

# REES' Pieces

## Congratulations Premier Houston

Granted he has been getting a lot of heat for several factors, including his government's inability to provide the quick "fixes" he promised during the election campaign, which resulted in his winning a large majority.

If for a moment we forget about perceived short comings, it is time to congratulate the Premier for a recent decision to supply a monthly column to the community newspapers. Not sure how many of the papers expressed interest in carrying the column, when a communications staffer from his office called to inquire if the Shoreline Journal and South Cumberland News would be interested. My immediate reply was YES.

Hard for me to say no, because for years on many occasions, I suggested to politicians and even their staffers, they needed to have a regular presence in the smaller papers. Not everyone subscribed to the provincial daily, My argument was they were missing a large audience. Additionally, with senior politicians taking time to supply a column it would give rural people a feeling they mattered.

Such a presence on those pages could possibly indicate those in power recognized them. For far too many decades, there was the impression, political parties focused only on the larger population areas.

All media has undergone major transitions since the enlarging advent of the social media. Nothing has been uprooted more than print media, as media buyers turned their focus toward electronic press.

A renewed focus on the newspapers serving the rural and remote areas of the province may have started on November 28<sup>th</sup>. This is the end of February, and I can attest a change is starting to become visible, but it is not growing by leaps and bounds and there is a lot of ground to make up, if we were ever to get back to the levels enjoyed a decade ago.

Why did I suggest November 28<sup>th</sup>? That happens to be the day, when the provincial daily stopped delivering the paper to rural convenience stores for resale or delivering a single paper to a home which had a six day a week subscription. Here's an example. If you travel from Truro to Parrsboro there is not one place to buy a daily paper, and not one home got an early morning delivery of a single copy to enjoy with the first cup of coffee.

Over half the province (area) and close to that in population could not read the provincial obituaries or work away on a crossword puzzle. Once they realized it, and it finally started to sink in the communications experts at all political parties were vulnerable for cardiac arrest. We are missing about half of our audience, what do we do now?, would be their coffee break chatter.

Maybe political animals might start to recognize the importance of rural areas are to the province and their ability to fill the ballot boxes with their candidate's name.

If you care, about your rural area and the attention is may receive in the future, I suggest you write, call or mention these facts to your MLA. He or she will have difficulty reaching you, but singularly can remind them we are still here, and WE DO MATTER.

On another matter, which is very promising. In early February, Colchester council received a public presentation from several astout business people who outlined their plans and hope to start a real estate development on 160+ acres in Bible Hill, which over a 15 year build out could add 2,200+ residential units to a very tight real estate market.

The shortage of housing, particularly the affordable type, has driven prices through the roof, and will curtail other economic development in areas which are not able to provide housing for new or expanding businesses. Because of our geographic location if Colchester can supply the housing, we will grow in other areas at the expense of others.

Based on population ratio Colchester equates to 10% of HRM. 2,200 units in Bible Hill has the same impact as 22,000 in HRM. The 5 Points project is not the only one in the area. How soon will Colchester be the provincial leader in affordable housing development?

Maurice

# Colchester Council Notes

## Council Holds Two Public Meetings

By Maurice Rees

Two public meetings regarding property redevelopment were first on the agenda at Colchester's monthly meeting on February 23. The first was from the former Central Nova Animal Hospital, now Trivirtus GP I Inc for a redevelopment at Main and Avon in Bible Hill and from Dal Ag for a rezoning for a new research building at Vimy and Pictou Road in Bible Hill.

With regard to the property at Main and Avon, James Russell spoke on behalf of Trivirtus GP I Inc to covert Existing Land Use for Vacant (Avon St). The center lot has propane tank, walkway & is used as green space now.

Proposed Use: Staff parking on Avon St. & walkway, propane tank & green space for clients on center lot.

The application is to rezone these properties from residential to commercial for a new staff parking lot (Avon) and a walkway, propane tank and green space for clients' pets on the center lot.

Objectors to the project,

who did not have overall problem with the application, voiced their request to have access from Main Street, not from Avon St.

Following the public meeting council approved the redevelopment.

