

REES' Pieces

A great start for CNSTDS

I must start this column with sad news. Ken Kennedy, the inventor and founding publisher of this great newspaper passed away on October 18th at the age of 84.

If we wish to keep our sanity, I recommend we stop closely paying attention to what is happening south of the border unless we check on how Canada is being abuse by President Trump. He hasn't clued in to what he will face when 41-million Canadians have 'their elbows up.' All winter he was proclaiming there was nothing we had that USA needed or wanted.

I don't have the export figures but it they California and other western states didn't need British Columbia timber, why did they buy it, and what did they do with it as they imported almost as much at we could produce? For as many decades as I can recall, softwood lumber has been a major irritant in every set of Canada-USA trade discussions.

Last weekend when Trump called of trade discussions he might have done us a favour. Instead of us letting up on the peddle, thinking we might get things solved, we now have to turn our attention to "looking out for ourselves". Since 1867 the determination and hard work of our forefathers and mothers we built a very nice democracy. a good example is our national healthcare "free hospitalization" program. In Canada we do not have couples earning combined \$95,000 family income spending \$20,000-22,000 a year for health insurance.

If you want to hear some sad stories, or what is devastating for 41-million Americans who will lose their current healthcare coverage and will face a yearly cost triple (up to \$2,000 more per month) than they paid in recent years. Existing plans expire end of this year.

It's great to live in Nova Scotia for many reasons, but I'll give you an example.

In September, Municipality of Colchester and Town of Truro each received two \$75,000 funding requests from the RECC for Nova Scotia Stampede and the upcoming World U17 Hockey Challenge. Both councils passed on the Stampede, but deferred the U17 Hockey Challenge to the in-process of being formed Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society (CNSTDS). (See last months headline story for detailed information)

The reason I am using CNCTDS as an example is at the September 16th committee meeting a lengthy two page from the not-yet-formalized society essentially reading the riot act to RECC management.

And drawing a line in the sand how things will operate once it is up and running. The following is 5 excerpts from the letter. A fuller version of the excerpts are printed elsewhere in this issue.

EXERPT (1), see page 3, mentioned both councils deferred decision to CNSTDS on a total of \$150,000 in funding for the World U17 Hockey Challenge. No mention was made to the Nova Scotia Stampede, which was held a month ago, three days after being discussed at Colchester Council and at a separate time by Truro council.

In next paragraph of the letter CNSTDS stated it does not have sufficient information to make a funding decision. In EX-ERPT (2) it is pointed out the municipalities, where the tax is collected, intend the funds to be used as primary funding for major events in the region.

The CNSTDS letter in EXERPT (3), in a lengthy list of requirements stated, as of this time, it has not received the necessary documentation to support a funding request. This excerpt concluded: "the society is unable to complete the necessary due diligence to consider or approve funding for 2025".

What several business owners have said concerning other similar major events, particularly World Hockey events "it appears most attendees are local residents with out of town visitors largely comprised of players, scouts and families, or groups that have a more limited impact on the local tourism economy was the main message in EXCERPT (4)

In EXCERPT (5), the board stresses that since the World U17 Hockey Challenge does not appear to be in jeopardy and is proceeding without funding being provided, even though the event is important, "we currently have no clear rationale for the funding request or clarity on how the proposed funds would be spent".

Enjoy November as you prepare for Christmas Holiday Season.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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West Mabou Beach: Unfinished Business

Editors note: This letter was originally written and published in December 2024.

Dear Editor,

It has now been a few weeks since the votes of the provincial election were tallied and, as the newly elected government settles in, I would like to extend my congratulations to the Progressive Conservative Party and the elected representatives of all the parties that form our new government, including and especially, Kyle MacQuarrie of Inverness. I wish him, and all those, entrusted with the responsibility of governing our great province the very best. The people of Inverness, specifically, and Nova Scotians, generally, deserve no less. And despite my disagreement with Premier Houston's assessment of the election result in which he declared that his government was delivered a "clear and loud" mandate to "keep going," even though voter turnout in the province reached a historic low, I do wish Premier Houston and his government every success in tackling the multitude of challenges facing the people of Nova Scotia.

One such challenge that remains unaddressed from the PC's first term in government is the failure to take substantive action on passing strong, clear and unambiguous legislation to protect public lands against private development. This is an important endeavour province-wide, but, for the voters in Inverness' electoral district, this is particularly pertinent to the protection, or lack thereof, of West Mabou Beach Provincial Park. This is evidenced by the fiasco that took place during the Fall of 2022 and into the Spring of 2023 where Cabot Golf attempted to secure public lands for the purpose of developing a private golf course located at West Mabou Beach via the vendor application process that is managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables.

Editors note: This is his resubmission for November 2025.

What does it mean to act in good faith? Dear Editor

The expression to "act in good faith" is often used within the context of contract law and it is an implicit assumption that the parties to the contract are sincere and will act honestly and fairly to uphold both the obligations and the spirit of the contract. A contract is thus an agreement between two or more parties that share common interests and that seek to partner for the mutual benefit of all parties.

Regarding the Nova Scotian government and its most recent mandate to govern, one might wonder if the government is acting in good faith as it relates to the consideration of a golf course at West Mabou Beach Provincial Park. An election is, after all, a contract between the electorate and those elected to govern. This contract is an agreement that allows elected representatives to act on your behalf, granting them the formal power and authority to make decisions that represent the interests of the electorate. While this power is formal and grants authority, it is not absolute. For democratic representation to function properly, transparency is essential in order to hold elected officials accountable. How can you know if your interests are being represented if the processes of government take place behind a veil of secrecy? Transparency is a fundamental principle of democracy and it is absolutely imperative that the public be kept informed.

