

RICHMOND COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

MAY 10, 2004

Location: Court House, Arichat

Warden Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the singing of O'Canada.

The Clerk took roll call of Councillors.

The Clerk indicated that Councillor Boudreau notified him that he would be unable to attend tonight's meeting, due to school commitments.

Items Added to the Agenda

Warden Johnson indicated that Councillor Goyetche wished to add Honorary Doctorate/Edgar Samson and Radio Communautaire, she wished to add Nova Scotia Landowners & Forest Fibre Producers Association and a grant request, the C.A.O. wished to add Nova Scotia Firefighters School Representative, Councillor McNamara wished to add the Riverdale Community Centre Funding Request and Deputy Warden Bourque wished to add a grant request and the Department of Transportation.

Warden Johnson indicated that, with the permission of Council, she would also like to add New Provincial Legislation Limiting Tax on the LNG Plant and Imperial Oil Refinery.

It was the consensus of Council that this item also be added to the list of items added to the agenda.

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacPhee that the items added be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Review of Minutes: (a) April 13, 2004 (Public Hearing)
(b) April 13, 2004 (Regular Meeting)

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor McNamara that the minutes of April 13, 2004 (Public Hearing) and April 13, 2004 (Regular Meeting) be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

Presentations and/or Delegations:

(a) Destination Richmond Tourism Cooperative Ltd. re: Update

Mr. Jeff Stanley, President of Destination Richmond Tourism Cooperative Ltd., joined the meeting.

Mr. Stanley indicated that he wished to update Council on the activities of the Cooperative for the last 12 months.

Mr. Stanley indicated that the target membership of 57 members by March 31, 2004 was exceeded, noting that there are currently 79 paid members and the Cooperative is only a few members away from their year two projections.

Mr. Stanley indicated that Mr. Matt Chisholm was hired on December 1, 2003 and is currently working out of the St. Peter's Visitor Information Centre.

Mr. Stanley indicated that because the St. Peter's V.I.C. was kept opened for an extended period this past season, an extra 2800 visitors passed through the Centre.

Mr. Stanley indicated that Destination Richmond is a partner in the 2004 Tall Ship event in Arichat, scheduled for August 4,5 and 6, 2004.

Mr. Stanley indicated that since Mr. Chisholm's office is in the St. Peter's V.I.C. it will remain open all year round, when Mr. Chisholm is not away on business.

Mr. Stanley indicated that cost sharing and partnering has allowed the size of the Richmond County ad in the N.S. Festival and Events Guide to go from ½ page to full page, as well as the printing of 25,000 Visitors Guides, with a new section to incorporate additional services available to visitors.

Mr. Stanley indicated that they have also placed an ad in Readers Digest, which has had a very high response.

Mr. Stanley indicated that Richmond has also been able to increase their exposure by attending three trade shows.

Mr. Stanley apologized for the fact that their budget had been prematurely released, not giving an accurate picture of their financial status.

Mr. Stanley indicated that the Cooperative is in pretty decent financial shape for the next 6-7 months and anything further than that will depend on continued relations with HRDC.

Mr. Stanley indicated that they are in the process of hiring two staff, through a job creation program, for six and nine-month terms, whose main task would be the evaluation of feedback and statistics.

Mr. Stanley indicated that they also hosted two Superhost training sessions, one in French and one in English, with a total of 37 participants.

Warden Johnson opened the floor for questions.

Councillor Cotton congratulated Mr. Stanley on all of the hard work that he has put into the Cooperative, noting that hiring Mr. Chisholm was very positive.

Councillor Cotton indicated that he thought that the goal of 57 members was ambitious, noting that surpassing this goal shows that there is an interest and the renewal of memberships will dictate the success of the Cooperative.

In response to a question from Councillor Beaton, Mr. Stanley indicated that membership is disbursed all over Richmond, noting that St. Peter's and Arichat are very well represented.

Mr. Stanley indicated that their next step is to focus on expanding their relationships with HRDC and ECBC.

