

**RICHMOND COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**OCTOBER 21, 2003; 7:15 P.M.**

Location: Court House, Arichat

Mr. Maurice Lloyd welcomed everyone present and indicated he had been retained by the Strait Area Mayors and Wardens Committee to look at the potential impact of offshore development on the communities and the land base in the Region. He indicated this process had started several years ago when the thought was that we were going to see a lot of activity offshore in oil and gas that could generate substantial developments in the region and that something should be done to perhaps prepare the region and work with the Mayors and Wardens Committee to look at the broader region area which would be best to accommodate the growth. He noted a small conference had been held where the position paper had been recommended and the Mayors and Wardens Committee felt work should be done with the assumption that something was going to happen in order to determine how it would impact on our communities.

Mr. Lloyd noted that it seems quiet offshore at the moment, but that doesn't mean anything and it is very difficult to get a handle on what is happening, and it is sometimes difficult to obtain information, but feels it is important to continue with planning, making the assumption that there will be some growth and this will give us some time to think on what we want our communities to look like and think of what things we would like to see down the road.

Mr. Lloyd indicated when the work program was submitted, they first talked about what the issues were and what the options for reviewing these positions were, and produced the paper "Issues and Options", which was released December, 2002 and revised in March, 2003 (copy distributed), after meeting with individual Councils.. He noted this document had been held over during the summer, due to the provincial election and did not want to hold public meetings during the election campaign.

Mr. Lloyd noted that the "Issues and Options" paper is not intended to be a final paper and would like to receive comments/concerns. He noted information from these meetings will be used to modify this paper. He noted the Mayors and Wardens have already signed an inter-municipal agreement to develop a Strait Region land use and infrastructure strategy, and noted that whatever comes out of this work could very well form an amendment to that agreement.

He noted the objectives proposed in the “Issues and Options” paper are as follows:

- **Protect and enhance the environment while still encouraging and accommodating development** – Ensure that there is a balance between development and its impact on the environment, on the resource sectors, and between resource sectors. For example, protect municipal and industrial water supply areas; minimize development on flood plains and flood risk areas.
- **Encourage development to take place in appropriate places** – Utilize current infrastructure capacity and invest wisely in new infrastructure (e.g. sewer, water, public buildings, roads and streets) so as to maximize return on investment).
- **Insure that there is a positive impact on the communities** – Identify impact of developments and apply appropriate mitigative measures that result in a positive long-term impact as well as meeting immediate needs.
- **Optimize opportunities to attract development to the region** – Partner with provincial and federal governments so as to optimize opportunities for the region. Project a positive image of the region through the press and other information releases.
- **Deal with the oil and gas industry with a single voice** – By establishing regional/community positions through internal discussion and resolution the Region’s local government can present a unified external front.

Mr. Lloyd indicated that the Strait Area Mayors and Wardens Committee had decided they wanted to conduct a random sample survey within the Region and approximately 1,500 surveys were sent out to residents of the Strait Area at the beginning of September asking questions regarding what their priorities were in terms to land use, community economic development, etc. He indicated the responses from 418 residents represent a return rate of 30%, and noted he summarized the results in the questionnaire which he distributed (copy attached). He noted the Committee had suggested holding the public meetings only after the survey results were available to hand out at the meetings.

Mr. Lloyd indicated the “Issues and Options” paper began by talking about the objectives and what the Committee was trying to achieve and by defining what the principles were that they were striving to meet, and what the objectives of the exercise were. He thought this would give it some focus and looked at what they did in Shetland Islands, off Scotland, noting there was considerable impact in the 1980’s from offshore oil and the Committee looked at their objectives and modified them to suit the area here. He noted Great Britain has a lot more direction and control and a much better definition between rural and urban.

Mr. Lloyd indicated the survey results ended up with five principles. He noted he did get a very definite feeling from the responses that people were very interested in having jobs

created and perhaps sacrificing some of the environment, but with the environment being very important to the region. Mr. Lloyd indicated he had looked at communities and where their services are, etc. and requested that the public present refer to the maps displayed which shows the number of communities with water and sewer. He noted he had conducted a bit of capacity analysis and noted there is a capacity to accept development, but does not mean everything has to go into communities with water and sewer.

Mr. Lloyd indicated the paper talks about identifying roles in communities and how to encourage development in certain communities, but indicated what he would like to achieve from tonight's meeting is to focus a bit more on how to protect and enhance the environment while still encouraging and accommodating development. He noted in order to optimize development opportunities, we must look at minimizing conflicts between the economic sectors.

Mr. Lloyd asked the public present how they would like to describe this region and how they would want their community to look like 10-15 years from now. Replies from the public included clean, safe, rich, peaceful, prosperous, diversified, protected, well planned, and young people living and working here.

Mr. Lloyd distributed a copy of vision responses from previous public meetings held (copy attached).

