

Cumberland's Accessibility Committee

By Maurice Rees

Maggie Pitts presented an update to Cumberland Council to council on February 17th on activities of the county's Accessibility Committee which was formed in June 2020. Her report indicated the committee meets quarterly, or as needed, and contains six members.

The purpose of the committee is to Advise council on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its accessibility plan. In accordance with the Accessibility Act, the plan must include: a report on measures the municipality has taken and intends to take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers; information on procedures the municipality has in place to assess the following for their impact on accessibility for peo-



ple with disabilities: any proposed policies, programs, practices, and services any proposed enactments or by-laws •any other prescribed information. A review and update the accessibility plan at least every three years, in accordance with the Act.

The committee is to consult with the community on accessibility and advise council on the impact of municipal policies, programs, and services on people with disabilities. The committee's role includes many other responsibilities and can be found on the municipalities website.

RFP to be issued for Glooscap Campground

By Maurice Rees

Cumberland Council asked that comments received from a four question survey concerning the future of the municipal owned Glooscap Campground, Parrsboro be posted to the municipalities website. Amanda-Leigh MacLeod, Sustainable Communities Marketing Officer submitted a written report to council which was unveiled at its February 17th meeting.

The Municipality of Cumberland currently owns and operates the Glooscap Campground. Council is considering the option of leasing the management of the campground to a third party. The third-party would then be responsible for upkeep and promotion of the campground.

Her submission indicated most of the comments from the four-question survey which had been presented on the municipal website, on Facebook, and also delivered a paper copy of the survey to every post office box in Parrsboro, asked for Beach access for area residents would be guaranteed in any lease agreement. Response rates were 38 from the website, 162 from Facebook and three paper copies.

Results of the questions asked in the survey are as fol-

lows:

Which best describes where you live? 61.5% Municipality of Cumberland - District 8 (former Town of Parrsboro and area); 24 % Municipality of Cumberland (Districts 1-7); 12% Nova Scotia and 2.5 % Other, (Amherst (1) / Summer Resident, (4).

How do you normally use the campground? 27 responses -As a seasonal camper; 64 responses -As an occasional camper; 118 responses - I use the beach access; 17 responses - I own a business in the area that provides goods/services to campers and Other - Visit campers (4); Run program-

ming for the GeoPark (1); I don't use it (13) and Run the campground (1).

Do you feel the Municipality of Cumberland should look for a third party to manage and perform upkeep to the campground? 49.5% Yes; 30.7% No and 19.8% Other.

The fourth question was an open opportunity for the public to include any further concerns or ideas regarding the campground.

The municipality is expected to prepare an RFP seeking a lease arrangement for the campground in time for the 2021 summer season.

Council Approves Salary Review

By Maurice Rees

Cumberland Council, approved a request from acting CAO, Allie McCormick who in a memo asked council to approve an RFP expected to cost less than \$20,000 to provide a report detailing a salary review for all municipal staff.

Previously established salary bands and a competent scoring tool which are already in place are expected to expedite completion of the review. Items to be included in the RFP include: Comparing

benchmark positions to other rural municipalities in NS; Re-evaluating positions that have changes in their position descriptions; Evaluate internal equity; and Review of Mayor and Council remuneration.

Approval to proceed with the RFP were approved at council's February 17th meeting. A professional consulting firm will be engaged to conduct a salary review. It was confirmed to council monies for the review are already budgeted.

Development Districts and MPS Amendment

By Maurice Rees

In a memo submitted to Cumberland Council for its February 17th meeting, Steve Ferguson, Director of Community Development requested Council's approval and direction to move forward with the development of a Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) amendment and a Commercial Development District (CDD) By-Law that together would enable the Municipality to delay the effect of increased property assessments on new commercial capital investments in specified areas. The Province gave municipalities this authority a few years ago by enacting section 71C of the MGA.

The intended purpose of this new authority was to enable municipalities to encourage redevelopment of older commercial areas, but it can be extended to any commercial area with central water and wastewater systems, and it may be a tool to attract investment. Ferguson indicated at least one developer in the area has expressed an interest in the Municipality adopting such a program.

The applicable sections of the MPS amendment specifies: (2) Notwithstanding subsection 57(2) but subject to Section 71D, where a council considers it necessary or advisable, the council may, by by-law, provide for (a) the phasing-in of an increase in the taxable assessed value of an eligible property located in a commercial development district over a period not exceeding ten years; and (b) the cancellation, reduction or refund of taxes paid as a result of the phasing-in of the increase. (3) Subject to subsection (4), a by-law made pursuant to subsection (2) must establish, in accordance with a municipal planning strategy, one or more commercial development districts. (4) A commercial development district may only be established in an area that is serviced by wastewater facilities and a water system.

At the end of discussion council approved for staff be directed to begin the process to allow the creation of Commercial Development Districts pursuant to section 71C of the Municipal Government Act by commencing the process to

adopt the necessary amendment to the Municipal Planning Strategy and developing a Commercial Development District By-Law.

SOAR Community Health Board

By Maurice Rees

After a brief explanation about a matter concerning the Springhill, Oxford, Amherst & River Hebert (SOAR) Community Health Board, Mayor Murray Scott asked and received council's approval for him to head discussions concerning solution to the problem.

SOAR board chair, Leon Landry, in a letter to council advised that In the latter part of 2019, SOAR advocated for a renewed discussion between the Town of Amherst and the County of Cumberland that would outline a cooperative

strategy for construction of pedestrian access to the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre.

Landry continued, Due to jurisdictional problems, budgetary concerns, and liability issues, it seems that this project remains at a stalemate. SOAR believes that the responsibility for this advocacy work should shift to the newly formed accessibility committees. Equal access to health care is paramount to all citizens in both the Town and the County and must be considered a necessary public service. The lack of

pedestrian access must be considered a barrier to access this fundamental right to health care for all.

In his concluding remark, Landry said, It is the position of SOAR that, because this issue is complicated by jurisdictional confusion, that both the respective Accessibility Committees formally request official mandates from the Provincial Accessibility Advisory Board and directly from the Minister of Justice, because the Town of Amherst and the County of Cumberland both deserve better.

Robertson Raft Resembled a "Caterpillar"

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the shores of Joggins funded by Leary and supervised by Robertson.

The raft was designed to be towed to New York and once there to be broken up, as an economical method of transporting the timber of which it was constructed. Through the center length of the raft was a chain, from which at stated intervals smaller chains radiated to the circumference, and at the circumference each set of radiating chains was bound together by another chain encircling the raft. These sets of radiating chains were about 15

feet apart.

The 734 ton iron steamer "Miranda" built in 1884 in England was contracted to pull the raft to New York for Leary and on December 8, 1887 it left Joggins with the wooden mass in tow. But 45 miles south of Chappaquiddick, Massachusetts they were quickly forced to abandon the raft in a fierce storm directly in the track of European ships approaching New York and Philadelphia. Alarms were

raised on both sides of the Atlantic, and the U.S. Navy sent out vessels to locate the dangerously drifting and disintegrating lost raft.

A week later, a "great mass of logs" was located off Nantucket. James D Leary did try again in the summer of 1888 and with much praise succeeded in transporting a slightly bigger raft (equivalent of 45 lumber schooners full of timber) to New York without incident.

South Cumberland NEWS



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