

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

The Inaugural Session of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was held at the Colchester Legion Branch No. 26, 42 Brunswick St., Truro, NS, on Thursday, October 29, 2020, at 6:00 pm.

The meeting was called to order by the Chief Administrative officer (CAO), Rob Simonds. The following members were in attendance:

Mayor-Elect Christine Blair, Chair	
Councillor-Elect Eric Boutilier	District 1
Councillor-Elect Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Councillor-Elect Geoff Stewart	District 3
Councillor-Elect Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor-Elect Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor-Elect Karen MacKenzie	District 6
Councillor-Elect Michael Gregory	District 7
Councillor-Elect Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor-Elect Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor-Elect Tom Taggart	District 10
Councillor-Elect Wade Parker	District 11

Staff Present

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works
 Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst
 Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner (*for Item No. 11*)

Declaration of the 2020 Municipal Election

Referring to the memorandum as distributed in the Council package, the CAO presented the declaration of the Municipal Election held on October 17th.

Swearing in of Mayor

The CAO administered the Oath of Allegiance and Office to Mayor-Elect Christine Blair.

Swearing in of Councillors

Mayor Blair administered the Oath of Allegiance and Office to each of the Councillors-Elect.

Following the swearing in of Council members, Mayor Blair noted that this is a historic time for Colchester County, with five women being elected to serve on Council.

Election of Deputy Mayor

Mayor Blair called for nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor. Councillor Parker moved and Councillor Cooper seconded the nomination of Councillor Stewart, who accepted the nomination. Councillor Parker moved and Councillor Sandeson seconded the nomination of Councillor Boutilier, who accepted the nomination. Mayor Blair called three times for further nominations and, on hearing none, the nominations ceased.

Both Councillor Boutilier and Councillor Stewart were provided the opportunity to address Council on serving as Deputy Mayor, if elected.

To verify the vote, the CAO requested that Council appoint the Municipal Solicitor, Dennis James, as Scrutineer.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That Dennis James be appointed as scrutineer for the counting of ballots for the election of Deputy Mayor, Alternate Chair and Nominating Committee.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Following the counting of the ballots, Councillor Stewart was declared Deputy Mayor for a two-year term.

Deputy Mayor Stewart thanked Council for their support in electing him to continue to serve as Deputy Mayor.

Election of Alternate Chair

Mayor Blair called for nominations for the position of Alternate Chair. Deputy Mayor Stewart moved and Councillor Parker seconded the nomination of Councillor Cooper, who accepted the nomination. Mayor Blair called three times for further nominations and, on hearing none, the nominations ceased.

By acclamation, Councillor Cooper was declared Alternate Council Committee Chair for a two-year term.

Councillor Cooper thanked Council for their support in his serving as Alternate Chair.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the agenda be amended with the following additions:
- Item 17b, Springside Community Association Grant;
- Item 17c, Light in East Stewiacke.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart
Seconded by Councillor Taggart

“That the minutes of the meeting held on September 24, 2020, be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

Referring to funding of the Biosolids Pilot Project on page 48 of the minutes, Councillor Cooper asked if there was an update on this item.

Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works, advised that we have not heard yet on the additional sources of funding, however Council had approved funding the full cost so staff has started with preliminary work on the project. A further update can be provided in November.

ACTION ITEMS**Appointment of Nominating Committee**

Mayor Blair called for nominations to serve on the Nominating Committee. Councillor Gregory moved and Councillor Cooper seconded the nomination of Deputy Mayor Stewart, who accepted the nomination. Councillor Cooper moved and Councillor Johnson seconded the nomination of Councillor MacKenzie, who accepted the nomination. Councillor Taggart moved and Councillor Patton seconded the nomination of Councillor Sandeson, who accepted the nomination. Mayor Blair called three times for further nominations and, on hearing none, the nominations ceased.

By acclamation, Deputy Mayor Stewart, Councillors MacKenzie and Sandeson were appointed to serve on the Nominating Committee. The Mayor also serves on the Nominating Committee as a standing appointment.

