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KINGSTON VILLAGE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING OF APRIL 11, 2024

COMMISSION:

Wayne Fowler
Mike Bishop - Absent
Muriel West
Neil Larder
Lauren Avery

Mike McCleave – Clerk/Treasurer
Janice Knickle – Administrative Assistant

GUESTS:

Martha Armstrong – Councillor District 4, Municipality of the County of Kings
Jason Haughn – Municipal Affairs
Kathleen Novelia, Annapolis Valley Welcome Network (REN)

OPENING

Chair Fowler called the Regular Session meeting to order at 7:00pm.

County of Kings – Update

- Council passed the 2024/25 budget on March 20th with no tax increases due to the increase in assessments.
- County did not agree to help fund the leaf/brush bin service the Village provides to residents and outsiders. Councillor suggested asking the Village of Greenwood to contribute a mutually agreed contribution amount.
- At the afternoon meeting with the Association of NS Villages, Commissioners discussed the topic of the County of Kings taxing their water utilities in the County (excluding Port Williams and the Village of New Minas). Property Valuation Services Corp. is now assessing water utilities as taxable. Kings County is the only county in NS that does not exempt their water utilities from taxation. They are essentially taxing a taxing company. Councillor will bring the item to staff.
- Commission asked about gas tax allocations to villages. Councillor Armstrong will ask staff at the County. Commission reiterated the importance of having that information for budgeting purposes.
- The County will be holding a planning advisory meeting with residents and Commissioners regarding zoning and a new build on Windsor St.

Presentation Annapolis Valley Welcome Network (REN)

Kathleen Novelia, Immigration and Settlement Navigator with Valley REN, gave an overview of her role. The role was created a year ago after research was completed by Valley REN regarding the workforce in the valley.

The following information was provided:

- The program is there for people from out of country, province, or the valley facing challenges.
- They provide written information to newcomers such as a welcome guide and a fridge magnet of useful telephone numbers.
- By 2029 the province will need \$6,590 workers which can only be filled with immigration. Immigrants will not replace workers locally, they will only take jobs that are difficult to fill, such as farm workers and small businesses.
- The death rate is higher than the birth; immigration is critical.
- Role includes supporting employers and helping them learn about immigration programs to make them better equipped.
- Nova Scotia's population is growing with newcomers, but the retention of immigrants is low in the Valley due to a lack of social inclusion here.
- Kathleen is very busy helping newly arrived immigrant workers settle here.
- Since it is not a one-person job, six volunteer welcome groups have been created throughout the Valley. Volunteers are including newcomers in everyday activities and events to make them feel welcome. They are looking to have a welcome group with a Chair and Co-Chair created for Kingston and Greenwood. A description of the role of the Chair and members is available. The volunteerism is only at the capacity of the volunteers and not beyond.
- The Chair would be the liaison between the volunteers and the Village Office.
- Wanted to make sure the Village is onboard before setting up a group in Kingston/Greenwood area.
- Commission was encouraged to read over the welcome guide and make any suggestions. Chair asked that Villages be added to the list of municipalities.
- They will reach out to the local Dr. Recruitment group.
- Information sessions can be set up at the Village office conference room.

Jason Haughn – Municipal Affairs

Mr. Haughn provided the following information:

- The legislature wrapped up on Friday.
- There have been changes made to the Municipal Government Act (MGA), with some directly affecting villages in the province. Letters went out to the president of the Association of Nova Scotia Villages (ANSV).
- The answer to villages' question of why they do not have the same recognition as towns is that villages are not autonomous (the County has no jurisdiction over towns but has some jurisdiction over villages).
- ANSV could push for an amendment of the MGA to change the law that says Villages cannot change into towns and vice versa. This effort may require a full-time staff person.
- ANSV should make all proposals to the province as professionally prepared as possible with solutions attached to any complaints. Use specific examples, in detail, such as the Streetscape Beautification Grant or gas tax hurdles.
- ANSV may be able to access more funding through the federal and provincial government.

- ANSV could establish a relationship with the NS Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) and have them go to bat for Villages' needs.
- ANSV could put out a proposal to review getting a staff member that could speak on all villages' behalf. Suggestion was made to ask Louis Cantino for advice on what would be needed for a skillset.
- Staff member could keep the momentum going and push forward with project-based items. Ask for a meeting with the newly appointed executive director with NSFM.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Chair asked for a review of the March 14, 2024, Regular Session meeting minutes.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER WEST AND COMMISSIONER AVERY, THAT THE COMMISSION APPROVE THE REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 14, 2024, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Mural Project

Owner of 565 Main is in favour of having a mural on the west side of the building. Commissioner Avery received two different quotes from artists to paint the mural. Both artists are willing to work within the Village's budget. The base price is \$5,000 and the top price was \$23,000, depending on the mural.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER WEST TO ADD A BUDGET OF NO MORE THAN \$20,000 FOR THE MURAL. MOTION DEFEATED.

