



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of The Whole (COTW) Meeting

Wednesday, March 17th, 2021

1. Meeting, Date & Time:

The COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council was called to order on Wednesday, March 17th, 2021 at 7:00pm in the Council Chambers Sherbrooke, N.S.

2. Attending:

Warden Wier	Councillor Mailman
Deputy Warden Fuller	Councillor Malloy
Councillor Baker	Councillor Zinck
Councillor Harpell	

Also Attending:

Marian Fraser, Director of Finance (DOF)
Marissa Jordan, Municipal Clerk & Special Projects Coordinator

Absent with Regrets:

Marvin MacDonald, CAO

3. Additions to the Agenda:

- The Director of Finance asked to add "Provincial Surplus Land" to the agenda as item 9.g.

4. Approval of the Agenda:

On motion of Councillor Harpell and seconded by Councillor Malloy Council approved the agenda with the above addition.

Motion approved.

5. Approval of Minutes:

On motion of Councillor Zinck and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held Wednesday, March 3rd, 2020.

Motion approved.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- The DOF updated Council on the housing deficit from the 3rd quarter finance that is projected to be over budget. Staff requested an additional breakdown from them, and they said that there is new municipal reporting framework. There will be further detail and breakdown from Housing Nova Scotia in June 2021 when their year has ended.

7. Correspondence:

a. St. Mary's Shooter Association- Thank You Letter:

- Staff received a thank you letter from the St. Mary's Shooter Association for a grant that they received from the Municipality.

8. Presentations:

a. Whale Sanctuary Project- Charles Vinick (virtual):

- Mr. Charles Vinick of the Whale Sanctuary Project provided a presentation and update to Council and explained where in the process the project is currently at. The Whale Sanctuary Project is currently a US Non-Profit Organization that is registered to do business in Canada and established as a Canadian Non-Profit Corporation in 2021. The Project is currently applying for charity status.
- Progress during 2020 and early 2021 included consultation with >20 scientists & researchers throughout the Maritimes, public outreach through webinar live series events, Lands & Forestry - Crown Lands lease & permitting progress, Community Liaison Committee established, additional community meetings in November and February, informal consultations with Mi'kmaq First Nation including with Regional Chief
- Mr. Vinick also spoke of a local supporter that purchased a property on HWY 7 in Sherbrooke to rent to the Whale Sanctuary Project so they can use as their welcome centre as well as accommodations for staff if needed.
- Council asked how many whales the area can accommodate, Mr. Vinick said they would begin with 2 or 3 and build to a maximum of 8 whales. Council asked if they have looked at how the road would be impacted and Mr. Vinick said they did some traffic analysis and that with a staff of only 15-20 people on site at one time, the impact would be very minimal.
- Council asked if there was a potential for the funding to run out after the whales have already been located here. Mr. Vinick stated that their obligation is to ensure that they have the funds to care for the whale's lifetime when they bring any whale to the Sanctuary.
- Council asked if there was potential for any ice blockages at the site to negatively impact the Whales. Mr. Vinick said that all of their research shows that other than minor surface ice that won't affect the whales, pack ice shouldn't be a normal occurrence. Even if there were pack ice, the Sanctuary would have the ability to break this up with their teams and boats.
- Council asked if waste from whales has the potential to negatively impact the Port Hilford Beach, Mr. Vinick stated that all of the hydrodynamic modeling shows that any waste will dissipate in the environment which is why they are only suggested 8 whales. This allows for a pristine environment for the whales and the community and the way in which the waters move in the bay wouldn't bring it to the beach anyway, it tends to come around from the beach and towards the sanctuary and then out to the main ocean area.
- Council asked when they expect to welcome the first whale, Mr. Vinick stated the end of 2022 and is dependent on the process with the lease as well as permits. Council also asked if there was a fear of food shortage for the whales' diet. Mr. Vinick stated that they whales eat whole fish and will be a buyer of frozen fish that is then thawed for them. The whales have always been fed this way and have no interest in catching their own fish.
- Council asked how many jobs the marine security team would create. Mr. Vinick stated that this would create around 6-8 jobs. Council thanked Mr. Vinick for his presentation and after ending the virtual presentation, discussed the potential of writing a new letter of support to the Whale Sanctuary Project.
- Council asked if they Project would be taxable in our Municipality if they have a charitable status. The DOF stated that it would depend on the assessment placed on it through PVSC. There are only a few categories under the Assessment Act that constitute an exemption.