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council directs that all ballots used in the election of Deputy Mayor, be destroyed.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Memorial Garden(s) for Tulip Bulbs Donation

Referring to the 1000 red tulip bulbs donated by Veseys Seeds Ltd. in PEI, Mayor Blair indicated that staff were directed to look into possible locations to plant the bulbs as a memorial to the victims of the April tragedy and report back to Council. This item provides three possible locations as suggested by staff: the Community Hall in Portapique, the Debert River Park in Debert; and the Veterans Memorial Garden in Bass River.

Discussion was held on the suggested locations with support indicated for the Community Hall and Debert River Park. A question was raised on whether the Memorial Garden in Bass River was a suitable location, as it is a Memorial Garden for Veterans. Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development, confirmed that the group responsible for the Memorial Garden were consulted as part of staff’s review.

Further discussion was held on providing some of the bulbs to family members of the victims as well as to the Rotary Club. Mr. Macpherson suggested that planting 200 bulbs at each of the locations as suggested by staff would still provide plenty of bulbs to distribute to families and the community. He noted the timing sensitivities with this project as the bulbs would need to be planted in November.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the bulbs be planted at the three locations as suggested by staff, as well as distributed to family and community members affected by the tragedy, in consultation with the Councillors from District 9 and 10.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Carbon-Free Colchester Advisory Committee – Authority for November Committee to Approve

Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner, provided information on the Carbon-Free Colchester project, the Community Energy and Emissions Plan, and the role of the Advisory Committee. The appointments to the Committee is somewhat time sensitive as the project has a rigid timeline for spending grant funds. Staff is recommending three Councillors serve on this Committee.

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council grant authority to Council Committee, at their meeting on November 12, 2020, to select and approve Council representatives for the Carbon-Free Colchester Advisory Committee, based on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Councillor Taggart advised that the Council representative to serve on the Northern Region Committee, is also time sensitive. This Committee would like to have a representative appointed prior to November 27th.

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Stewart

“That Council grants authority to Council Committee, at their meeting on November 12, 2020, to select and approve Council representatives for the Northern Region Committee, based on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

RECC Board Appointment – Authority for November Committee to Approve

The CAO indicated that Council was previously advised of a vacancy on the RECC Board. The vacancy was advertised in the Chronicle Herald and on the County website with a closing on October 30th. Staff is recommending that authority be granted to November Council Committee to approve the citizen representative appointment to the RECC Board, following review and recommendation by the Nominating Committee.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council grant authority to Council Committee at their meeting on November 12, 2020, to approve the citizen appointment to the RECC Board.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Debert Aviation Centre – Award of Tender for HVAC System

For the benefit of the new Council members, Mr. Macpherson provided a brief background on the County’s recent purchase of the former Orenda building in Debert and the renovation budget. This item deals with the replacement of the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system component of the renovation.

The tender for the HVAC system closed on October 15th, following a mandatory site visit on October 8th. Three bids were received at the time of

closing, all local companies and all having the experience to complete the project. Two of the companies might have to subcontract some of the work, with the remaining company being more qualified to complete the work in-house. Source of funds for this project would be the Federal Gas Tax funds. Staff's recommendation is to award the tender to JC Mechanical.

Brief discussion was held on overall budget for the renovation, the budget for this project and status to date.

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

"That Council award the tender for the HVAC System for the Debert Aviation Centre to JC Mechanical for \$192,675, plus HST; and,

That an internal contingency of \$20,000 be approved, to be spent only on authority of the Director of Community Development."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Fire Suppression System, Debert Aviation Centre – Authority for November Committee to Award

Mr. Macpherson advised that the fire suppression system is another key component to the renovations at the Debert Aviation Centre. The tender for this system closed on October 29th. Staff are requesting that authority be granted to November Council Committee to award this tender.

Moved by Councillor Benoit
Seconded by Councillor Parker

"That Council authorizes Council Committee, at their meeting on November 12, 2020, to award the tender for the Fire Suppression System at the Debert Aviation Centre."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Resuming In-person Meetings

Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer, provided an overview of this item which included requirements for compliance to Public Health and related orders; penalties for non-compliance; options for resuming in-person Council meetings; and, the pros and cons of the options.

