

Incentive to Encourage Affordable Housing

The Province is partnering with homeowners to create more affordable housing, faster. The Secondary and Backyard Suite Incentive Program, announced on October 19, will provide up to \$25,000 in forgivable loans to eligible homeowners who create an affordable secondary or backyard suite in their home or on their property.

"Secondary or backyard suites are a proven way to get housing stock built fast and also contribute to things like rental income for the owner, supportive housing for an elderly family member or person with a disability, and freeing up housing in other areas," said John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "We

know to truly address the housing crisis we need more units, and we need them fast. We also know it can be expensive to build a suite. This program will help homeowners with some of the costs while creating hundreds of units for our most vulnerable Nova Scotians."

To qualify for the pilot program, homeowners must: provide housing at a maximum rental rate that is 80 per cent of average market rent in the area for a minimum of five years; not make suites available for short-term rentals while homeowners have an active loan under the program.

Tenants must be at least one of the following: below the house-

hold income limits for their area; a parent, 65 years or older, of one of the homeowners or an adult child of a senior homeowner.

The landlord-tenant relationship will be subject to the Residential Tenancies Act. This pilot program represents an \$8-million investment over three years and is expected to result in more than 300 secondary or backyard suites during that period.

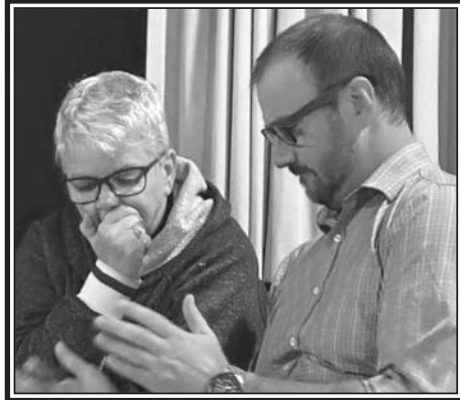
BASS RIVER BRIDGE: Not Everyone Happy



MLA Tom Taggart hosted an information meeting concerning options for the new bridge in Bass River at the Victoria Hall on Sept. 28th. (Harrington Photo)



Greg Chisholm, Construction Manager for Dept. Of Transportation Northern District attended the Bridge meeting in Bass River, showing residents the proposed placement and answering questions. (Harrington Photo)



Erma Cox had a very thorough presentation at the Bridge meeting in Bass River and she discussed some of these options with Greg Chisholm following the meeting. (Harrington Photo)

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At a previous meeting a Pedestrian Traffic Survey was requested, and this report was presented by Greg Chisholm and Luke Crocker, Construction Engineer with Dept. Of Public Works. The proposed new location would include a stop sign on Hwy 2 for traffic coming from the direction of Truro and a sidewalk on the north side of the bridge (with potential for a sidewalk on both sides). Pedestrians would be able to cross on Maple Avenue and then walk along the north-side sidewalk. Traffic coming from the Parrsboro direction would not have a stop sign but a reduction in speed was a consideration for the new design.

The proposed new bridge location further up Maple Ave has a wooden arch bridge design, allowing an increase of about 6 feet allowing for more water flow underneath.

Many residents have been concerned about past flooding. Long time resident Jim Grue said he had seen lots of floods over the years and noted the river used to be dredged every few years to remove gravel.

Tom Taggart said he hoped to be able to address some of these flooding issues in the future but the flooding down river was not part of the bridge proposal at this time.

There were four bridge locations considered during the planning stages. One involved moving the road over, passing through the site of a former gas station and come up the right side of the river. This would be more intrusive to several properties, potentially doubling the cost and could have environmental risks when disturbing contaminated soil. Traffic would no longer pass by the General Store.

Many local residents were very concerned about the impact the latest bridge proposal could have on Veterans Memorial Park. MLA Taggart assured them he had been working hard to keep any encroachment to a minimum. There was much discussion about exactly how much of the Park will be changed and ensuring protection for the existing memorial trees.

Erma Cox, a former principal at West Colchester Consolidated School put

together an informative presentation looking at another option. This option would move Highway 2 from its existing location at the corner onto to what is known as the Feed Mill building and Elliott house. This option would not impede on the Veteran's Memorial Park location and give more operational space to the General Store.

Tom Taggart noted the engineers had looked at the option Erma presented (this resembles what was known as Option 2) but it was determined to get proper elevation on Maple Ave to meet Hwy 2 at required angle, the General Store would have to be demolished.

There was also concern about the edges of the road currently washing away along Maple Ave., down to the store. This was something Public Works needs to look at in the future, per-

haps installing a larger culvert.

After much discussion, it was concluded each of the bridge proposals presented pros and cons and not everyone would be happy. The engineers would be made aware of new suggestions and see if anything else could be done, especially making sure Veterans Memorial Park had the least amount of disturbance possible. Greg Chisholm said talks would continue with stake holders, including the owners of the General Store to see what can be done in front of the store to make it safer for traffic and pedestrians. MLA Taggart said he would look into options of moving the bridge slight distances from the proposed location, to investigate if any of the concerns could be addressed.



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Council Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 16 @ 6pm

Council Meeting
Thursday, November 30 @ 6pm

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