On recommendation of Deputy Warden Fuller and seconded by Councillor Harpell, Council agreed to write a letter of support in favor of the concept of the Whale Sanctuary.

Recommendation adopted.

9. Other Matters of Business:

a. Strait Area OEM Newsletter:

- Staff presented Council with a copy of the Strait Area Onsite Energy Management (OEM) Newsletter for information purposes. This newsletter updates on the OEM program which the municipality is a part of and the other Strait Area partners.

b. Port Hawkesbury Paper:

- Staff provided information to Council about policies updates from the Port Hawkesbury Paper.

c. Council Chambers IT:

- Staff provide Council with information for upgrading different portions of the council chambers technology including fixing and upgrading the projector system to allow for audio during presentations, a new audio recording device that is linked directly to the current mic system and for the option of a mounted camera for current use for virtual meetings and the potential to use for future live meetings. This information was brought forward due to a request from Council at a prior COTW meeting.
- Council discussed the different options and cost and agreed that at this time they did not want to proceed with any upgrades.

d. Incident Command System (ICS) Courses:

- Last week there was an EMO and it was suggested there that all of Council and staff take the ICS basic courses. Staff will organize putting on these courses in the near future.

e. Road Name Request:

- On March 12, 2021 a resident provided staff with a formal letter asking to name a private road near 2130 highway 211. The letter included the appropriate amount of signatures from other property owners on this road. The road name requested is “MacIntosh Lane” which has been checked in the Nova Scotia Civic Addressing System with no road match name found.
- Council discussed and agreed to the road name request.

On recommendation of Councillor Mailman and seconded by Councillor Zinck, Council approved that the road currently located at 2130 HWY 211 be named as “MacIntosh Lane”.

Recommendation adopted.

f. Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission:

- Staff received correspondence from the Department of Municipal Affairs for the NS Affordable Housing Commission that they have launched an online survey to gather input from Nova Scotians that will help form recommendations to ensure adequate supply of safe affordable housing. They are asking that staff and Council complete the survey as it will be presented by May 31st, 2021.
- Correspondence was received regarding a housing stakeholders’ session with Inverness, Richmond and Guysborough Counties for a regional workshop by the NS housing Commission scheduled for April 7th, 2021 at 10am. Staff will register for this session and host it in the Council Chambers for any interested councillors.

g. Provincial Surplus Land:

- On November 18, 2021 staff received a letter from Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal notifying the Municipality of a parcel of Surplus Land. The land PID # 35231786, Old Ferry Road/Gegogan Ferry Road, at St. Mary’s River Guysborough County and is approximately 1.4

acres. At that time council expressed their interest in the surplus land. There was also another provincial department that stated their interest in the parcel.

- Since then, there have been communications from a local developer as well as the local MLA. The developer had asked that the Municipality revoke their interest in order for the developer to purchase this property and continue with their development. There was confirmation that the other provincial department has since revoked their interest and again the developer is asking that the Municipality revoke their interest.
- Council discussed and agreed to revoke their interest in the property.

On motion of Councillor Malloy and seconded by Councillor Zinck, revoke their interest of the surplus land with PID # 35231786.

Recommendation adopted.

10. Adjournment

On motion of Councillor Mailman and seconded by Deputy Warden Fuller, there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 8:05pm.

Motion approved.



Recorded By
Municipal Clerk/Special Projects Coordinator



Approved By
Warden Wier