The second public meeting was to hear an application by Dalhousie University to convert zoning from Double Unit Residential Conversion (R-2C) to accommodate New Research building. The application is to rezone these properties from Residential to Institutional to allow a new research building to be built on the Agricultural Campus. Also includes the rezoning of 70 & 74 Pictou Rd. to reflect long standing institutional use of the existing buildings.

There are numerous Municipal Planning Strategy policies relevant to this application. The existing policies in the MPS support this proposal with relevant site development criteria being satisfied.

Staff concluded that the proposed zoning amendment for these properties to Institu-

tional is consistent with policies and objectives outlined in the Municipal Planning Strategy and is properly before Council. The policy criteria have been satisfactorily addressed and staff recommended and Council followed their suggestion to approve the request by Dalhousie University.

In other property matters during the monthly meeting council gave first reading to a Development Agreement Application by Dylan Blenkhorn and Reginald Quinn to advance a Development Agreement application to build a multi-unit residential development on the former Ridge View Golf Course property on Ravine Drive in Truro Heights, consisting of 43, two unit buildings, for a total of 86 units.

The Central Colchester Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), held a public meeting to consider this application on February 16, 2023. The document circulated at the meeting is the final draft of the development agreement as recom-



mended by PAC and submitted to Council for its consideration to approve.

Council approved First Reading, the Development Agreement application, as presented, for purposes of forwarding this document to a Public Hearing reserving consideration of the Development Agreement until Second Reading following the Public Hearing.

## Recommendations from Committee Approved

By Maurice Rees

At its February 22 monthly meeting Colchester Council approved four recommendations discussed and approved four motions from its February 9th committee meeting, which included:

**Low Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program:** Approved household income levels and exemption amounts are: Single less than \$27,915 income in 2022 was raised to \$30,064/. For family of 2 income level was \$36,871 in 2022, but income level was raised to \$39,710 for 2023. 2023 income level for a family of 3 or more was raised to \$47,652 up from 2022 level of \$44,245. In all three income levels the tax exemption was raised from \$563.47 to \$606.86.

**Colchester Clean Litter Program:** Council ap-

proves the Colchester Clean Program be continued for 2023. Changes or additional details to the plan will be announced at a later date.

**Manager of Reduction and Recovery Operations Position:** Council approved the creation of the Manager of Reduction and Recovery Operations be approved at Range 10 of the Non-union Salary Scale; and, the positions of Waste Reduction Manager and Materials Recovery Facility Manager be removed.

**Engineering Technician to GIS Technician:** Council approved one Public Works Engineering Technician position be converted to a GIS Technician position, still to be housed within Public Works; and, this position fall into the existing Range 5.1 for GIS Technicians of the Municipality's Nonunion Salary Scales.

## Temporary Borrowing Resolution Approved

By Maurice Rees

Colchester borrowed for the RECC construction in 2013. The loans were amortized over 15 years with a renewal scheduled at the 10-year mark. A Temporary Borrowing Resolution is required to renew the loan for the last five

years of the debenture.

The amount eligible for renewal in 2023-2024 is \$1,659,450 which will retire the debenture at the end of the new five year period. The renewal of the debenture will not impact debt ratios as this is not new debt but a renewal

of an existing debt.

Council approved renewal of the borrowing resolution and gave the Mayor and CAO the authorization to sign the Temporary Borrowing Resolution and Resolution for Pre-Approval, as presented.

### I hear her calling (a distant love)

*From the cliffs of dover  
To the fields where we met  
I know we will meet again  
On an irish day i'll bet*

*How i hear her calling*

*Though we were distant*

*Our hearts and souls are true  
Our love so strong  
Who could have knew*

*How i hear her calling*

*I wait for that March day  
With just three words to say*

*"i love you" lady of the glen  
Forever now forever then!*

*How i hear her calling*

*God bless and thank-you  
Thomas A. Marshall,  
(Ex-Navy)*

*From the Stars Before Us to the stars that are yet to become!*

The Shoreline Journal (circ. 1650) is a monthly community newspaper serving communities along the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia serving the communities of Belmont/Debert, Wentworth/Londonderry, Onslow/Masstown along the shore to Great Village, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands and Lower Five Islands. It is published on the last Wednesday of each month (earlier in December) with a deadline of the 20th of the month.

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

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