



Truro Town Council Meeting
Monday, May 11th, 2015
Council Chambers – Civic Building

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A regular public meeting of Truro Town Council was held on Monday, May 11th, 2015 at 1:00 pm in the Council Chambers of the Truro Civic Building.

Present: Mayor W.R. (Bill) Mills, Deputy Mayor R. Tynes, Councillors B. Kinsman, D. Joseph, C. Fritz, G. MacArthur and T. Chisholm

In Attendance: Director of Finance A. Currie, Director of Planning J. Fox, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture D. MacKenzie, Police Chief D. MacNeil, Fire Chief B. Currie, Director of Public Works A. MacKinnon, Town Solicitor J. Rafferty and CAO M. Dolter

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and B. Kinsman, the agenda was approved as circulated. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councillor T. Chisholm requested that the portion of the minutes in which he was quoted as saying “the Province should take over the maintenance of all roads in the Town”, it should say “maintenance and plowing costs of the provincial roads”. He stated he does not want the Province to take over every road in Town.

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and C. Fritz, the minutes of the Public Hearing and the Public Council Meeting held April 6th, 2015 were approved as amended. Motion carried.

MOTIONS AND NOTICES OF MOTIONS

a) Public Hearing – 21 Pleasant Street, Development Application

The CAO reviewed a letter received from the Town Planning Advisory Committee, recommending that Council consider permitting the development of one additional unit in an existing converted two unit dwelling at 21 Pleasant Street.

On motion of Councillors G. MacArthur and T. Chisholm, the development agreement application for 21 Pleasant Street to allow for one additional unit in an existing converted two unit dwelling was approved as presented. Motion carried.

PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

a) Presentation – Art Acquisition Winner

The Mayor announced that this year’s winners of the Town’s Art Acquisition Program were Janice Stewart and Anna Fullerton. The artists presented the Town with their art.

b) Petition – Faulkner/Muir Streets

The CAO advised that a petition had been received from the residents of Faulkner and Muir streets, requesting that their streets and sidewalks be completely redone, as they believe the conditions are a safety concern.

It was agreed that this matter would be sent to the Public Works Department for review and consideration, with a report back to Council.

Deputy Mayor R. Tynes asked where these streets fell within the schedule for improvement.

The Director of Public Works advised that during the last budget presentation, they were projected to be completed in year 3, but if the number of streets repaved per year is reduced, it could end up being year 6.

OLD BUSINESS

a) Vacant Building Bylaw – 2nd Reading

The CAO advised that 1st reading of the proposed new Vacant Building Bylaw was approved at the April Council meeting, and 2nd reading was on the agenda for today’s meeting. He noted that the Bylaw had been reviewed by the Planning Department, the Town Planning Advisory Committee and legal. The purpose of the Bylaw is to regulate vacant buildings within the Town and to address issues commonly experienced by the Town’s Building Inspector, Fire Inspector and Bylaw Enforcement Officer in dealing with vacant buildings. The CAO noted that the Town Solicitor wished to make one more revision to the Bylaw at the meeting before Council considered approving.

The Town Solicitor advised that upon reviewing the Bylaw, he felt that buildings such as a garden shed could be caught by the Bylaw unintentionally and that he was suggesting an amendment to resolve that. He was recommending that an addition to the exception section, a fourth definition be made as follows: a vacant building does not include an accessory building located on the same site as the main building if the main building if the main building is being used or occupied.

Councillor B. Kinsman expressed confusion over the reason for charging a \$25 fee to have a building added to the list, and perhaps people may use it as an excuse not to register.

The CAO and Director of Planning confirmed that the fee would cover the administration costs of creating and maintaining the registry and processing the files.

Councillor B. Kinsman asked if the Town typically charges fees for things of this nature.

The Director of Planning stated that the Town does charge fees for minor permits.

The CAO noted that part of the reason for the new Bylaw is to assist the Town with vacant buildings when it comes to issues like fire and reacting appropriately.

