

Fulton House Extensively Damaged

By Lawrence R Nicoll.

Raccoons may have played a part in a house fire at 32 Moos St, Parrsboro on February 11th. At 17:50 Parrsboro Fire, Five Islands Fire, FPW, Southampton and Joggins received a Residential/garage fire at 32 Moore St. Later Springhill brought their Aerial truck.

On arrival flames were starting to show from the attached shed/garage. I arrived and started taking pictures 6 minutes later and already smoke was coming from the house portion. And flame at the edge of house where it attached to the garage.

In my experience once the fire starts in the roof portion of an older house, the results are predictable. This one was built in 1880 although it had been added to.

Had they received an alarm at 1/2 to 3/4 hours before they likely could have stopped it before the fire reached the attic of the house, but on arrival it was already a forgone conclusion

Parrsboro was already fighting the fire when

I arrived, and other departments both assisted and continually helped keep the water supply available. The fire was contained to the roof/attic and the rear of the house until late in the fire due to the valiant efforts of the fire

Raccoons were observed running from the garage during the fire operations

Most of the lower portion of the house survived, but the what happens now will have to be decided. The Fire Marshall took control from Parrsboro Fire and concluded the fire likely started from wiring in the garage, and the raccoons may have played a role in damaging that.

Unlike the many opinions, this was NOT considered an arson fire. Luckily, there was no-one in the house at the time.

Everyone is safe, but despite the valiant efforts of all the firefighters, the home is severely damaged

Lawrence R Nicoll, an observer A/DC retired, Toronto Fire Service

Mayor Scott Speaks to Amherst Rotarians

By Darrell Cole

Municipality of Cumberland Mayor Murray Scott spoke of a year full of progress during his annual address to members of the Amherst Rotary Club on Monday, Feb. 12, 2024, in Amherst.

"It has been a very busy year within the municipality with a lot of projects underway. There are a lot of things happening that maybe the public doesn't see, but we have around 100 employees and they are doing a terrific job working to improve life in Cumberland County," the mayor told Rotarians during his annual address to the club.

The mayor spoke of the policing review the municipality conducted in 2022 and the decision last June to select the RCMP as the preferred provider. Since then, he said, the municipality has worked with the RCMP and the Department of Justice to address some of the issues residents shared during the public engagement sessions.

Andrew Clarke is the new staff sergeant of the Cumberland RCMP while Jaret MacDonald is the new sergeant in charge of the Springhill detachment. As well, the municipality is working with the Department of Justice and the RCMP to address vacancies and increase police presence in communities across the county.

Mayor Scott talked about the fire services review that was conducted in 2022 and the decision to implement a hub model system with Springhill, Pugwash, Parrsboro and Truemanville serving as the hubs and the remaining 12 departments as local departments.

The municipality is hiring a new fire manager and administrative person and recently passed a new bylaw to regulate fire departments.

It has also made a financial commitment to the fire service including \$400,000 for bunker gear, breathing apparatus and radios and \$1.5 million



Municipality of Cumberland Mayor Murray Scott (left) speaks with Amherst Rotary Club member Bruce Baxter following his annual address to the business club on Monday, Feb. 12, 2024. (Darrell Cole - Municipality of Cumberland photo)

for trucks in the 2023-24 budget. As well, it recently called for proposals for a new fire station in Springhill and will include a new station for Parrsboro in capital budget planning.

The mayor talked about the \$7.92-million rehabilitation of Junction Road in Springhill and the \$2.361-million water-main replacement project on Athol Road as well as the development of a new playground on the site for the former town hall property in Parrsboro.

The past year also saw the municipality merge three water utilities in Pugwash, Parrsboro and Springhill into one water utility that will also see the installation of water meters in Springhill residences.

The municipality is also partnering with NSCC and the provincial government on studying the potential of deep mine water geothermal and using geothermal energy to support a greenhouse in Springhill, while it is partnering with Truro to investigate the potential of a 25-acre utility-scale solar project with funding through the Sustainable Communities Fund.

