuarries Pharmacy
Kennedy's Deli - Ryland Ave

DEBERT:
Debert Mini-Mart

FIVE ISLANDS:
Masstown Market Five Islands

GLENHOLME:
Double "C" Truckstop

GREAT VILLAGE:
Wilson's Gas

MAITLAND:
Frieze & Roy General Store

MASSTOWN:
Masstown Market
MTM Retail Gas (Petro-Can)

MILLBROOK:
Super 8 Motel
Hampton Inn & Suites

NORTH RIVER:
Grant's Grocery

PARRSBORO:
CrossRoads Co-op
Ken's Grocery
Wright's Pharmasave

TRURO:
Atlantic Superstore
Best Western Glengarry
Holiday Inn
MacQuarrie's Pharmasave (Esplanade)
Rath Eastlink Comm Centre
Colchester East Hants Health Centre - Coffee Shop

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