

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

The Regular Session of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted in-person and virtually combined, on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

In peace and in friendship, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, it was acknowledged that the Municipality of Colchester is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

**Roll Call**

Mayor Christine Blair, Chair	
Councillor Paul Weatherby	District 1
Dep. Mayor Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Councillor Sheldon Richardson	District 3
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor Nigel Leggett	District 6
Councillor Sherry Martell	District 7
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor Charlene Fletcher	District 10
Councillor Allan Kennedy	District 11

**Staff Present**

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer  
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works  
 Phil Redden, Director of Solid Waste  
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development  
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor  
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary  
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst  
 Colin Forsyth, Development Officer (for item #2)  
 Tamara Marchbank, Assistant Development Officer (for item #2)  
 Kaela MacLellan, Project Engineer (for item #10)

**Site Plan Appeal –  
Lands of Brookside  
Developments Inc., Lot  
3 College Road, Bible  
Hill**

Mayor Blair called the Public Hearing to order respecting a Site Plan approved by the Municipal Development Officer, Colin Forsyth. The Site Plan application was made by Mr. Dylan Blenkhorn for a property located on College Road, Bible Hill. The Site Plan has been appealed by neighbours so Council becomes the decision-making body that will decide to either uphold or overturn the decision of the Development Officer. Council was reminded that the Public Hearing is Council's opportunity to hear the Site Plan decision and concerns of residents so notified.

The CAO confirmed that the guidelines of the *Municipal Government Act* regarding advertising of the Public Hearing have been followed.

Colin Forsyth, Development Officer (DO), presented an overview of the application including details about location, current zoning, reason for application, building design highlights, details of surrounding areas and uses, air photos, and site plan considerations.

Following the presentation from the DO, Council discussion was held on setbacks, parking, stormwater plans, well water concerns, and buffering including trees and fencing,

The applicant, Dylan Blenkhorn, Brookside Developments Inc. was in attendance to speak to the application, providing brief details of building and the plans for the property.

Discussion was held on rent costs being approximately \$1,400 for the one-bedroom unit and \$1,500 for the two-bedroom units. Further discussion was held on the energy efficiencies being 40% above code, solar panels not being an option for this project due to too many unknowns, well water concerns, construction schedule, and buffering with fencing and trees.

The CAO advised that one written submission was received relative to this site plan approval from Taylor and Anna Dara, a neighbouring property owner in Bible Hill. Key concerns noted in the correspondence include development being too large for the area, wells/water, driveway being too close to their property line, loss of trees, long term construction – noise, safety, privacy and changing the character of the neighbourhood. A copy of the correspondence was included in the package for this evening’s meeting.

Ardith McLean, also a neighbouring property owner, was in attendance to speak on this matter. Ms. McLean indicated that she feels bad for the Dara’s and she also has concerns regarding the potential for water run-off, specifically on College Road as well as onto her own property. She inquired about if this were to happen, who would she contact and who would be responsible. Concern was also raised about garbage and privacy with all the windows in the apartment complex. Mr. Blenkhorn indicated that garbage and recyclables would be located at the back of the property with weekly collection. The property would be graded to the back of the property with swales to address stormwater management. The windows are small and slim to be less intrusive.

Council discussion included tree buffering and anticipated timeline to start the project. Mr. Blenkhorn provided plans for trees would be to try to leave bigger trees however, those that needed to come down, he planned to replace with similar sized trees. He is 100% willing to work with neighbours. Also, he hopes to be able to start the project in February.

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That the decision of the Development Officer be upheld and the Site Plan be granted.”  
Carried unanimously.

With no further business on this matter, Mayor Blair declared the Public Hearing closed.

#### **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the agenda be approved with the addition of Item # 8b, FCM .” Carried unanimously.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the minutes from November 27, 2025, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

#### **Business Arising from Minutes**

None.

#### **Standing Committee Reports and Recommendations**

*Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Chair of Council Committee, presented the reports from the meetings held on December 11, 2025 & January 15, 2026.*

*Report from December 11, 2025*

Addition to Millbrook Reserve

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council provide a release to Millbrook First Nation confirming that no road reservation exists on PID No. 20206595.” Carried unanimously.

***Report from January 15, 2026***

Land Purchase for Parkland, Summer Hill Place, Upper Onslow

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council approve the purchase of the Summer Hill Place Lot 5, Upper Onslow, at a purchase price of \$49,000, with source of funds being Open Space Fund Reserve; and,

That the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign the Purchase and Sale Agreement.” Carried unanimously.

Personnel Policy 6.25 – Remote Work Policy

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Leggett

“That the amendments to Personnel Policy 6.25 Remote Work Policy as presented, not be approved.”

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council approves extending the six-month trial of the Remote Work Policy to one year with an overview of how it worked being provided to Council upon completion of the one year.”