Despite the recent rhetoric from the Nova Scotian government that they have been clear and consistent with Nova Scotians, it is my belief that this government is not acting in good faith and there is ample reason for Nova Scotians to question whether this government has been honest and sincere and whether they have been fair to those they have been elected to represent.

Consider that, in April 2023, Premier Houston's office made the statement to CBC that "[West Mabou Beach Provincial Park] is protected under the Provincial Parks Act, and [the government] has no plans to change that." Additionally, Minister Rushton, acting on behalf of the Ministry of Natural

The fate of this ecologically sensitive land that is home to several rare species and held dear by the members of the surrounding community hung in the balance for months on end as local politicians and the government deliberately avoided commenting on the escalating situation. To this day, it remains incomprehensible to me that large swathes of publicly protected land could ever be up for grabs through an application process that allows privately owned businesses to develop that land for their own personal gain. It has become clear that protected lands in Nova Scotia are protected only to the extent that the government of the day allows. For this reason, strong, clear and unambiguous protection against large scale private development of Nova Scotia's public lands is urgently necessary to prevent the misappropriation by the current and subsequent governments. At no time should a short-sighted, politically motivated government be granted the power and authority to appropriate protected lands to private individuals or corporations. A law that allows for this also allows for the flagrant misuse of this power and this needs to be corrected with legislation that is far more comprehensive in its protection.

The most recent attempt by Cabot Golf to secure a portion of West Mabou Beach - a provincial park, a land that is supposedly protected by law - as a building site for a new golf course, and the events that surrounded the proposal's campaign, should serve as a stark warning of the vulnerabilities that exist to our public lands under the existing legislation. It should also remind us of the corruptibility and ineptitude of politicians to take the necessary action to act in the public interest. The blatant cowardliness and neglect of duty demonstrated by the former representative for Inverness, makes clear the necessity of legislative reform. This is all the more necessary and urgent with a government in power that has not only a majority, but a superma-

Resources, "informed the company that even if Cabot does make a formal request, the government will not consider it."

I can't and do not claim to speak for all Nova Scotians, but, to me anyhow, this does not appear to be clear and consistent with the message coming from the government in recent weeks. Minister Rushton's message appears to have changed from "the government will not consider a [proposal]" to "We'll have a conversation and see what takes place." These are very different statements and, unless my grasp of the English language is not what I believe it to be, these messages are not clear nor are they consistent. Further to this, I am still very much interested in knowing who is having the conversation and what exactly is taking place.

Nova Scotia's Environment Minister, Tim Halman, has also decided to join the conversation and, I'd say, it's about time. He stated the government must consider "a new context" when it comes to the protection of land and water, adding further, that the economic use of land is something to be considered. This is not exactly what I had expected to hear from the Environment Minister and I should highlight that, it is not often that you hear environment ministers commenting on the economic value of land, especially as it pertains to the use of already protected public lands.

I am finding it difficult to uncover the clarity and consistency that this government continues to assert. This is especially the case when you consider that the government created a law that introduced fixed election dates under the Elections Act in 2021 and then proceeded to circumvent its own law to trigger a snap election. It should be noted that this appears to have been done for no other purpose than to consolidate power by capitalizing on a wave of popular support. This resulted in the lowest voter turnout of any provincial election in Nova Scotia's history with significantly less than half the population casting a ballot. The government has since repealed fixed election dates in the province.

I ask, does this sound to you, like this government is acting in good faith?

I'd argue that it sounds more consistent with the deceptive tactic commonly known as a bait and switch.

Doug Lowry
West Mabou

majority. Strong, clear, unambiguous legislation must serve to counter any temptation by government to take liberties in dispersing public lands to private stakeholders under the false notion that a "loud and clear" mandate grants them the authority to do so.

It is shameful that reform of the existing legislation was not championed back in 2023 when the events at West Mabou Beach were taking place. This was a missed opportunity to better the lives of Nova Scotians for generations to come. Fortunately, the opportunity has not passed us by and support in favour of stronger protections has not waned. This offers our newest representative, Kyle MacQuarrie, the chance to redeem his predecessor and I invite him to do so.

Furthermore, the strengthening of protections for Nova Scotia's public lands is not only consistent with, but complementary to, the PC government's healthcare platform. Increased access to healthcare providers, reduced wait times and improved health outcomes would, unquestionably, be positively influenced by a citizenry that has greater access to the riches of our province's great outdoors. Whether that be through a hike in the forest, a walk on the beach, or, simply, the enjoyment of smelling the fresh ocean air, we all stand to benefit from the protection of our natural landscapes, which allow us to be more active and more socially, spiritually, and ecologically connected. In fact, a healthcare agenda that ignores this fundamental necessity is not worth a damn. If we continue to see healthcare as a mere means of treating illness and ignore the factors that facilitate a healthy life, our system will continue to break and buckle under the weight of a population that is chronically ill.

I believe that, as a community, as a province, and as organisms that belong to, and depend on, the health of our environment, we must take action to protect it with the seriousness that it deserves. The stakes are far too high. This is the very

foundation of health and we cannot afford to leave ourselves vulnerable to the arbitrary decision-making process of the Department of Natural Resource and Renewables. We must understand that to lose ANY of our public lands to private development is unacceptable. For God's sake, we cannot afford to lose West Mabou Beach! Repeat: WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE WEST MABOU BEACH!!

Kyle MacQuarrie, we, the people of Inverness, have elected you to serve us as our representative in government. I hope and trust that you honor this sacred responsibility that is our democracy and act in accordance with your highest ideals and values, so that the current generation of Nova Scotians and all the generations to follow can enjoy the unspoiled beauty of places like West Mabou Beach, AS IS THEIR BIRTHRIGHT.

Doug Lowry
Resident of West Mabou,
Citizen of Inverness Electoral District

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