In response to a question from Councillor McNamara, Mr. Stanley indicated that they hoped to deal with festivals and events on a larger scale, with an event similar to that of the Celtic Colours, where the smaller festivals and events can plug into, also noting that they hope to focus to on an infrastructure project for tourism in Richmond.

In response to a question from Councillor MacNeil, Mr. Stanley indicated that they hope to have a lot more service groups join the membership of the Cooperative, however they are very pleased with their current membership.

In response to a question from Councillor Goyetche, Mr. Stanley indicated the Superhost sessions were held in St. Peter's and Arichat.

Warden Johnson thanked Mr. Stanley for his presentation.

Committee Reports

(a) Committee of the Whole

Deputy Warden Bourque declared a conflict of interest, indicating that he is an employee of the Assessment Department, and removed himself from discussions.

Councillor Cotton declared a conflict of interest and removed himself from discussions, because his name is included in a staff report.

Councillor Beaton presented the Committee of the Whole Report for the month of May 2004 (copy attached).

Moved by Councillor Beaton, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and the Deputy Clerk Treasurer and write off the attached list of deleted accounts, totalling \$12,021.62, because these accounts are not collectable. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Beaton, seconded by Councillor Sampson that Council accept the Committee of the Whole Report for the month of May 2004. Motion carried.

(b) Planning Advisory Committee

Councillor McNamara presented the Planning Advisory Committee Report for the month of May 2004 (copy attached).

Councillor McNamara gave notice that she will introduce a motion at the next regular Council Meeting to adopt the Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Policy, as a policy of the Municipality, attached as Appendix "A".

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Councillor MacPhee that Council accept the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee and determine the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Advisory Committee and provide a copy to each member of the Committee. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Councillor Cotton that Council accept the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee and that Mr. Doug Begg and Mr. Ron MacKillop be appointed as members of the Area Advisory Committee for the Sporting Mountain Plan. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Councillor MacNeil that Council accept the Planning Advisory Committee Report for the month of May 2004. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

- (a) Hon. Ron Russell re: Repairs to Trunk 4

The CAO indicated that correspondence was received from the Minister of Transportation indicating that tenders will be going out for repairs for 3 km of Trunk 4 at Middle Cape, which is located in Cape Breton County.

(b) Ian MacKinnon re: Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia

The CAO indicated that an alternate board member is required for the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia, and he suggested that Council take action to have this position filled.

The CAO indicated that he is aware of someone that may be interested in this position however perhaps the position should be advertised to allow all interested parties to apply.

In response to a comment from Councillor Cotton, the CAO indicated that the item added from the Nova Scotia Firefighters School, requesting a director, does seem to appear to be a separate appointment and he apologized for overlooking this.

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Bourque that Council authorize staff to advertise for the position of Alternate Director for the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia and the position of Board Member for the Nova Scotia Firefighters School. Motion carried.

(c) CAO, Town of Port Hawkesbury re: Vic MacLellan's Paper on "What is missing in Canadian Legislation regarding Children's Rights"

The CAO indicated that he received an e-mail from the CAO from the Town of Port Hawkesbury urging all Municipalities to take this paper to their Councils, noting that this paper urges Councils to make representation to their local M.P.'s in order to improve the legal rights of children.

Councillor Cotton wished to congratulate the CAO of Port Hawkesbury for bringing this to everyone's attention.

Moved by Councillor Cotton, seconded by Councillor McNamara that a letter be sent to Mr. Rodger Cuzner, M.P., urging him to make representation to support the strengthening of Legislation regarding Children's Rights. Motion carried.

(d) Federation of Canadian Municipalities re: Municipalities Call for a New Deal on Rights-of-Way

The CAO indicated that this New Deal has more of an impact on towns and cities, however the principle is important.

The CAO indicated that the FCM has requested that Councils make their views known to their local MP.