*Amending motion*

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the Remote Work Policy be kept on a trial basis with the following key enhancements:

- Anchor days be reduced from three (3) to one (1) per week, with this day being Tuesday. Departments can set their own additional anchor days if required.
- Remote workdays be increased from one (1) to two (2) per week, at Management’s discretion.
- It shall be the responsibility of Management to ensure there is no reduction in service to Colchester citizens or loss of interaction between members of staff.” Motion Carried (*Councillor Kennedy opposed*).

The amending motion having carried, the original motion was voted on and carried with Councillor Kennedy opposed.

Points of discussion on the amending motion included workspace in the municipal building and allowing work from home would help to address overcrowding; ensuring adequate staff and service to residents; and the motion still being a continuance of the trial period. Discussion was also held on measures to address the municipal building space issues with directive to bring information back to Council on this.

Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council adopts the New Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy as presented.”

A concern was raised on the wording on page 13 of the Strategy, specifically #2, first bullet – Improving the way our municipalities serve and support our Community. It was felt that we are doing a good job and there may be a better way of wording this. Council was reminded that this is a regional Strategy which has already been approved by other municipal units involved and any changes would be required to go back to the respective units for consideration.

*Amending motion*

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the wording be changed on page 13, #2 first bullet to ‘Continue supporting the way our municipalities serve and support our community, contingent on agreement from other municipal units.’ Motion DEFEATED (Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Councillors Richardson, Johnson, Leggett, Martell, Patton, Benoit, and Fletcher opposed).

The amending motion having been defeated, the original motion was voted on and carried with Councillors Cooper and Kennedy opposed.

Community Event Grant Request – FIS Wentworth Canada Cup

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council approves funding in the amount of \$2,500 for the 2026 FIS Wentworth Canada Cup being held in February 2026.” Carried unanimously.

Amendments to Procurement Policy

*Councillor Martell declared a conflict of interest and recused herself from discussion on this matter.*

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Richardson

“That Council approves the amendments to the Municipal Policy for Purchasing and Tendering for Goods, Services and Construction Projects as presented.” Carried unanimously.

2026-27 Schedule of Meetings

A request was made by Councillor Cooper to change the date of the April Council meeting from April 28<sup>th</sup> to April 27<sup>th</sup> due to a conflict with the Library Board meeting.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves the 2026-27 Schedule of Meetings as amended.” Carried unanimously.

***Colchester Planning Advisory Committee – report from meeting held on December 15, 2025***

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the report from the Colchester Planning Advisory Committee meeting held on December 15, 2025, be received.” Motion carried (*Councillor Patton opposed by way of abstention*).

***Flood Advisory Committee – report and minutes of meeting held on January 13, 2026***

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council approve a budget of \$100,000 for the 2026/27 operating budget for the Small Flood Damage Reduction Projects program.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the Flood Advisory Committee minutes of the January 13, 2026, meeting be received.” Carried unanimously.

***French River Source Water Protection Advisory Committee – minutes of meeting held on December 4, 2025***

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the minutes of the French River Source Water Protection Advisory Committee meeting held on December 4, 2025, be received.” Carried unanimously.

***Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee – minutes of meeting held on January 13, 2026***

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Richardson

“That the minutes of the Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee meeting held on January 13, 2026, be received.” Carried unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**First Reading –  
Proposed Development  
Agreement on Lands  
Owned by 4432357  
Nova Scotia Limited  
and Andrew Blackburn,  
PIDs 20067658,  
20069027 and  
20408456, Bible Hill**

*Councillor Patton declared a conflict of interest and recused herself from discussion on this matter.*

This item deals with a request for a proposed Development Agreement to enable a mixed use planned development, consisting of residential, commercial, and open space uses in Bible Hill, an application made by zzap Architecture + Planning for land on Pictou and Vimy Roads. The Colchester Planning Advisory Committee held a public meeting to consider the application on December 15, 2025, and recommends in favour of the application.

Under requirements of the *Municipal Government Act*, this type of agreement requires two readings before adoption. First Reading essentially announces Council’s intent to consider for approval and advance to a Public Hearing and Second Reading.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Richardson

“That Council approves, by way of First Reading, the application for the proposed development agreement, as presented, for purposes of forwarding this document to a Public Hearing reserving consideration of the proposed development agreement until Second Reading following the Public Hearing.” Carried unanimously.

**Community Event Grant Request, Truro Housing Outreach Society, Coldest Night of the Year – Authority for February Committee to Approve**

Initial correspondence was received concerning a sponsorship request for the Coldest Night of the Year event taking place in February. Staff is working with the Truro Housing Outreach Society to gather all necessary information to bring forward to February Committee. With the event taking place late February, staff is requesting Council grant authority to February Committee to make a decision on the request.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council grants authority to February Council Committee to award the community event grant from the Truro Housing Outreach Society for the Coldest Night of the Year event.” Carried unanimously.