Deputy Mayor R. Tynes and Councillor C. Fritz also advised that they were not in favour of the proposed fee.

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and G. MacArthur, 2nd reading for the new Vacant Building Bylaw was approved as presented, with the addition of the amendment from the Town Solicitor. Motion carried.

On motion of Councillors D. Joseph and C. Fritz, it was agreed that motion by Councillors T. Chisholm be amended to accept the Bylaw, but that the Bylaw be changed to include that a fee of \$25 will be charged unless financial hardship can be demonstrated, and the fee will be refunded upon rehabilitation of the building. Motion carried.

IN-CAMERA SUMMARY REPORT

The CAO advised Council that there were three issues discussed by Council at the last In-Camera meeting and there are four issues to be discussed by Council at the incamera meeting today.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CAO Report

The CAO report for the month of April was presented to Council.

Councillor G. MacArthur asked if the Chairs Committee would be part of the new communications tool.

The CAO advised that it certainly could be, any type of mailing list can be created within the system.

On motion of Councillors G. MacArthur and B. Kinsman, it was moved that the CAO Report for the month of April, 2015 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Finance Report

The Finance report for the month of April was presented to Council.

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and D. Joseph, it was moved that the Finance report for the month of April, 2015 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Fire Report

The Fire Report for the month of April was presented to Council.

On motion of Councillors C. Fritz and T. Chisholm, it was moved that the Fire Report for the month of April, 2015 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Planning and Development Report

The Planning and Development report for the month of April was presented to Council.

Councillor G. MacArthur asked how long the Planning Department waits for responses for unsightly premises violations.

The Director of Planning stated that once a notice is sent from the Town, the property owners has 30 days to respond. After the 30 days, if there is no response, a 14 day notice is issued and after the 14 days, the Town will remedy the problem and charge the fees to the property owner.

Councillor G. MacArthur expressed frustration over repeat offenders of the unsightly premises bylaw. He requested that the Department look into a speedier process for repeat offenders.

On motion of Councillors G. MacArthur and B. Kinsman, it was moved that the Planning and Development report for the month of April, 2015 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Police Report

The Police Report for the month of April was presented to Council.

On motion of Councillors C. Fritz and T. Chisholm, it was moved that the Police Report for the month of April, 2015 be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Public Works Report

The Public Works report for the month of April was presented to Council.

Councillor D. Joseph asked what the average age of the Town's underground water infrastructure was.

The Director of Public Works advised that the Town's water system was initially constructed in 1875 and a lot of the system was built between 1900 and 1920 and it's some of the best infrastructure. He stated that cast iron mains were used up until the late 60's, 1970's saw the use of ductile iron pipe water mains and in the last 20 years, the Town has used mostly PVC and some modern ductile iron.

Councillor T. Chisholm asked the Director of Public Works to explain the new assessment program the Town would be used to grade streets for repair.

The Director of Public Works advised that the current system was somewhat subjective and consisted of a visual inspection by Town staff of each of the streets and then weighted against the street classification system (arterial, collector, etc.). He stated that a new system will be implemented using a software package called Total Pave, which uses a handheld GPS system and will rate the streets, block by block, between 0 and 100.

Councillor G. MacArthur asked the Director of Public Works to look at finishing sidewalk on Burnyeat Street this year. He also asked for an update on the work that was done in the Coburg Crescent area with regards to the water issues that some residents were experiencing.

The Director of Public Works advised that a storm drain system in the backyards, under the Local Improvements Bylaw, had been planned last year, but last Fall ended up being too wet to finish the work and it would be completed when the properties dried up.

The Mayor asked the Director of Planning for an update on the burned down property on Slack Street.

The Director of Planning advised that the Building Inspector has spoken to the property owner and they planned to have the property cleaned up within 30 days.