It was the consensus of the Committee that Council members that will be attending the FCM Conference later this month address this issue by making representation on behalf of Council at this conference.

(e) Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations re: Assessment Services Year End Report

Deputy Warden Bourque declared a conflict of interest, indicating that he is an employee of the Assessment Department and removed himself from discussions.

The CAO indicated that in Richmond residential assessment has increased by 4.7% and commercial assessment has increased by 5.0%.

Councillor Cotton indicated that he was notified by the Minister at the last UNSM conference that the Provincial Government will be bringing forward legislation which restricts assessment on properties, noting that this has not been discussed with industry or with municipal units, further noting that this may be good for areas like Halifax and CBRM where assessments would decrease, however areas such as Richmond may see the opposite effects and assessments increase.

(f) Hon. Ernest Fage re: Richmond County Broadband Project

The CAO indicated that this is a response to a letter written to the Minister requesting additional government support for the Richmond County Broadband Project.

The CAO indicated that the Minister has requested that officials from the Office of Economic Development follow up on the Municipality's request.

Warden Johnson thanked the CAO for all the hard work that he has put into this Project.

The CAO briefed Council on the progress of the project, indicating that he will provide a more complete written report for the next meeting.

(g) Hensen College re: Continuing Education/Grant Request

(h) MacAskill House Museum re: Grant Request

(i) Point Tupper Heritage Association re: Grant Request

(j) Societe Destination Isle Madame Society re: Grant Request

(k) St. Peter's United Church re: Request for Tax Exemption

(l) Janvrin's Island Community Centre re: Request for Tax Exemption

(m) South Mountain Arm of Gold Community Club re: Request for Tax Exemption

Moved by Councillor MacPhee, seconded by Councillor McNamara that grant requests from Hensen College, MacAskill House Museum, Point Tupper Heritage Association, Society Destination Isle Madame Society and tax exemption requests from the St. Peter's United Church, Janvrin's Island Community Centre and the South Mountain Arm of Gold Community Club be tabled until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

Items Added to the Agenda

(1) Councillor Goyetche re:

(i) Honorary Doctorate/Edgar Samson

Councillor Goyetche indicated that Mr. Edgar Samson should be recognized for receiving an honorary doctorate in Economic Development.

Deputy Warden Bourque indicated that Mr. Samson received his honorary doctorate at the same time as Mr. Jean Belliveau, former hockey star, noting that Mr. Samson has several successful businesses in Richmond County, employing many residents.

Deputy Warden Bourque suggested that an annual night of recognition be held to honour local successful business people.

Councillor Goyetche suggested that Mr. Samson be invited to the next Council meeting, where he will be presented with a letter of recognition.

Councillor Cotton agreed that something should be done to recognize the accomplishments of local business people.

The CAO indicated that a recognition ceremony is usually held by a local Chamber of Commerce, which doesn't exist in Richmond.

Councillor Sampson agreed that Mr. Samson is a very successful businessman in Richmond, noting that Mr. Samson has been very generous and has helped more than his community, noting that his success and generosity is shown throughout Richmond and that it would be very fitting to have him appear before Council and be recognized.

Moved by Councillor Goyetche, seconded by Councillor Beaton that a letter be written to Mr. Edgar Samson, congratulating him on receiving an Honorary Doctorate in Economic Development, from L'Université Ste. Anne. Motion carried.

It was the consensus of Council that the possibility of incorporating a recognition night for local business people, with the annual Volunteer Banquet, be referred to the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

(ii) Radio Communautaire

Moved by Councillor Goyetche, seconded by Councillor MacNeil that since Radio Communautaire has conducted all of the necessary research regarding the possible tower site at the former landfill site, that this item be referred to the Director of Public Works for further action. Motion carried.

(2) Warden Johnson re:

(i) Nova Scotia Landowners & Forest Fibre Producers Association

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Cotton that the request from the Nova Scotia Landowners & Forest Fibre Producers Association for a letter of support be tabled until further information can be obtained regarding the roles and responsibilities of this organization. Motion carried.

