

RICHMOD COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

JANUARY 8, 2007

Location: Council Chambers, Municipal Office

Warden Boudreau called the meeting to order and asked everyone to stand for the singing of O'Canada.

The Clerk took roll call of Councillors.

Warden Boudreau indicated that he received a phone call from Councillor C. Boudreau indicating that he was ill and would not be able to attend tonight's meeting.

Items Added to the Agenda

Warden Boudreau indicated that there were no items to be added to tonight's agenda however Councillor Martell would like to request that Council permit him to add a grant request from his District \$3,000 fund.

Council unanimously agreed to permit this item to be added to tonight's agenda.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Sampson that the item added to the agenda be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Review of Minutes: December 11, 2006

Moved by Councillor Beaton, seconded by Deputy Warden McNamara that the minutes of December 11, 2006 be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

Presentations and/or Delegations:

- (a) District #10 Community Planning Committee (Betty MacNeil) Re: Phased Plan for Improvements at the JCDC Site

Mrs. Betty MacNeil, Chair of the District #10 Planning Committee, introduced other members of the JCDC present including Wilf MacNeil, Treasurer of the District #10 Volunteer Fire Department, Rita Campbell, Chair of the Johnstown Community Development Cooperative and Charlie MacIntyre, Sacred Heart Parish Council.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they originally approached Council last October, however there have been issues that arose that impacted their presentation and now they have

revised their information and have come to Council once again to make their presentation.

Mrs. Campbell indicated that the issue that arose was that last fall they were not able to raise funds to pay the mortgage of the JCDC site, noting that they have passed a motion at their last board meeting to divest the property to an interested community group, in particular the District #10 Volunteer Fire Department, noting that they have begun negotiations with the fire department as well as with other community groups.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that the fire department has recently acquired a new fire truck and was faced with housing difficulties with the fire house and that the fire house is deteriorating and has been doubling as a community centre, noting that one of the long term objectives of the fire department is to work with other community organizations.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that the fire department is still in a period of negotiations with JCDC and has not yet made a decision on divestiture of the property.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that the fire department appreciates the support from Council with the fire service levy, noting that the fire department heavily relies on volunteer organizations in the community to carry the burden of the fire service.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they have engaged a group of Dalhousie architecture students in the planning process noting that during their Strawberry Festival the students observed that there was a lot of congestion on the highway with people going from the church to the parish hall, noting that they suggested to link the properties by putting a road between the church and the parish hall parking lot and proposed this as Phase 1 of the project.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that the Dalhousie students will keep in touch and provide input.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that it must be determined if the JCDC site is an asset or liability, noting that it is a beautiful piece of property on the Bras D'Or Lakes however a structural assessment and appraisal are required to be provided to the fire department before they get engaged in this project.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they have met with a lawyer, who has volunteered their services, for a legal opinion on the divestiture of the property and the best way to go about it.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they are looking for funding to cover the appraisal, structural engineering and the initial phase including the road and signage.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they hope to have the appraisal and structural assessment done by the end of January and hope to begin construction of the road by the end of May and have the first phase completed before the next tourism season.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that the last time they were before Council they were provided with direction to phase this project out and to look into how much community involvement they have for the project, which they have done.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that they have met with federal agencies who question them about the municipality's support for the project.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that communities are all facing the same problems and are having to consolidate their efforts to sustain their communities.

In response to a question from Warden Boudreau, Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they are looking for funding of \$8,000 to cover Phase 1 on the project.

In response to a question from Councillor Johnson, Mrs. MacNeil indicated that the old road between the graveyard is crown land, formerly the old #4 highway.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they have received support from Parish Council for Phase 1, noting that they have had Rennie Kelly, a local contractor, indicate that the project can easily be done.

In response to a question from Councillor Sampson, Mrs. MacNeil indicated that in addition to the annual Strawberry Festival, other activities held at the hall are the Milling Frolic, Wednesday night bingo's during the summer and the occasional wedding or funeral reception, noting that the hall is only open on a seasonal basis due to heating costs and then activities are carried out at the fire hall.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that parking along the highway is a disaster and that this project would keep the vehicles off the road.

In response to a question from Councillor Sampson, Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they have received a lot of moral support from other levels of government but nothing financial so far, noting that she will again be contacting the MLA and the MP for further assistance.

In response to a question from Deputy Warden McNamara, Mrs. MacNeil indicated that there being more involvement by members of the fire department than other groups in the community in this project is just a coincidence.

Mr. MacNeil noted that it just so happens that the members of the fire department are the group that naturally get involved.

In response to a question from Deputy Warden McNamara, Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they will not be selling off the property but rather divesting it to a community group/groups, noting that there are approximately 50 shareholders and they have been made aware of this plan.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that there is approximately \$17,000 remaining on the mortgage of the JCDC property, noting that she hopes that there is enough energy and commitment to solve this, further noting that this piece of land is one of the last pieces of public access to the water.

In response to a question from Deputy Warden McNamara, Mrs. Campbell indicated that the JCDC will still exist after divesture of the property, noting they will just operate without the ownership of the property.

In response to a question from Deputy Warden McNamara, Mr. MacNeil indicated that many of the members of the JCDC are seasonal residents.

Councillor Martell indicated that many communities in Richmond are facing the same dilemma of decline of the community.

In response to a question from Councillor Martell, Mrs. MacNeil indicated that the community contributes mainly “sweat equity” and she is hoping that a municipal contribution will kick start other contributions to this project.

Councillor Martell indicated that in his district he has implemented a Community Improvement Tax Levy which results in approximately \$10,000 per year that the community can use as “seed” capital to leverage other funding.