Mrs. Rosemary Burns questioned Mr. Lloyd whereby if a public meeting held with only a handful of individuals attending, if it is assumed that individuals don't care, and what effects it will have on the report. She indicated that it is not because individuals don't care, but rather because a lot of people don't like to go to meetings.

Mr. Bain indicated this was the reason for the survey, because there is not always a good turn out at meetings.

Mr. Lloyd indicated that one of the issues that came up in discussions was the issue of water supply and that we should be looking at protecting water supplies and find out where the supply is and that probably means a detailed water resource study for the region and made reference to an excellent map from 1975. He noted it is important to look at the whole issue of water supplies.

Mr. Lloyd indicated he had made a presentation to each Council and noted that a transportation issue was raised regarding getting a four lane highway extended from New Glasgow through the Strait and onto Sydney. He noted another issue came up regarding municipal/provincial coordination and if there is a way of perhaps coordinating the activities of the province and the municipalities. He noted the suggestion was that perhaps there should be a meeting and perhaps a vehicle for getting all politicians together with the Mayors and Wardens, but noted the Election came along and this did not take place, but was hopeful it will be restarted soon.

Mr. Lloyd noted that the Department of Natural Resources was presently doing a lot of work regarding forestry management, particularly on Crown lands in the region.

He noted the Committee talked about mitigative measures and residual impacts and noted this is something you apply if you have a problem. He noted one way to deal with that might be to set up a mobile home park, or something of that nature, and noted residual impact is after they pull out when you have a fully serviced mobile home park.

Mr. Lloyd noted that the other map displayed shows changes in populations over the three different census periods for all municipalities, noting that our population is declining and aging. He noted it may be difficult to think about planning when you don't see anything happening offshore, but want to have it set up and running in order to be ready for it when it happens. He noted when you're in an area with a very slow growing economy, you have to make sure you do it right the first time, because you can't afford to make mistakes.

Councillor Goyetche expressed concerns with the eco-system and their livelihood (i.e. gas industry), and asked Mr. Lloyd how he plans to protect and enhance the environment while still encouraging and accommodating development. Mr. Lloyd indicated this would be done through the municipal planning process or through a more pro-active program of picking up key pieces of public land and getting public control, etc. He indicated Step 1 was to identify where the areas are, followed by public consultation.

Councillor Goyetche asked if development was going to be encouraged in areas where there were presently Zoning By-Laws in place. Mr. Lloyd referred to the map showing serviced communities. He indicated he has spoken to all municipal engineers and has recorded the areas where there is capacity to accept development, and where it is possible to upgrade systems to accept more development. He noted new development or new housing should be encouraged in serviced areas, as opposed to non-serviced areas.

Mr. Lloyd noted that residents may want to discourage development in a prime agricultural area.

Mr. Lloyd asked if the public were aware of any particular areas that were environmentally sensitive that they wished noted; or any shoreline issues that they would like to see protected.

Mrs. Rosemary Burns indicated she felt that new industrial development should certainly not compromise or destroy existing businesses, such as agriculture, fishing, tourism, aquaculture, etc. She also indicated that if we are going to have oil and gas, then it should not be a great giveaway, and we should get top dollar. She also felt that property should not be sold if it can be leased for a lot more, and stressed that products should not be sent away when they can be given here. She indicated she felt it should be part of the bargain that residents of Nova Scotia get the product first. She also indicated we should not compromise our environment, in particular our water and our air quality, which are two of the things that sustain us; stressing that we can't breathe gas and drink oil. She

noted she strongly favored land use planning and noted this is the time to plan, when nothing is really happening.

Mr. Lorenzo Boudreau noted he had been following meetings for the past 20 years and noted nothing is moving too far ahead. He noted he felt land Bear Head should be sold rather than being given away.

Councillor Goyetche noted that sometimes you have to give something away in order to receive, especially when you want to optimize development and want to categorize opportunities.

Mr. Lorenzo Boudreau questioned the benefit from offshore oil, when gas is piped from offshore. He noted it takes a lot of individuals to build these facilities. He indicated the area had an oil refinery and a heavy water plant, which are both gone.

Mr. Lloyd indicated that the real spin-off from offshore gas comes with the residual that they take off before they pump the gas away. He noted at the moment, it is taken to Port Hawkesbury and then put in tank cars. He noted we need a petrochemical plant that will use those up and start making plastics, etc.

Mrs. Rosemary Burns indicated she had heard rumors that a company wanted to drill in Malagawash, along the Bras D'Or Lakes, and noted she would not like to see any development along the Bras D'Or Lakes, noting that the cod fish is already close to extinction.

Mr. Lloyd indicated that the survey provided a lot of input, which is now being analyzed, and noted that public meetings is another opportunity for the public to come forward and provide input, and thanked the public for attending the meeting.

The public meeting concluded at 8:40 p.m.