(ii) Grant Request

Moved by Councillor Goyetche, seconded by Councillor Cotton that the grant requests from the L'Archeveque Fisherman's Association and the Red Islands Property Owners Committee be tabled until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

(3) C.A.O. re: Nova Scotia Firefighters School Representative

Previously addressed.

(4) Councillor McNamara re: Riverdale Community Centre Funding Request

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Councillor MacPhee that the Riverdale Community Centre Funding Request be tabled until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

(5) Deputy Warden Bourque re:

(i) Grant Request

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that the grant request from the Janvrin Island Sports and Recreation Association be tabled until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

(ii) Department of Transportation

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor MacPhee that a letter be sent to the appropriate authorities at the Department of Transportation requesting that the North Side Passage Road in Janvrin's Island be paved and that copies of the letter be sent to the MLA as well as Karen and Karrol Marchand, Janvrin's Island. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Bourque noted that this was an "I" class road, which is not the responsibility of the Municipality.

(6) New Provincial Regulations Limiting Tax on the LNG Plant and Imperial Oil Refinery.

Warden Johnson reported that the Minister of Service Nova Scotia had advised municipal representatives on April 30th, that legislation would be introduced in the next week that would amend the manner of assessing the proposed LNG Project in Richmond County. The Minister also indicated that he was considering further amendments to the manner in which other industries are taxed.

Mr. Digout reported that he was advised on May 7th, that the legislation had been introduced earlier that day. The legislation appears to deal with a specific problem in Halifax (Imperial Oil Refinery) and apply a very specific taxing formula to that industry; but the legislation also includes a very vague and broad reference to taxation of the LNG Project to be carried out by regulation and Provincial Cabinet.

Councillor Cotton noted the major intrusion by the Province in an area of municipal responsibility, that was perhaps further complicated by the lack of any guidance with respect to the proposed LNG Project. It also appears that the industry did not request this amendment, but were only notified a few days before legislation was introduced. Councillor Cotton indicated that he had attended the meeting referenced by the Warden with the Minister, and it appeared that the Province was not aware of the impact of this legislation on the proposed plant, because of the significant difference in the commercial tax rate in Richmond County as compared to HRM (approximately one-third).

Deputy Warden Bourque noted the contrast in the treatment of an industry in HRM, whereby this legislation is being introduced to assist with the Imperial Plant that is named to have approximately 200 jobs; however, there was no provincial legislation with respect to the announced loss of 800 jobs at a call centre in Glace Bay, a few weeks ago.

Moved by Councillor Goyetche, seconded by Deputy Warden Bourque that Municipal Council establish an Adhoc Committee to represent the municipal position regarding Bill

74 (An Act Respecting the Municipal Taxation of Oil Refineries and Liquefied Natural Gas Plants), with the Warden being authorized to select and appoint the members of the Committee; and further moved that the Committee be provided with terms of reference to include that they will determine the impacts of the Legislation on the industry and the Municipality; consult Access Northeast Energy Inc. to determine their position and the impact on their business proposal; research and provide information on the similar situation of taxation of the LNG Plant in New Brunswick which was referred to by the Minister of Service Nova Scotia; research the recent history of property tax concessions in Nova Scotia (particularly the termination of property tax concessions by the Province approximately 15 years ago, with a view to determining the reason for change in government policy); consult other affected municipal units and organizations (U.N.S.M., HRM, rural units with large industry, etc.); monitor the progress of Bill 74 through the Legislature (including Law Amendments Committee) and prepare a submission for a presentation by Richmond Municipal representatives to the Law Amendments Committee, regarding Bill 74. Motion carried.

Warden Johnson indicated that she had been approached by Councillors Cotton, Beaton and McNamara, with respect to this issue, and therefore she would be appointing them to the Adhoc Committee.

Fifteen Minute Question Period

There were no questions.

Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Cotton, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Warden Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.