Councillor Martell also noted that each District has a \$17,000 infrastructure fund that will match dollars for community projects.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that the community has just incurred an increased area rate from the purchase of a fire truck.

Warden Boudreau indicated that he is surprised that ECBC has not been more involved, especially with the concept of a hiking/walking trail.

Mr. MacNeil indicated that part of the trail is already completed.

Mrs. MacNeil indicated that they have received festival and events funding from ECBC for the past three years and will continue to do so.

Warden Boudreau indicated that the Municipality has three sources of funding for community groups, a Councillor’s District Activity Fund - \$3,000, a Municipal District Fund - \$17,000, and the Grants to Charitable Organizations fund, noting that all grant requests require completion of a formal application process.

In response to a question from Mrs. MacNeil, Councillor Johnson indicated that she will meet with the group to discuss the funding options and provide applications.

Committee Reports:

Councillor Sampson agreed to present the Committee of the Whole Report for the month of January 2007 on behalf of Deputy Warden McNamara because she was ill.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Martell that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that additional funding be approved for the Destination Richmond Tourism Co-Op in order to provide the Co-Op with the ability to pay for the business plan consulting services that they have utilized, and also to pay outstanding amounts to Destination Cape Breton for the Visitor Information Centre (if necessary). Motion carried.

Councillor Sampson gave notice that he will introduce a motion at the next regular Council Meeting to amend the Policy re: Disposal of Surplus Equipment, attached as Appendix "A".

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Johnson that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that a grant be approved for the Strait Area Ground Search and Rescue in the amount of \$750; and that these funds be taken from the Councillor's District Activity Fund - \$3,000, as follows:

- District #2 - \$150.00
- District #3 - \$150.00
- District #8 - \$150.00
- District #9 - \$150.00
- District #10 - \$150.00

Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Deputy Warden McNamara that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that staff be authorized to approach Mr. John Proctor and indicate that the Municipality is interested in acquiring his parcel of land at a cost of \$2,500, plus migration costs. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Martell that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that a "one time" \$250 per Councillor training allowance be established, which must be utilized to purchase computer equipment or training; and further moved that the training allowance must be utilized prior to the end of the fiscal year 2007/08. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Rankin that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that a letter be written to Mr. Stephen MacKenzie, Department of Transportation and Public Works indicating that the Municipality wishes to have the roads shown on the Gillies Subdivision Plan, which are presently unopened and being held in reserve, transferred to the Municipality. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Beaton that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that a grant in the amount of \$5,000

be approved for the D'Escousse Civic Improvement Centre, to be taken from the Municipal District Fund - \$17,000 for District #3. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Rankin that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that a letter be written to Mr. Bob Earle, Department of Transportation and Public Works, indicating that the Municipality wishes to relinquish their right to the property and request that the Department convey the right-of-way to Mr. Brent Kinslow and Mr. Kenneth Fougere. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Johnson that the Committee of the Whole Report for the month of January 2007 be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

Councillor Sampson presented the report from the Richmond Villa Board of Directors.

Warden Boudreau indicated that the issue of the lack of beds at the Richmond Villa for Richmond residents is because of the 100 km radius allowance by the Department of Health which forces the Villa to take residents that are not in Richmond.

Councillor Rankin indicated that the Villa has been open less than six months and there are Richmond County residents that are being housed at the Strait Richmond Hospital awaiting beds, further noting that because of the 100 km stipulation by the Department of Health many outside residents are placed in the Villa awaiting openings in their communities but after they are there they enjoy the facility and want to stay.

In response to a question from Councillor Beaton, Councillor Sampson indicated that an estimate of 10 Richmond County residents on the waiting list is probably low, noting that currently 13-14 residents of the Villa are not from Richmond.

Councillor Sampson indicated that in the planning stages of the new Villa the Board felt that there should be an increase in the number of beds, noting that the Department of Health experts did not agree.

Councillor Sampson indicated that the Villa Administrator recently attended a meeting with GASHA and the proposed expansion for the nursing home in Sydney has not even broken ground.

Councillor Rankin indicated that half of the beds at the Strait Richmond Hospital are residents waiting for rooms at the Villa.

Warden Boudreau indicated that he is aware of instances where seniors had to be placed in homes as far away as Halifax and Shelburne.

The CAO indicated that elderly couples are being forced to move to nursing homes in Halifax in order to stay together, noting that if they wished to stay closer they would be split up.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Rankin that Richmond Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Richmond Villa Board of Directors and request additional nursing home beds at the Richmond Villa facility, in order to properly service the residents of Richmond County who are attempting to gain admission to the facility. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Deputy Warden McNamara that the report from the Richmond Villa Board of Directors be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

(a) Hon. Peter MacKay re: Federal Gypsum

For information.

(b) Canadian Federation of Students Nova Scotia re: Nationwide Campaign/National Day of Action - February 7, 2007

Moved by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Martell that Council support the Canadian Federation of Students Nova Scotia's campaign and the National Day of Action on February 7, 2007. Motion carried.

(c) River Bourgeois Seniors 50+ Club re: Thank you

For information.

(d) Richmond County Literacy Network re: Family Literacy Week

Moved by Deputy Warden McNamara, seconded by Councillor Martell that Council proclaim the week of January 21-27, 2007 as Family Literacy Week. Motion carried.

Warden Boudreau indicated that signing of the proclamation will take place after the meeting.

Items Added:

(1) Councillor Martell re: Grant Request

The CAO indicated that staff have provided him with information indicating that this grant request has been properly submitted.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Johnson that the grant request from the West Arichat and District Village Circle Society be approved in the amount of \$1,500 and that this money be taken from the Councillor's District Activity Fund for District # 4. Motion carried.

Fifteen Minute Question Period:

There were no questions.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Rankin that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.