**2026 FCM Conference - Edmonton, Alberta**

Past practice of Council is to allow three members of Council, along with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and CAO, attend the annual FCM Conference. This would allow each member opportunity to attend a conference during the term of Council. If more than three wish to attend, the attendees will be determined by draw. Four members expressed interest in attending the 2026 FCM Conference in Edmonton.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

“That Council approves Councillors Richardson, Patton, and Benoit attend the 2026 FCM Annual Conference in Edmonton, Alberta; and,

That Councillor Johnson serve as an alternate in the event any of those selected are unable to attend.” Carried unanimously.

**Correspondence – ACTION**

Victoria Lomond

Email dated January 8, 2026, regarding a proposal to include a community resource insert in the Municipal Newsletter.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the request concerning a proposal to include a community resource insert in the Municipal Newsletter be referred to staff.” Carried unanimously.

Sharon L Mulvagh,  
Wear Red Canada  
Atlantic Campaign  
Team Leader

Letter dated January 9, 2026, requesting a proclamation for Wear Red Canada Day.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That February 13, 2026, be proclaimed **Wear Red Canada Day** in support of raising awareness about women’s cardiovascular health.” Carried unanimously.

Pam Macintosh,  
Manager of Planning  
Services

Memo dated January 21, 2026, concerning a rezoning application by Scott Hill, Import Heaven Auto Services for land in Greenfield.

Moved by Councillor Legget, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the memo dated January 21, 2026, concerning a rezoning application by Scott Hill, Import Heaven Auto Services for land in Greenfield be referred to the Colchester Planning Advisory Committee.” Carried unanimously.

Meghan Todd, Head  
Coach, Truro Centurion  
Swim Club

Email to the Mayor requesting a letter of support for their grant application to revitalize the scoreboard, timing system, and starting blocks at the RECC.

Brief discussion was held on the mentioned lease agreement and the CAO advised that this would be considered by the RECC Board of Directors.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

“That Council approves a letter of support for the Truro Centurion Swim Club for their grant application to revitalize the scoreboard, timing system and starting blocks at the RECC.” Carried unanimously.

Following several pieces of correspondence received in recent weeks, including a letter from Shelly DeViller regarding 4-H and various emails related to RECC governance, Councillor Martell requested clarification, for the purpose of providing consistent messaging to constituents, on the process for correspondence being included in the Council package for distribution.

The CAO explained that this would depend on the nature of the correspondence and the timing and manner in which it is received. The emails from Ms. DeViller addressed matters concerning the Farm Loan Board and the Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society which were considered Society related rather than Council matters. If correspondence has already been circulated via email to all of Council, it would be redundant to circulate in the package unless there was a specific reason to bring forward. Additionally, some correspondence may be operational matters which often will be handled directly by staff. The development of a policy for Council correspondence which was referred to staff at the January Committee meeting may help provide greater consistency in the distribution process.

### Correspondence - INFORMATION

**Development Officer**

A copy of Development Activity Reports for November and December 2025.

**Building Inspector**

A copy of Building Permit Statistics for November and December 2025.

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

“That the reports from the Development Officer and Building Inspector be received.” Carried unanimously.

**Beth MacMichael,  
Royal Canadian Legion  
Branch 106**

A letter dated January 2, 2026, seeking support for Debert Legion roof repairs.

Staff suggested discussion on this item be deferred as Ms. MacMichael is scheduled to make a presentation to Council at their February 3<sup>rd</sup> Presentation meeting concerning their request.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

**Active Transportation Strategy Update**

This item provided Council with an update on the findings from the first round of public engagement for the Active Transportation Strategy project. A brief presentation from consultants Urban System Ltd will be made at the February Council Committee meeting. A full copy of the report was included in the package for this evening's meeting.

**Reports from Council Members**

Copies of reports from the Mayor and Councillors were circulated in the package and 'On Table' for this evening's meeting.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Moved by Councillor Richardson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

"That the meeting go into closed session at 8:02pm." Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Richardson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

"That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:31pm." Carried unanimously.

**Contract/Negotiations – RECC Operating Agreement**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Cooper

"That Council approves the proposed operating agreement and that it be presented to the Town of Truro and the Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society for approval.

AND

That the Mayor and CAO be given the authority to extend the current operating agreement with the Town of Truro and Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society until February 28, 2026, if additional time is required, with the matter being brought to Council for further consideration." Motion carried (*Councillors Martell, Patton and Benoit opposed*).

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Councillor Kennedy, the meeting adjourned at 9:50pm.

Tracey Veno  
Recording Secretary