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and C. Fritz, it was moved that the Public Works Report for the month of April, 2015 be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Parks, Recreation and Culture Report

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Report for the month of April was presented to Council.

On motion of Councillors G. MacArthur and C. Fritz, it was moved that the Parks, Recreation and Culture Report for the month of April, 2015 be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Safety Coordinators Report

The Safety Coordinators Report for the month of April was presented to Council.

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and D. Joseph, it was moved that the Safety Coordinators Report for the month of April, 2015 be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Councillor T. Chisholm advised that he had been contacted by residents of his ward regarding the Department of Education's decision to cancel the French immersion program at Truro Elementary School. He noted that unless a citizen was educated in a French school, then residents' children are not eligible to attend Ecole Acadienne, and that without French immersion, parents were very concerned.

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and G. MacArthur, it was agreed that a letter would be sent to school board expressing support for the continuation of French immersion at Truro Elementary School. Motion carried.

Councillor T. Chisholm noted that at last month's Council meeting, he spoke about streets in Town being paid for by Town residents and County roads being looked after by the Provincial government. He advised that he has since found a list of the streets in Town that were originally the responsibility of the Province: Willow Street, Lower Truro Road, Robie Street to Juniper, Juniper down to Prince, Commercial Street, all of Queen Street going to Walker, Walker across the bridge to Bible Hill, Park Street, Marshland Drive, Harmony Road and Camden Road. Councillor T. Chisholm encouraged residents to write to their MLA, requesting that the Province take back the responsibility of these streets, and this would therefore free up more money in Town to repair the rest of the streets.

Councillor D. Joseph noted that the Town has a serious deer problem, which is a threat to the health and safety of residents. He advised that residents want to know that the Town has a plan in the works, in collaboration with perhaps the Department of Natural Resources, to deal with this issue.

The Mayor advised that someone had recently told him that Barrie, Ontario, has a good program for the deer population; perhaps that is something the Town could look into.

Councillor G. MacArthur advised that he has spoken with the Agriculture Minister regarding the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition audit. He stated that he hoped the Town was willing to support the Exhibition moving forward.

Councillor G. MacArthur advised that at the FCM Conference last year, participants were asked if they benefitted from working with their local MPs, and he had stated at the time, and still does, that the Town has a great working relationship with MP Scott Armstrong.

On motion of Councillors G. MacArthur and B. Kinsman, a letter of appreciation will be sent to Farida Gabbani for her work on the RECC Operating Board, as her term was coming to an end. Motion carried.

Councillor B. Kinsman noted that he was recently stuck in traffic on Willow Street as crews were patching, and while he appreciated the potholes being filled, he could have taken a different route if he had known about the work. He asked if the Public Works Department had ever considered renting or purchasing some of those flashing mobile signs that could be installed a week or so before work began to let people know.

The Director of Public Works advised that he could look into those types of signs. He noted that last year the locations of street work were posted on Facebook and Twitter and then picked up by the radio station, and that seemed to work really well and it was something that needed to be implemented again.

Deputy Mayor R. Tynes advised that he wishes the new general manager of the Exhibition the best of luck and would love for him to come and make a presentation to Council on the business and financial plan.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Letter from Canada Post

The CAO reviewed a letter received from Canada Post regarding their decision to eliminate door to door delivery service and in response to a letter that the Mayor had sent. This letter was for information purposes.

b) Letter from CN

The CAO reviewed a letter received from CN regarding dangerous goods lists, for information purposes.

c) Colchester Community Support Society Colchester Food Bank Annual Meeting

The CAO advised that the Town is in receipt of the proceedings from the Colchester Community Support Society Colchester Food Bank Annual meeting that occurred on March 24th, 2015 and it is available for Councillors review and information.

d) Communications Policy

The CAO advised that a new Communications Policy was being presented for Council approval. He stated that the policy has six main objectives: to inform citizens about the municipalities, programs, services and initiatives through communication that is timely, accurate and consistent; consult and inform stakeholders when establishing or developing priorities, policies, programs and services; ensure the municipality is visible and responsible to the citizens it serves; anticipate the needs of the community, Council and administration for timely and relevant information; engage in a proactive communications program that uses a variety of formats to accommodate diverse needs and that reflects the diversity of the community; and provide timely, accurate and relevant information to staff and Council on key issues prior to release to public.