Mayor Scott spoke about the unprecedented level of de-

velopment taking place in the municipality, saying permits have grown by 2.5 times since 2020 with most of those being single-dwelling units. He also told Rotarians the municipality is focusing on getting surplus properties in circulation for housing development and the municipality is also working with NSCC at developing a residence for students attending the Springhill campus - a facility that will be available in the offseason to support events such as tournaments and sports activities.

"In a large geographic municipality such as us you may not see it, but there is a lot of development taking place," the mayor said, "and it's through the whole municipality."

Mayor Scott said council and staff are working on the 2024-25 budget, and while residential and commercial assessments are up, those numbers are impacted by the cap on assessments and a number of financial pressures including salaries, the mandatory contribution to education, rising costs of police, fire and insurance and capital investment in all aspects, including the fire service.

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Bezanson Retires After 27 Years

By Darrell Cole

The Municipality of Cumberland is saying goodbye to a longtime member of its development and planning department following a 27-year career. Nelson Bezanson, who joined the municipality on an interim basis in 1997, is retiring. His last day on the job was Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024. Bezanson was recognized for his contributions during a luncheon at the Upper Napan Service Center on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

A native of New Ross, N.S., Bezanson studied at Acadia University and Mount Allison University before getting his masters degree in environmental studies from Wilfred Laurier and the University of Waterloo in Ontario. He worked as a summer student for the municipality in 1995 and joined the organization full-time two years later.

Since 2005 he has worked in development and planning, most recently as a planner.

It was at Mount Allison where he was introduced to the former Rural and Small Towns Program and fell in love with planning.

"At Mount A there was a rural and small towns research and study program. It was a great program that was really interesting," he said. "I'm very much a small community person. I grew up in a small community and have a good feeling for small communities. I wanted to help those communities be good places and see them develop in a conscious way."

Bezanson looks back fondly on his career working in Cumberland County, joking his trial by fire of sorts was handling the public engagement portion of the decision in the late 90s to move streetlights from the general tax rate to the area rate system.

"I've really enjoyed my time in public service," said Bezan-



Municipality of Cumberland chief administrative officer Greg Herrett (left) and director of development and planning Glen Boone (right) thank municipal planner Nelson Bezanson for his 27 years of service to residents of the municipality. Bezanson retired on Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024. (Darrell Cole - Municipality of Cumberland photo)

son, whose wife retired from Indigenous Affairs in Amherst several years ago. "There's a tremendous family here and real sense of internal support.

"Being a public servant can be a real challenge. Some people see it, but a lot don't see it. You do your best for people and for council. You appreciate they're decision makes and we give them the information and advice to make decisions."

One of the things he's appreciative of is Cumberland County being one of the few municipalities with a comprehensive land-use bylaw that is up to date and consistent across the municipality.

In retirement, he plans to do some work on his home in East Amherst and eventually wants to sell that property and build a new home.

Municipality of Cumberland chief administrative officer Greg Herrett congratulated Bezanson on an exemplary career.

"The municipality truly appreciates the contributions he has made over his time with us, whether it be his role in implementing comprehensive land-use planning in rural areas of the county or dealing

with our recent unprecedented growth. As CAO I'd like to thank Nelson for a job well done and certainly wish him well in his next chapter," Herrett said.

Glen Boone, director of development, said Bezanson will be missed for his professionalism and dedication to the customer.

"Nelson has been a big part of our success within the municipality," Boone said. "His professionalism and dedication will be missed. He has always been customer-service oriented and has always been the people's planner."

Darrell Cole is Corporate Communications Officer, 902-297-1333; dcole@cumberlandcounty.ns.ca



Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024, was the last day of work for municipal planner Nelson Bezanson, who retired after 27 years with the Municipality of Cumberland. (Darrell Cole - Municipality of Cumberland photo)

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