After a discussion, the Commission decided on a budget of \$12,000.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER AVERY AND COMMISSIONER WEST THAT THE VILLAGE COMMISSION ADD A BUDGET OF NO MORE THAN \$12,000 FROM OPERATING RESERVES FOR A MURAL ON THE WEST LOWER WALL OF 565 MAIN ST. MOTION CARRIED.

Steer BBQ

Committee decided not to have music in Centennial Park during Steer BBQ. The music will be on the stage on the Steer BBQ grounds.

Hwy 101 Village Signs

There would be a cost to the artist for whichever piece of art is chosen for the highway sign. Commission agreed to get a quote from Amber from 7Arts.

Certificate for Staff

Commissioner West presented the long service certificate to crossing guard Katherine Fredericks.

CONSENT TO AGENDA ITEMS

Chair asked for additions to the agenda. Volunteer of the Year item was added to the agenda.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER WEST AND COMMISSIONER LARDER THAT THE COMMISSION APPROVE THE AGENDA, AS PRESENTED WITH ADDITION. MOTION CARRIED.

Volunteer of the Year

After a discussion, Commission agreed to congratulate all 8 nominees with a certificate this year at the Annual General Meeting. Clerk can also make a slide for the meeting.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – See Full Report

Work by Mid Valley Construction at KN3 lift station is close to being completed.

PUBLIC WORKS – See Full Report

Irrigation may possibly help with ballfield problem, which is in the budget for next year.

RECREATION – See Full Report

Kingston/Greenwood Soccer Club Situation

Canadian Armed Forces Personal Support Programs (PSP) at 14 Wing Greenwood are moving in a different direction and are no longer running Kingston/Greenwood Soccer. They kept all the money and equipment, so the soccer club must start all over. PSP did allow the club to rent the equipment this year. The ball club is hoping to use Kingston's Elm St ballfield more often. There may be grants out there for this situation. Chair Fowler will also consult with Chair of the Village of Greenwood.

Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt

Commission would like to have numbers of attendance for the scavenger hunt.

Sign for Duck Pond

Commission agreed to have a proper sign at the Duck Pond to keep wildlife wild and not feed the ducks since regular feeding causes poor nutrition, spreads disease, overcrowding and delayed migration, to name a few. Due to an overabundance of ducks, many have been hit by cars on Bridge St.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – See Full Report

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Steer BBQ

See Community Development report.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC)

N/A

Kingston Area Advisory Committee (KAAC)

There will be an upcoming meeting with the County of Kings.

Audit Committee

N/A

Soldiers Memorial Hospital (SMH) Foundation – Dr. Recruitment Committee

Committee member Anne Crowell would like the Commission to hang a few banners in the Village as an anti racism initiative since many of the new doctors are arriving from Africa. The banner they chose was the African/NS flag.

Association of Nova Scotia Villages (ANSV)

Discussed under Jason Haughn's report.

CLERK REPORT – See Full Report

NS Power – Sidewalk Power Poles

The Village is still waiting for NS Power to schedule the removal of the poles from the sidewalk in East Kingston.

Flooding on Kingswood Lane

Village may have to put a culvert under the new East Main St sidewalk. Also, the driveway going into Rice's pit is not wide enough for trucks to go in and out of.

Commissioner West - Service to the Village

Chair Fowler, on behalf of the Village Commission, thanked Commissioner Muriel West for her two and a half 3-yr terms serving the Village of Kingston, which went well beyond the normal duties.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Soldiers Memorial Hospital Foundation March Newsletter and Updates

The newsletter included the following highlights:

- The Mid Valley Region Physician Recruitment & Retention Committee secured a \$99,963.00 grant through the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment. The monies will be used to continue supporting newcomer physicians and healthcare professionals in the region.
- The ER at Soldiers Memorial will continue to be open weekdays from 7:30am – 1:30pm due to an increase in ER doctors working there.
- A doctor worked at the Kingston Medical Centre for 6 weeks as part of their NS Practice Ready Assessment Program.
- The foundation will now be asking volunteers to apply and be accepted through an interview process to be on the board.
- Newsletters will be sent to community groups monthly to be shared at their meetings.

CAPITAL BUDGET

After capital budget meeting the Commission agreed on the following motions:

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER AVERY AND COMMISSIONER LARDER THAT THE 2024/25 CAPITAL BUDGET WITH GROSS EXPENDITURES OF \$1,049,500 BE APPROVED; TO BE FUNDED THROUGH SEWER RESERVES OF \$604,734, CAPITAL RESERVES OF \$273,000 AND THE REMAINDER THROUGH THE FEDERAL CANADA COMMUNITY BUILDING FUND OF \$171,766. MOTION CARRIED.

ON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER LARDER AND COMMISSIONER AVERY THAT THE PROPOSED 2024-25 OPERATING BUDGET, DISSEMINATED AT THE APRIL 11TH, 2024, COMMISSION MEETING, BE ACCEPTED AND APPROVED. MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:37pm.

COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON

CLERK/TREASURER