

Amherst, Cumberland Mayors Express Health-Care Concerns

The mayors of the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of the County of Cumberland are expressing concern about a nursing shortage that is impacting the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre in Upper Nappan and All Saints Hospital in Springhill.

The mayors expressed their concern in a letter to Health Minister Michelle Thompson, dated Sept. 24, 2021. They also proposed a solution they believe would help resolve the problem in a timely manner.

"The chronic shortage of nurses has recently become acute," Mayor David Kogon of Amherst and Cumberland County Mayor Murray Scott wrote. "The latest need to transfer emergency room nurses from All Saints to CRHCC attests to this.

"The acute shortage of

nurses in our region is severely limiting the delivery of health care to our citizens and needs to be addressed quickly and definitively."

Mayor Scott also expressed serious concern about the potential negative health-care impact the nursing shortage may have on Highcrest Nursing home in Springhill and the Springhill Institution, because of their reliance on the All Saints Emergency Room.

The mayors noted they had met the previous day with Cumberland North MLA Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, Cumberland South MLA Tory Rushton and Deborah Kogon, the chairwoman of the Cumberland Healthcare Professionals Recruitment and Retention Committee. The committee helps recruit allied health-care professionals, with

the exception of physicians, for the Cumberland region.

Also in attendance were representatives from the Cumberland Regional Health Care Foundation and All Saint Hospital Foundation

"Our meeting was to see what more we, as a community, can do to retain nurses and also recruit more," the mayors wrote.

Kogon and Murray pointed out recruitment of nurses currently rests solely with Nova Scotia Health, but is "unfortunately, a slow and often tedious process" in which the local community plays no part.

"As a result, we are very limited in what we can do," they wrote. "We believe an effective innovative approach would be to treat nurse recruitment like physician recruitment. NSH

would determine how many nursing positions are allotted to each hospital, but have each institution seek out, interview and hire their staff."

The mayors indicated they would be more than willing to discuss their concern and solution with the health minister. They also thanked her for her time and consideration.

Besides the health minister, the letter was also sent to Smith-McCrossin, MLA, Cumberland North; Tory Rushton, MLA Cumberland South; Premier Tim Houston, NSH interim CEO Karen Oldfield, Oxford Mayor Gregory Henley, Linda Cloney, acting clerk, Town of Oxford, Cumberland County CAO Greg Herrett and Amherst CAO Jason MacDonald.

A Walk in the Woods

By Donald Cameron

Importance of volunteers fighting wildfires is huge and invaluable. "Remember, only you can prevent forest fires." - Smokey

There has been much discussion in recent weeks about the unusually dry and hot conditions that have caused disastrous wildfires in western Canada and the US. The hot, dry weather seems to be making its way eastward. Although we in Nova Scotia have been relatively fortunate this spring and summer due to periodic rainfall, we know from experience how quickly this can change after a week or two of dry weather.

Once a wildfire gets established, it can create its own terrifying hot and ember filled winds that dry and torch everything in its way. There have been countless examples on this occurring in BC in recent weeks. In fact, my brother in law who is a professional forester in BC, recounted how recently a wind swept wildfire spread quickly across three watersheds to quickly destroy nine large forestry machines that were working on creating firebreaks in an attempt to stop the fire many kilometers away just a couple days before. Resulting were many millions of dollars lost and the company workers narrowly escaping with their lives.

Here in Nova Scotia, we are dependent on the many community volunteer fire brigades to be the first on site, and often to extinguish both building and forest wildfires. To witness these well trained volunteers work cooperatively together is impressive. Through mutual aid agreements, the brigades routinely work together or support each other whenever required. Therefore, the various brigades can supply different services or support such as fire fighters, tactical planning assistance, equipment such as hose, ground tools, tankers, pumpers, tanks, traffic control, vehicle support, communications, equipment and food supply.

Since the brigades are located in rural communities throughout Nova Scotia, they are often the first to arrive at and start suppression activities on wildfires - both grass and forest fires. If it were not for their quick and skilled action, there would be many larger, more costly, and damaging wildfires in the province every year. We owe these brave men and women a great amount of gratitude.

The value of these volunteer fire brigade members cannot be over-stated. They are



heroes in every sense of the word. These men and women literally put their health and lives on the line every time they answer a fire call so that you and I will be safe from loss and damage due to structure fires and wildfires. They don't do this to become famous or to become rich. In fact, not only are these members unpaid volunteers, answering fire calls also usually costs them out-of-pocket money for travel as well as sometimes the loss of wages from their regular jobs. They are willing to risk much for the sake of others - most of whom are total strangers who often take them for granted. They simply want to do the right thing that can help others. As encouragement for new and current members, hopefully over time, there may be appropriate financial incentives developed for volunteers - especially those that provide such essential emergency services. They certainly deserve it.