Referring to the hybrid option of resuming in-person Council meetings in Chambers, the CAO advised that all in attendance would be logged into Zoom with some members of staff joining virtually. This option would also address the public component with media and public joining virtually. All in attendance in Chambers would be required to maintain physical distancing, wear headsets, and microphones would be turned on only when speaking. Once seated, members would be permitted to remove masks. Mr. Trefry noted that depending on the level of engagement required by the public may determine how and where meetings are conducted.

An inquiry was made on whether the Debert Hospitality Centre was considered as one of the offsite venues. The CAO advised that a number of venues were considered, however, from a logistics perspective, close

proximity to the Municipal Office was a key consideration as well as venues with access to microphone and sound system to accommodate all of Council.

Concern was expressed regarding the second wave of Covid-19 with discussion on continuing meetings virtually via Zoom. It was suggested that members with underlying conditions and potentially at greater risk might prefer the option of meeting virtually.

Moved by Councillor Parker
Seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That Council continue to meet virtually.”

Motion **DEFEATED**. (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Stewart, Councillors Sandeson, Johnson, MacKenzie, Gregory, Benoit, and Taggart opposed*)

Further debate was held on the option of meeting in Council Chambers via Zoom; which staff would be in attendance; whether it would be possible to bring additional staff into Chambers to present their agenda items; and the possibility of Council members joining virtually should they wish to do so. The CAO indicated that the staff members in Chambers would be the CAO, Solicitor and Deputy Clerk/Recording Secretary. The maximum capacity with physical distancing in Chamber is 15, so additional staff would not be permitted to present items in person.

Clarification was sought on if there would be protocols in place for attending in Council Chambers. Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, advised that the Municipality is already following protocols and anyone attending the meeting would have an obligation to ensure they are not experiencing any symptoms. It would be a private meeting with fairly passive activity and minimal interacting. Any protocols in place would be proportionate to the activity being conducted in the room.

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council and some staff (maximum of three) meet in-person, adhering to physical distancing and mask protocols, with additional staff, media and public joining by virtual means; and, that Council members may attend virtually, as necessary.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

The CAO reiterated that there may be times, such as Council orientation, that meeting in Council Chambers in-person, may not be an option and Council will be advised accordingly.

Council Orientation Session

The CAO advised of the upcoming plans for a Council orientation session and some of the key considerations. He also advised that the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing has informed us of some upcoming dates for the Provincial orientation session.

Our session will consist of an orientation binder, presentations from our RECC Board, the REN, Policing Services, Department heads, as well as a presentation on Council's Strategic Priorities. Staff is recommending the orientation session take place in either two evening sessions or a couple of Saturday morning sessions and is requesting feedback from Council on how they would like to proceed. Sessions would likely be three and a half hours each, 6 pm to 9 pm for evening sessions or 9 am to 12:30 pm on Saturdays.

Some members of Council expressed interest in morning sessions while others indicated evenings would be their preference. A suggestion was made to have the orientation held over one evening and one Saturday morning session. It was agreed that the CAO look into availability of other presenters and bring back some dates for consideration.

Brief discussion was held on site visits/tours of facilities being open to all Council members. The CAO advised that a RECC tour is being arranged for November 5th and an email with details will be sent to members of Council.

On-line Voting

Councillor Boutilier advised of inquiries he has received on why on-line voting was not available for the recent Election and that it is time that Colchester moves into the 21st century and make this option available in future.

Some concern was expressed with on-line voting including one person having the ability to vote for all members in the family, as well as being able to vote multiple times. Mr. James advised that multiple voting can be tracked and on-line voting has more security than one realizes.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

"That on-line and phone-in voting be an option for residents of Colchester County at the next Municipal Election."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Mr. James advised Council that prior to proceeding with on-line/alternative voting methods, the Municipality would be required to adopt a by-law.

Springside Community Association – Grant

The CAO indicated that the Springside Community Association was granted funding in the amount of \$10,000 for a new washroom facility. Due to circumstances, there were insufficient funds to complete the project and the group was undertaking fundraising to assist with costs needed to complete the project. A more significant and urgent matter arose during the process of the upgrades, namely repairs to the roof. The group is requesting funds be repurposed to address the more urgent matter of repairs to the roof.