Councillor T. Chisholm asked if one central communications voice has been considered.

The CAO advised that it could be something to look at in the future, but he believed that with the new policy, it would be effective without having a single person as a spokesperson. He stated that he would prefer that the people talking on a specific issue was the person dealing with it on a regular basis.

Councillor B. Kinsman noted that the policy touches on responding to concerns in a timely fashion, but the policy does not define timely fashion and it does not talk about the public specifically.

The CAO advised that the plan is to put a metrics for communication in place, so there is a measure in responding. The Policy is intended to define how the Town is going to communicate, as opposed to measuring. The CAO stated that it would be difficult to commit to a timeline currently, because there is not a central location for complaints or information to come through, and therefore response time currently depends on the source and chain of communication it follows.

The Mayor asked if a 311 system would be considered.

The CAO advised that discussions on a 311 system have taken place, or a customer service line, and that it would be investigated in the future.

On motion of Councillors G. MacArthur and T. Chisholm, the Communications Policy was approved as presented. Motion carried.

e) Adam Street Extension

The CAO reviewed a request from Chris MacDougall that was submitted through the Planning Department to declare Adams Street a public street, for the purpose of facilitating a development to the rear of 128 Brunswick Street to allow for the subdivision of the land and construction of a single unit dwelling. The CAO advised that the street is owned by the Town and maintained as a roadway, but has not been formally or officially designated as a street. He noted that the Director of Public Works has confirmed that the majority of the roadway contains sewer and water services.

On motion of Councillors T. Chisholm and B. Kinsman, Adam Street was declared a public street. Motion carried.

f) 55+ Games

The CAO advised the public that the 55+ Games are coming up in New Glasgow in September, and the Town encourages people to attend and participate.

g) Library Basement

The CAO advised that the original design for the basement of the extension on the new library was a frost wall with no basement underneath. He stated that there is an opportunity to build a basement under the extension, but the original contract does not cover that portion, and therefore a change would need Council approval. The CAO advised that three options were being presented and reviewed the options. The third option was being recommended by staff, and would include the addition of four meeting rooms in the existing building, 5000 square feet of heated storage in the new addition, the installation of two public washrooms, the installation of concrete floors in the new addition and heat, at a cost of \$190,096.00.

Councillor G. MacArthur Greg advised that he had spoken with the Heritage Minister who suggested that the Town apply for federal funding for the library project.

The Mayor advised that this information had been passed along to the CAO last week and that the Town would be pursuing that.

On motion of Deputy Mayor R. Tynes and Councillor B. Kinsman, it was agreed the Option 3 would be chosen for the library basement. Motion carried.

h) Library Spire

The CAO advised that there was a spire, or steeple, on top of the old Normal College which burnt in the 1950's. He stated that it was being recommended that the infrastructure to support a spire in the future be added to the construction of the new library. The CAO advised that the proposed work to support a spire would cost \$30,000 plus \$7,500 for engineering.

On motion of Deputy Mayor R. Tynes and Councillor T. Chisholm, \$37,500 was approved to install the infrastructure on the new library for a future spire installation. Motion carried.

ACCOUNTS

It was moved by Councillor C. Fritz and Deputy Mayor R. Tynes, that Council approve for payment the accounts as presented be approved for the month of April, 2015. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Deputy Mayor R. Tynes and Councillor T. Chisholm, it was moved that the meeting be adjourned at approximately 3:25 p.m. Motion carried.

W.R. (Bill) Mills
Mayor

M.W. Dolter
CAO