Sadly, we are living in a time when society doesn't produce nearly as many, or enough volunteers. It is the volunteers that add so much vitality, capacity, opportunity, potential and general high quality of life to communities. Without new volunteers to work with, or take over, from aging volunteers, we are all worse off for it. We need more people coming forward to get involved in the world outside of their work or personal interests.

If you look at most long term volunteer organizations such as fire brigades and community service organizations, you will notice that the average age is creeping up with relatively few new recruits joining the ranks. If we hope to enjoy a similar quality of life in our communities, we will have to see more people stepping up to the volunteer plate.

Thank you to volunteer fire brigades and their members. May you remain active and healthy as members and as organizations, for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Donald Cameron, RPF, is based in Truro office of the newly named Natural Resources and Renewables

Four Unsightly Premises to be Eliminated

Council of the Municipality of Cumberland met via zoom for a Public Council Meeting on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 approving a Memorandum of Understanding with Towns of Amherst and Oxford. The meeting opened with a territorial acknowledgement.

Four public hearings were held regarding dangerous and unsightly properties. Each of the properties was ordered to have all structures and debris removed and disposed of in an appropriate facility by October 22, 2021. The properties were 3086 Highway 302 Maccan; 541 Wentworth Collingwood Road; 4497 Barronsfield Road Barronsfield, and 1413 Murray Road Pugwash.

Council received a staff report regarding the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change public consultation of the Coastal Protection Act. The staff report detailed the ways in which the municipal land use by-law has already been amended to account for coastal protection measures. Staff were directed

to forward their report to the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Council approved a memorandum of understanding with the Town of Amherst regarding a West Amherst sanitary sewer. This will create the possibility for defined residential properties in West Amherst to connect to the Town of Amherst sanitary sewer system.

Council approved a second memorandum of understanding with the Town of Amherst and Town of Oxford, this time regarding solid waste education and enforcement. This MOU will be important to continuing the public facing education and enforcement activities once the Cumberland Central Landfill sale has closed.

The second reading was heard to an amendment to the land use by-law pertaining to a rezoning request for 556 Valley Road in Westchester. First reading of this amendment was July 14, 2021. Second reading is scheduled for September 22, 2021.

Council adopted an update to the personnel policy, adding the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a recognized holiday. Council also formally adopted the addition of Nova Scotia Heritage Day. Municipal offices will be closed on September 30 in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Second reading was given to the solid waste by-law with a set of amendments pertaining to exporting solid waste outside of the municipality and an administrative update to remove reference to a non-existent policy on disposal fees. A first reading on this by-law occurred on July 27, 2021.

Council awarded \$3,000 to the Parrsboro Band Association in the form of an operational grant. Council also approved a regional operations grant of \$3,000 to the Wallace Area Community Centre.

Mayor Scott declared the week of September 20 - 26, 2021 as Rail Safety Week. This is to support CN with their on-

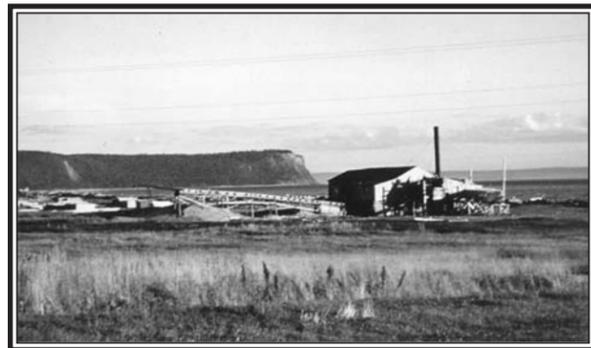
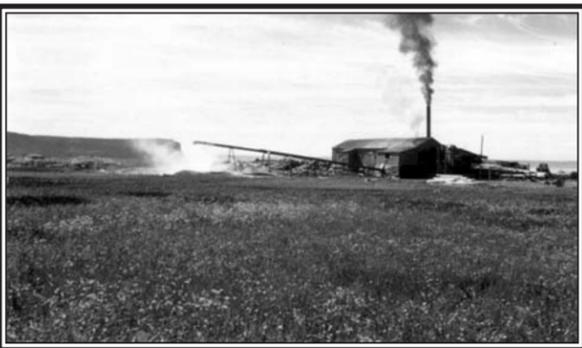
going efforts to raise awareness, safe lives and prevent injuries in our communities.

Mayor Scott updated council on his actions upon learning of a reduction of services at All Saints Hospital on September 17, 2021.

Council discussed concerns from the citizens of Pugwash regarding community safety due to traffic issues. The CAO has passed these concerns along to the staff sergeant of the Cumberland District of the RCMP. The staff sergeant has responded with assurances that the concerns will be addressed.

The next public council meeting will be October 27, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. A committee of the whole meeting will be held October 20, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. Formal minutes of the September 22nd meeting are available on the municipalities website. A Facebook live recording is available on the municipal Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MunicipalityofCumberland>

The CFAC September newsletter contained three photos of the Reid's sawmill that was located in West Advocate. This sawmill operated until the late 60's. (CFAC Newsletter)





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