Councillor Cooper added to the CAO's comments indicating that this is a fairly new, hard working group who recently bought the former Springside Church to make into a community centre. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the person who was going to provide in-kind work at the centre is now unable to do so and the group now has to hire someone to carry out the work. They are asking to use the funds towards repairs to the roof and are committed to fundraising and completing the washroom at a later time.

Council briefly discussed this groups enthusiasm and level of commitment during their presentation to Council and suggested that additional funding be considered to allow them to complete both projects. Councillor Cooper appreciated the suggestion however, expressed concern with the costs of building materials at this time due to Covid-19. The group's annual general meeting takes place in the next week or so and he will ask them to report back on this issue.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor MacKenzie

"That Council approves allowing changes to the original proposal for Springside Community Centre to get the roof repaired, with fundraising being carried out for the original plan."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Light in East Stewiacke

Councillor Cooper brought forward the issue of a major intersection in East Stewiacke called MacPhee Corner that is very dark. He was asked by a number of residents about the possibility of getting a light at this intersection.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

"That staff be directed to investigate the possibility of a light at MacPhee Corner in East Stewiacke."

Motion Carried Unanimously

Correspondence - ACTION

Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Municipality of Pictou County

An email from Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Municipal Clerk with the Municipality of Pictou County seeking support of Councils regarding temporary relief from the Provincial Government for community rinks.

Council expressed support for community rinks, especially during these difficult times and indicated that any support from the Provincial Government would lessen amounts that may be requested of municipalities.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart
Seconded by Councillor Parker

"That Council write a letter in support of temporary relief from the Provincial Government for community rinks and endorses the Resolution from Pictou County."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Stacey Biekx, MADD

An email dated October 19, 2020, regarding a request for sponsorship advertising from Stacey Biekx, MADD.

An inquiry was made on the Municipality's budget for sponsorships. The CAO advised that by practice, the Municipality does not provide support through subscription sponsorship, however, there have been some exceptions.

Brief discussion was held acknowledging the importance of this organization however, it was noted that the Municipality already provides funding through our granting process to MADD.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart
Seconded by Councillor Parker

"That the email from Stacey Biekx, MADD, requesting advertising sponsorship, be received for information."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Correspondence - INFORMATION

Development Officer

A copy of Development Activity Report received from the Development Officer for the month of September 2020. Council agreed to receive the report for information purposes.

Building Inspector

A copy of Building Permit Statistics received from the Building Inspector for the month of September 2020. Council agreed to receive the report for information purposes.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Birch Street/Cedar Drive Crossing Guards

This item provides an update to Council on the placement of Crossing Guards at Cedar Drive and Birch Street in Salmon River.

With no applications being received for the crossing guard positions, an inquiry was made about what other options are available. Ms. Newell advised that since the time the Information Item was created, one application has been received. HR has also reached out to the Village of Bible Hill and the Town of Truro for advice and the advertisement will continue to be posted.

Further discussion was held regarding the recommendation of the Area Manager and the County's decision to move forward with having crossing guards in place. Ms. Newell indicated that the Area Manager referenced in the Information Item is from Nova Scotia Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and because the roads are provincially owned, he was consulted as their approval would be required for the placement of crossing guards at those locations. Council's decision at the September Council meeting regarding the crossing guards was contingent upon provincial approvals.

Clarification was sought regarding the submissions of supporting documentation as per Councils Crossing Guard Policy. Ms. Newell confirmed that the submissions were to come from the area Councillor.

Covid-19 Update

As per the request of Council at the March 26th meeting, this item serves to provide Council with ongoing operational and administrative updates and implications relative to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Stewart

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:50 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:17 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Property Matter

Moved by Councillor Taggart
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council approves proceeding with a Quit Claim Deed for the former site of the Glenholme school property as discussed in Closed Session, and that the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign, subject to legal approval.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the meeting adjourn at 9:20 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary