

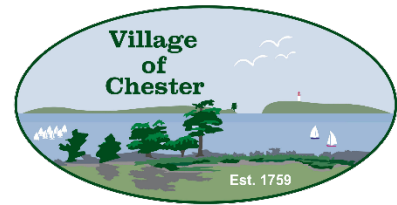
Minutes

Village Commission Monthly Meeting Wednesday, March 12, 2025 – 6:00 pm

In-Person & Virtual Meeting

27 Pleasant Street, Chester

Video Archive <https://www.youtube.com/@villageofchesters>



Present: Geraldine Pauley, Chair
Randall O'Malley, Vice-chair
Laura Mulrooney, Commissioner
Tom Mulrooney, Commissioner
Gloria Nauss, Commissioner

Staff: Heather McCallum, Clerk/Treasurer
Maxine Veinot, Recording Secretary

Guest: Councillor Tom Bremner, MODC District 3

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Pauley called the Mar 12, 2025 Regular Monthly Meeting of the Village of Chester Commission to order at 6:00 pm.

Chair Pauley stated the Land Acknowledgement:

As we meet today, we acknowledge that we live in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people with a responsibility to each other and to this land.

2.0 Public Forum – Councillor Tom Bremner thanked the Village welcoming him to attend these meetings.

3.0 Approval of Agenda/Additions to Agenda

Motion #25-010: Commissioner Nauss moved; Commissioner Mulrooney seconded: That the Agenda of the Mar 12, 2025 Regular Monthly Meeting be approved as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4.0 Review/Approval of Minutes

4.1 Special Commission Meeting: Wednesday, Feb 19, 2025

Clerk/Treasurer (C/T) McCallum noted an error on the date of the meeting.

Motion #25-011: Commissioner Nauss moved; Commissioner L. Mulrooney seconded: That the Minutes of the Feb 19, 2025 Special Commission Meeting be approved as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

4.2 Monthly Commission Meeting: Wednesday, Feb 19, 2025

C/T McCallum noted an error on the date of the meeting. Vice-chair O'Malley noted there was no VPAC meeting in February, not January.

Motion #25-012: Vice-chair O'Malley moved; Commissioner Nauss seconded: That the Minutes of the Feb 19, 2025 Monthly Commission Meeting be approved as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

4.3 Committee of the Whole Meeting: Wednesday, Feb 26, 2025

Motion #25-013: Commissioner T. Mulrooney moved; Vice-chair O'Malley seconded: That the Minutes of the Feb 26, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

5.0 Business Arising

5.1 Municipal Code of Conduct: Appointment of Investigator

C/T McCallum reported that the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) has completed their short-list of qualified investigators (*Schedule 5.1*). The Commission is not obligated to contract one of these.

Action: The Commission agreed to table this item until the mandatory training has been completed (date TBD). The Clerk/Treasurer will request the checklist of investigator qualities used by AMANS.

6.0 Correspondence

6.1 Municipality of the District of Chester (MODC) Planning re: Maple Cottage

The notice of a March 13th Public Hearing was provided for information (*Schedule 6.1*). Maple Cottage is on 75 Regent Street.

6.2 MODC Planning re: Public Hearing on Village Secondary Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw

The notice of a March 20th Public Hearing was provided for information (*Schedule 6.2*).

Vice-chair O'Malley reported that this is draft five of the Village Land Use By-law. MODC Council wishes to proceed with the new by-law to provide up-to-date requirements for developments.

6.3 MODC Planning re: Short-term Rentals

The notice was provided for information (*Schedule 6.3*).

6.4 Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)

A letter was received request action on the potential re-opening of fracking and uranium mining in Nova Scotia (*Schedule 6.4*) after an all-party ban in 2014.

Motion #25-014: Commissioner Nauss moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded: That the Chester Village Commission send a letter of support for the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment to the Premier.
Motion carried unanimously.

6.5 Chester Yacht Club: Invitation to Appreciation Social for Fire Department

The invitation was received for an event in July (*Schedule 6.5*).

Each Commissioner will individually RSVP for the event. The Commission will host a fire prevention-related Children's Poster Event; details to be determined at a later meeting.

7.0 Reports

7.1 Report from the Chair

Chair Pauley reported that she consulted the Village's legal advisor and insurer about maintenance and insurance responsibilities for the current Chester Fire Station on Central Street.

The Village owns the building and carries property insurance on the building. Under the Intermunicipal Fire Services Agreements, however, the building and its contents are in the "care, custody and control" of the Chester Fire Services Committee (CFSC). The CFSC carries property insurance on the contents and liability. The Agreement also states that the Fire Committee should be covering all fire service-related insurance premiums.

Maintenance of the fire station is legally the responsibility of the CFSC due to the “care, custody and control” designation. Chair Pauley noted that any maintenance concerns about the fire station should be addressed to the CFSC in writing.

The Clerk/Treasurer will draft a letter to the Chair of the CFSC from Commission Chair Pauley with this information and note the future billing of the property premium.

The other outstanding issue is the trunk radio tower, which was damaged in a storm in 2019 and only partially repaired. An insurance claim paid out to the Village and eventually went to the CFSC as part of the accumulated surplus. C/T McCallum and Chief Stevens are seeking a condition evaluation and repair estimate, which will be included in the CFSC’s budget.

Chair Pauley met with Robin Carling, Chester Merchants Association (CMA), and she is very enthusiastic about the proposed Village-run Visitor Information Centre. Chair Pauley will attend the next CMA meeting to discuss plans with them.

7.2 Clerk/Treasurer Activity and Financial Reports

C/T McCallum presented the monthly activities and financial overview reports ([Schedule 7.2](#)). She noted that a Special Commission Meeting on March 26, 2025 has been scheduled for both the 2025/26 Fire & Emergency Services Budget and Village Budget approvals.

7.3 Chester Fire Services Committee (CFSC)

The CFSC’s approved minutes of Feb 5 and the AGM of Feb 11, 2025 were shared for information. (www.chesterfirecommittee.ca)

7.4 Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee (LCAAC)

Chair Pauley reported on the Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan Draft.

The LCAAC minutes of Feb 5, 2025 were shared for information. (www.accessiblelunenburgcounty.ca)

7.5 MODC Village Planning Advisory Committee (VPAC)

Vice-chair O’Malley noted that the meeting minutes were from its January meeting. Municipal Council declined to take up recommendations from the Advisory Committee regarding the Draft Village Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. Some Committee members are hoping for an explanation from Council.

At their March 11th meeting, development agreements were addressed on two properties on Valley Road.

There VPAC minutes of Jan 14, 2025 were shared for information.
([Chester Village Planning Advisory Committee 2025](#))

7.6 MODC Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDIAC)

Commissioner L. Mulrooney reported that, as she is new to the Committee, she met with Jen Webber from MODC on the Draft EDI Policy. There is a Provincial requirement to have this Policy submitted to the Province by April 1st. The draft will be presented to Municipal Council at their March 13, 2025 meeting.

Commissioner L Mulrooney will be attending online welcome ambassador training through the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS).

The EDIAC minutes of Feb 4, 2025 were shared for information.
([EDI Advisory Committee 2025](#))

8.0 New/Other Business

8.1 Property Tax Records from MODC

Commissioner T. Mulrooney expressed concern that the Village does not have enough information to determine if the property tax received from the Municipality is correct and noted that there had been instances of some properties not being taxed in the past.

In response to a question, Municipal Councillor Tom Bremner confirmed that the property assessment roll comes from the provincial Property Valuation Services Corporation, and that received revenue is included in the Municipality's annual financial audit.

C/T McCallum noted that the Municipality's Finance Department provides her with spreadsheets containing figures per quarter and broken out by residential and commercial.

ACTION: The C/T will prepare a summary of the 2024/25 information.

8.2 Spring Street Cleaning

Commissioner T. Mulrooney suggested that the Village contract a supplier to provide street cleaning this spring. He understood that Mahone Bay and Lunenburg use a supplier from Bridgewater.

C/T McCallum reported that she contacted the Town of Mahone Bay and received the information that the Bridgewater supplier no longer offers the service. Mahone Bay purchased a sweeper attachment for one of their trucks, and apparently Lunenburg has done the same.

ACTION: As Chester streets are a Provincial responsibility, Chair Pauley will call the District Superintendent of Public Works to see if this work can/will be done this spring.

9.0 In camera – per Section 408B (2) of the Municipal Government Act

Motion #25-015: Commissioner Nauss moved; Vice-chair O'Malley seconded: That the Commission move in camera as per Section 408B (2) of the Municipal Government Act to discuss contract negotiations.

Motion carried unanimously

The Commission recessed at 7:00 pm.

10.0 Resumption of Public Meeting – report in public session per Section 408B (3) of the Municipal Government Act.

The Commission resumed the public meeting at 7:42 pm.

10.1 Agreement: Sharon LeBlanc

ACTION: The Commission agreed by consensus to engage Sharon LeBlanc for a Commission workshop for a fee of \$450 + HST. The date of May 14, 2025 from 2-5 pm and a backup date of May 20th will be requested.

10.2 Agreement: Chester District Swimming Program

Motion #25-016: Vice-chair O'Malley moved; Commissioner Nauss seconded: That the Lido Pool swimming lessons proceed in the 2025 Lido pool season on their usual split schedule of 9 am - noon and from 2 pm - 5 pm, and that the swimming lesson schedule be consolidated to a continuous block of time from noon - 6 pm beginning in the 2026 season.

Motion carried; Commissioner T. Mulrooney voted in opposition.

ACTION: Chair Pauley will draft a letter for the Swimming Program with the update.

10.3 Agreement: Maintenance Service Renewal

Motion #25-017: Commissioner L. Mulrooney moved; Commissioner Nauss seconded: That the Chester Village Commission approve the renewal of the Intermunicipal Service Agreement with the Municipality of the District of Chester for

2025/26 Maintenance Services with the amendment of Article 12 back to 90 days. The Chair and Clerk/Treasurer shall sign the agreement, and the Clerk shall apply the Village seal.

Motion carried unanimously.

11.0 Committee of the Whole Discussion

11.1 2025/26 Village Budget DRAFT – Revisions

C/T McCallum walked through the revised draft budget (*Schedule 11.1*) and noted that some cost quotations are still expected to come in.


ACTION: An updated draft will be brought to the Special Meeting on Mar 26, 2025 for review and/or approval.

12.0 Adjournment


There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:19 pm.

Next meeting(s):

- Special Meeting (Budgets) on March 26, 2025 at 6:00 pm
 - Regular Monthly Meeting on April 9, 2025 at 6:00 pm
- **Commissioner Nauss requests that Commissioners to bring any items for the Saltscapes event giveaway basket to this meeting.*



Commission Chair
Geraldine Pauley



Clerk/Treasurer
Heather McCallum

Schedule 5.2



AMANS Qualified List of Investigators – Municipal Code of Conduct

The following is a list of investigators qualified through the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia (AMANS) request for qualification (RFQ) process that closed on January 17, 2025.

AMANS worked with its internal Procurement Committee to evaluate all submissions received. Committee members evaluated each proposal and then met to form consensus on each proponent. The listed 10 investigators were qualified.

Unless otherwise indicated, all investigators met the Procurement Committee's evaluation thresholds for criteria related to investigations including corporate/financial, legal/adjudication, and human resources (HR). Each investigator has indicated capacity to administer potential complaints. Should a municipal unit choose to use this list, they will need to verify with the potential investigator if there may be capacity limits with client onboarding.

AMANS has not entered into either a Contract or an Agreement with any of the qualified investigators. The investigators included on this list have been vetted through an internal AMANS RFQ procurement process. **It will be the municipal unit's responsibility when determining an appropriate investigator as well as facilitating the process of entering into any Contract or Agreement should the municipality choose to use an investigator on the list.** Municipal units should also consider potential internal conflicts of interest if they choose to select a qualified investigator from the list.

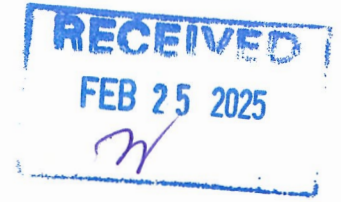
AMANS may expand the list at a later point in time by re-issuing the RFQ. AMANS will inform members of any potential changes to the list of qualified investigators as they come forward.

If you have any questions about the list of qualified investigators, criteria when using the list, or on the RFQ process, please reach out to David Campbell, AMANS Executive Director at (902) 423-2215 x8 or at dcampbell@amans.ca.

<p>BDO Canada LLP</p> <p>Caroline Dixon Partner, Forensic Disputes & Investigations</p> <p>6940 Mumford Road, Suite 510 Halifax, NS B3L 0B7</p> <p>Tel: (250) 837-5225 Email: cdixon@bdo.ca</p>	<p>Stewart McKelvey</p> <p>Rick Dunlop Partner</p> <p>Queens Marque, 600-1741 Lower Water Street Halifax, NS B3J 0J2</p> <p>Tel: (902) 420-3384 Email: rdunlop@stewartmckelvey.com</p>
<p>Burchell MacDougall LLP</p> <p>Charles A. Thompson Partner</p> <p>710 Prince Street Truro, NS B2N 5H1</p> <p>Tel: (902) 896-7543 Email: cthompson@burchellmacdougall.com</p>	<p>Taylor McLellan Cochrane</p> <p>Jonathan G. Cuming Managing Partner</p> <p>50 Bridge Street Kentville, NS B4N 2E4</p> <p>Tel: (902) 678-6156 x234 Email: cuming@tmclaw.com</p>
<p>Burchell Wickwire Bryson LLP</p> <p>Noella Martin Partner</p> <p>1900-1801 Hollis Street Halifax, NS B3J 3N4</p> <p>Tel: (902) 482-7013 Email: nmartin@bwblp.ca</p>	<p>Bardsley Investigative Services (HR matters only)</p> <p>Claudine Bardsley Owner/Operator</p> <p>2733 Deacon Street Halifax, NS B3L 3J2</p> <p>Tel: (902) 293-5052 Email: investigate@claudinebardsley.com</p>
<p>MC Advisory Group Inc.</p> <p>Tanya Tynski Senior Advisor</p> <p>1969 Upper Water Street, Suite 1300 Halifax, NS B3J 3R7</p> <p>Tel: (902) 598-7423 Email: tanya.tynski@mcadvisory.com</p>	<p>Mobile Resources Group Inc. (HR matters only)</p> <p>Tracey Williams Senior Workplace and Human Rights Investigator</p> <p>500-1000 Innovation Drive Kanata, Ontario K2K 3E7</p> <p>Tel: (902) 266-3040 Email: info@traceywilliams.ca</p>

<p>Nijhawan McMillan & Conlon Barristers</p> <p>Kelly McMillan Partner</p> <p>200-5162 Duke Street Halifax NS B3J 1N7</p> <p>Tel: (902) 407-2406 Email: kelly@nmbarristers.com</p>	<p>Power HR Inc. (HR matters only)</p> <p>Susan Power Founder & CEO</p> <p>22 Chelmsford Place Halifax, NS B3M 4R2</p> <p>Tel: (902) 719-6662 Email: susan@powerhr.ca</p>
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Schedule 6.1



The Municipality of Chester
151 King St, PO Box 369
Chester, NS B0J 1J0

Phone: (902) 275-3554
Fax: (902) 275-4771
www.chester.ca

[/ChesterMunicipality](#)
[@chestermun](#)

To: Area Property Owners (within 30m of subject property)
From: Paul Riley, CPT & MCIP, LPP (Candidate), Planner
Date: February 20, 2025
Subject: Amendments to the Chester Village Secondary Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to permit one residential unit in the Institutional Area and Institutional zone specific to lands known as "Maple Cottage" at 75 Regent Street and PID# 60089398 (Lordly House Museum lands)

As a property owner within thirty (30) m of a site requesting amendments to the Chester Village Secondary Planning Strategy (VSPS) and Land Use By-law (LUB), you are being contacted directly to advise of an upcoming Public Hearing being held by Municipal Council. Before approving the amendments to the Land Use By-law, Council must hold a Public Hearing to solicit comments, questions, and input from nearby property owners and members of the public.

The proposed amendments would permit the landowner to apply for a Development Permit to allow one residential unit whereas this is not a permitted land use in the Institutional zone. Municipal Council directed Staff to draft amendments to permit one residential unit specific to the subject lands, where the landowner is the Chester Municipal Heritage Society, a non-profit seeking to offset costs to the Societies ongoing community heritage efforts. The amendments included a new preamble section and policy in the VSPS and a new site-specific permitted use of one residential unit at the subject lands in the LUB.

Enclosed with this letter you will find a copy of the advertisement outlining the details of the Public Hearing and showing a map identifying the subject property requesting the amendments.

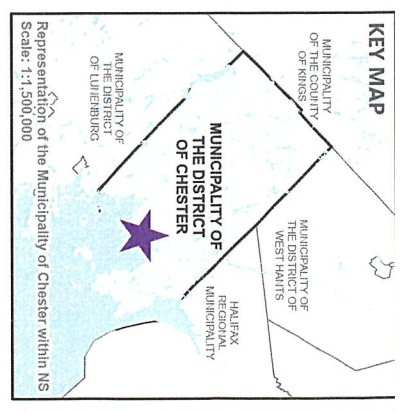
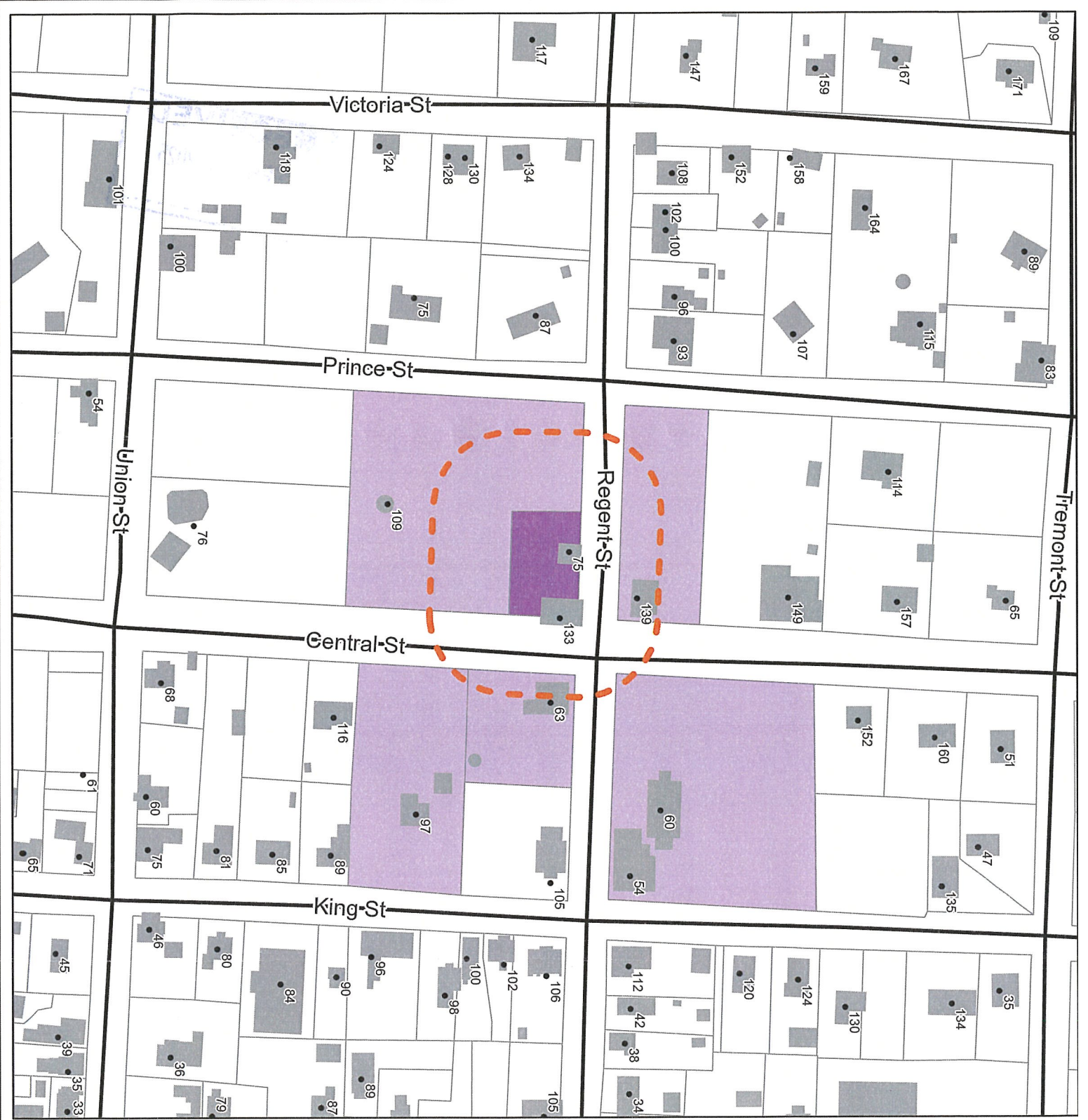
You are invited to attend the Public Hearing on **March 13th, 2025** at 8:45am in Municipal Council Chambers or alternatively may submit written comments directed to Pam Myra, Municipal Clerk (pmyra@chester.ca) no later than March 6th, 2025.

If you have any questions about the proposed rezoning, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

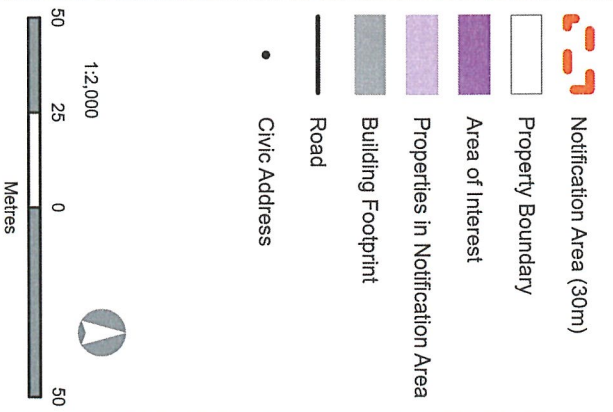
Paul Riley, CPT & MCIP, LPP (Candidate)
Planner, Municipality of Chester
priley@chester.ca

NOVA SCOTIA'S TREASURE



Location Map

75 Regent Street, Chester Municipality of Chester



Sources: Digital Base Map Data from Geomatics Information Services Division, Nova Scotia Department of Internal Services
Prepared by the Municipality of the District of Chester
Coordinate System/Datum: UTM NAD83 CSRS ZONE 20NMap

Disclaimer: Information shown on these drawings is compiled from numerous sources and may not be complete or accurate. The Municipality of the District of Chester is not responsible for any errors, omissions or deficiencies in these drawings. Date printed does not reflect the date of the map data.

Date Printed: 25/01/21
Digital File ID: 1540041
Actual Map Size: w 11" x h 8.5"



THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In the matter of the Municipal Government Act and the
Municipality of the District of Chester

TAKE NOTICE THAT on Thursday, February 13, 2025, Chester Municipal Council gave “First Reading” to draft amendments to the Chester Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw. The purpose of the amendments being to amend Institutional Area policy and the Institutional Zone to permit one residential unit in an existing building specific to lands known as 75 Regent Street or PID # 60089398 (Lordly House Museum lands).

A **PUBLIC HEARING** will be held on **Thursday, March 13, 2025, beginning at 8:45a.m.** in Municipal Council Chambers (151 King Street, Chester).



Residents can give their opinions at the Public Hearing by speaking in person or sending written comments to: Pamela Myra, Municipal Clerk, 151 King Street, PO Box 369, Chester, NS B0J 1J0 or pmyra@chester.ca.

Comments must be received before 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 6, 2024

Council may vote to approve or reject the amendments at the Council Meeting which will follow the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

Copies of the proposed changes are available by contacting the Community Development Department, located at 186 Central Street, Chester.

This Notice was posted to the Municipal Website on February 20, 2025.

Call us!

902-275-2599

Email us!

planning@chester.ca

Schedule 6.2

From: [Garth Sturtevant](#)
To: [Heather McCallum](#)
Subject: Notice of Public Hearing - Village Plan Review
Date: March 3, 2025 11:50:31 AM
Attachments: [image016664.png](#)
[image569336.png](#)
[image690389.png](#)
[image661493.png](#)
[image241466.png](#)
[image447622.png](#)
[Village Plan Review Public Hearing - Newspaper Ad \(March 5, 12, 19\).docx](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Good Morning Heather,

Please see attached an ad for a Public Hearing scheduled for March 20th at 6pm at Chester District School. This is the Public Hearing for Draft #5 of the Village Secondary Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law.

If you could provide this notice to the Commission as correspondence it would be greatly appreciated.

Any questions, please let me know.

Thank you!

Garth



Garth Sturtevant
Senior Planner
Community Development & Recreation

Municipality of Chester
186 Central Street, Chester, NS, B0J 1J0

Office: 902-275-4135
General Inquiries: 902-275-2599
Web: www.chester.ca



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I (we) respectfully acknowledge that I (we) live and work in Mi'kma'ki as a steward of the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people.

This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the intended recipients in communication with the Municipality of Chester. If you are not an intended recipient you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete this e-mail from your system. E-mail transmission cannot be guaranteed to be secure or error-free as information could be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. The sender therefore does not accept liability for any errors or omissions in the contents of this message, which arise as a result of e-mail transmission. If verification is required please request a hard-copy version.

PUBLIC HEARING

VILLAGE PLAN REVIEW



THE MUNICIPALITY OF
CHESTER
NOVA SCOTIA'S TREASURE

UPDATES INCLUDE

- ◆ Reduction in proposed density in the Commercial Zone from 10 units per lot to 4 units
- ◆ Changes to the zoning on Water Street to remove Commercial Zoning from 9 properties
- ◆ Removed exemption for existing structures, one and two-unit dwellings in the R5 Zone to require landscaping and parking locations at the side of rear of the lot
- ◆ Add allowance for one residential unit in Maple Cottage on Regent Street
- ◆ Revised definitions and policies to align with forthcoming Short Term Rental Licensing By-law and Marketing Levy

WHEN

March 20, 2025
Begins at 6:00 pm

WHERE

Chester District School Gym
202 Duke Street, Chester

Following two Public Hearings held in 2024 relating to Draft #3 and #4 respectively, Council and the Village Planning Advisory Committee (VPAC) reviewed a number of controversial topics and issues. VPAC provided recommended changes and Council considered those and gave final direction to staff to make agreed upon changes.

With this work now complete, the revised secondary planning strategy and land use by-law (Draft #5) have received 1st reading from Council. Members of the public are invited to attend the public hearing, which is the final meeting prior to Council voting to approve or reject the new documents.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
engagechester.ca/villagereview

LET COUNCIL KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS

Members of the public may speak at the hearing and/or submit written comments to pmyra@chester.ca by Friday March 14, 2025 at 4:30pm.

Schedule 6.3

From: [Paul Riley](#)
To: [Heather McCallum](#)
Subject: Early Notification MPS/LUB Amendments - Short-term Rentals
Date: March 5, 2025 9:56:07 AM
Attachments: [image874598.png](#)
[image507015.png](#)
[image247144.png](#)
[image578517.png](#)
[image888932.png](#)
[image413470.png](#)

You don't often get email from priley@chester.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Good Day,

In accordance with the Engagement Programs Content Regulations of the Municipal Government Act and Chester Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) Policy A-6, I am writing to advise that in accordance with direction from Council, municipal staff are preparing amendments to the MPS and Land Use By-law to consider changes to distinguish between Short-term Rental and other tourist accommodations.

This notice offers an opportunity to provide comments in relation to the proposal for consideration by Council as the file progresses.

This notice does not replace the standard practice of providing advance notice of a Public Hearing to adjacent municipalities per Section 206 (5) of the Municipal Government Act. Such notice will be provided if and when a date for a Public Hearing is set.

If you have any questions or wish to submit comments in relation to the attached, please let me know.

Thank you,
Paul



Paul Riley

Planner
Community Development & Recreation

Municipality of Chester
186 Central Street, Chester, NS, B0J 1J0

Office: 902-275-4149
General Inquiries: 902-275-2599
Web: www.chester.ca



♻️ Consider the environment. Do you really need to print this email?

I (we) respectfully acknowledge that I (we) live and work in Mi'kma'ki as a steward of the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people.

This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the intended recipients in communication with the Municipality of Chester. If you are not an intended recipient you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete this e-mail from your system. E-mail transmission cannot be guaranteed to be secure or error-free as information could be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. The sender therefore does not accept liability for any errors or omissions in the contents of this message, which arise as a result of e-mail transmission. If verification is required please request a hard-copy version.

Schedule 6.4

From: [Tynette Deveaux](#)
Cc: [CAPE NS Chair](#)
Subject: NS physicians warn of health risks of fracking and uranium mining
Date: March 4, 2025 4:46:25 PM
Attachments: [Open letter to Premier Houston-NS physicians warn about health harms.pdf](#)
[CAPE NS submission Bill 6-Dr. Nancy Covington.pdf](#)

You don't often get email from tynette@cape.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Dear Mayors, Wardens, Councillors, and CAOs of Nova Scotia,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Nova Scotia committee of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment ([CAPE](#)) with an urgent matter.

As Nova Scotia physicians and healthcare providers, we are deeply concerned that Premier Houston's government is taking steps to repeal legislation protecting Nova Scotians from the development of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and uranium mining in the province. Attached is an open letter we sent to the Premier on February 19, outlining the health threats posed by these industries.

We know from medical research that fracking is strongly linked to increased rates of birth defects, childhood leukemia and asthma, increased hospitalizations for cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and higher overall mortality rates and reduced life expectancy.

In northeastern British Columbia, where fracking is already well established, physicians are closing their practice and moving their families away, privately identifying it's because of the adverse health and community impacts of the local fracking industry. ([Health professionals urge B.C. to stop investing in the LNG industry](#))

Uranium mining poses grave health and environmental risks as well. Uranium mining (and exploration) releases radioactive materials into the air and water, and leads to elevated levels of radioactive toxic metals in the environment. This can cause long-term contamination of soils, well water and other water resources, and wildlife. (See attached submission by Dr. Covington for more information).

Studies show increased rates of lung cancer and other respiratory diseases for those living in nearby communities, as well as workers in the industry. Radon, the radioactive gas that is released when uranium is disturbed or mined, is the second leading cause of lung cancer in Canada, after smoking.

The decisions made in the coming days could have long-lasting consequences for the health of Nova Scotians and our environment. As local leaders, you have a crucial

role to play in protecting the health and well-being of your communities. We urge you to speak out publicly against Bill 6, which would repeal the existing bans on these industries, and to communicate your concerns directly to Premier Houston and your local MLAs.

We stand ready to provide any additional information or support you may need in addressing this urgent matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further discussion or clarification.

Sincerely,

Dr. Laurette Geldenhuys

Dr. Nancy Covington

On behalf of the Nova Scotia committee of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)

* CAPE is a non-partisan, physician-led organization with over 36,000 supporters across the country. It plays a unique role at the intersection of health and the environment, bringing a credible, evidence-based perspective delivered by doctors, other health professionals, and researchers to support community and planetary health and enhance equity. CAPE Nova Scotia represents more than 100 physicians and other healthcare providers in the province.

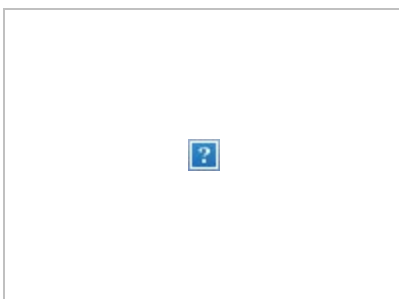
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Tynette Deveaux

Regional Program Manager & Atlantic Coordinator |

Gestionnaire des comités régionaux & coordonnatrice du Canada Atlantique

www.cape.ca | 902-719-9083 (Kjipuktuk | Halifax)



I live and work in Kjipuktuk (Halifax), on Mi'kma'ki territory, which is covered by the treaties of peace and friendship, guaranteeing the rights of Mi'kmaq to fish, hunt, and trade in perpetuity. These treaties are part of the Canadian Constitution and remain binding today. We are all treaty people.



February 19, 2025

The Honorable Tim Houston,
Premier of Nova Scotia
7th Floor, One Government Place
1700 Granville Street
Halifax, NS B3J 1X5

premier@novascotia.ca

RE: Repealing the Uranium Exploration and Mining Prohibition Act and amendments to permit hydraulic fracturing of natural gas in Nova Scotia

Dear Premier Houston,

We are writing on behalf of the Nova Scotia committee of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) to express our deep concerns regarding your plans to remove bans on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for natural gas and uranium mining exploration and research. As physicians and healthcare providers, we feel it is our duty to bring to your attention the latest medical evidence of the health harms associated with these extractive industries.

CAPE is a non-partisan, physician-led organization with over 36,000 supporters across the country. It plays a unique role at the intersection of health and the environment, bringing a credible, evidence-based perspective delivered by the trusted voices of doctors, other health professionals, and researchers to support community and planetary health and enhance equity. CAPE Nova Scotia represents more than 100 physicians and other healthcare providers across the province.

We understand the economic challenges facing Nova Scotia, including US tariffs and uncertainty around federal funding. We are also acutely aware of the high rates of poverty in our province and how this profoundly affects the communities we serve. However, we strongly believe that pursuing resource extraction activities that contribute to significant health and environmental harms is not the solution to these challenges.

The medical evidence on the health impacts of unconventional oil and gas development, including fracking, is clear and growing. Recent studies have found strong correlations between proximity to fracking sites and:

- Increased rates of preterm births, low birth weight, and congenital defects



- Higher incidences of childhood asthma and leukemia
- Increased hospitalizations for cardiovascular and respiratory diseases
- Higher overall mortality rates and reduced life expectancy

For example, a 2022 study in *Environmental Health Perspectives* found that children living near fracking sites had 2-3 times higher odds of developing acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Another study in *JAMA Pediatrics* showed significantly increased risks of spontaneous preterm birth and low birth weight for pregnancies within 10 km of fracking wells.

Many of the chemicals used in fracking are known carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, or have other toxic effects. Groundwater contamination from fracking chemicals can persist for decades, impacting drinking water supplies and soils, and, in turn, adversely affecting human health.

Uranium mining poses its own set of health hazards, related to radiation exposure from radioactive materials released into air and water, and elevated levels of toxic metals. Historical evidence from uranium mining regions shows dramatically increased rates of lung cancer and other respiratory diseases among miners and nearby residents. While modern safety practices have improved, workers and those living in nearby communities face increased health risks from radon gas, radioactive dust, and potential water contamination.

The long-term environmental impacts of uranium mining is equally concerning. It leaves a toxic legacy of radioactive waste with a half-life of tens of thousands of years. Eighty-five percent of the radioactivity in the uranium ore is left behind as tailings, including many radioactive poisons – such as radium, polonium, and radioactive lead-210 – that are far more toxic than uranium itself. These uranium mining and milling wastes will constitute an everlasting health hazard and will have to be monitored and managed in perpetuity at public expense. The Church Rock uranium tailings spill in New Mexico, which released 94 million gallons of such radioactive waste, remains largely unremediated more than 40 years later. A power outage at a uranium mine in Elliot Lake, Ontario, resulted in the spill of two million litres of contaminated water from a tailings site.

We are also deeply concerned about plans to expand fossil fuel extraction and consumption in the province, at a time when we urgently need to transition away from fossil fuels. Building pipelines and other new fossil fuel infrastructure would only exacerbate the root cause of the severe flooding, monster wildfires, and heatwaves we are experiencing in Nova Scotia. The medical journal *The Lancet* has identified climate change as the greatest global health threat of the 21st century. As healthcare providers, we are already seeing the health effects of climate change in our communities.

The health impacts of fracking, uranium mining—and more broadly, climate change—disproportionately affect Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities and vulnerable populations, including children, pregnant women, the elderly, disabled people, and



people with pre-existing conditions or biological susceptibilities. Rural and low-income communities also often bear a heavy burden of environmental contamination and health effects. These factors position this as a matter of social, racial, economic and environmental justice. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the UN declaration on the right to a healthy environment, and Canada's *National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act* should guide decision-making.

We recognize the need for economic development and healthcare funding. However, the boom-and-bust cycle of fossil fuel resource extraction and uranium mining offers only short-term gains at the expense of long-term public health and environmental costs. Instead, we encourage focusing on sustainable industries like clean renewable energy projects, which create more jobs per dollar invested than fossil fuels, while protecting our air, water, and climate. Such projects will need to be undertaken with community consultation and support, and at a scale that does not harm the local environment.

Nova Scotia has some of the most ambitious climate targets in North America. Expanding fossil fuel infrastructure would be a major step backwards and incompatible with our climate goals. Moreover, repealing laws that protect against the development of fracking and uranium mining would undermine the province's commitment to improve health care for all Nova Scotians.

Therefore, we respectfully call on your government to:

1. Maintain and strengthen existing restrictions on fracking, uranium mining, and other high-risk resource extraction activities
2. Invest in community-supported clean renewable energy and green infrastructure as a path to sustainable economic growth
3. Require comprehensive health impact assessments for any proposed resource extraction projects
4. Prioritize protection of drinking water sources and ecologically sensitive areas
5. Respect UNDRIP; engage in meaningful consultation with Mi'kmaw communities and ensure there is free, prior, and informed consent for any activities impacting Mi'kmaw territory.
6. Engage in meaningful consultation with rural communities, and work collaboratively with them to find shared solutions.
7. Respect the UN Declaration on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

We recognize the immense challenges you face as Premier during these difficult times. The pressures of US tariffs, healthcare funding gaps, and the need to ensure prosperity for all Nova Scotians are significant burdens to bear. However, we must be careful not to trade one crisis for another. The health of our communities and the natural environment that sustains us are



essential foundations for any lasting economic solution. By maintaining our commitment to environmental protection while pursuing sustainable economic development, Nova Scotia can lead the way on innovative solutions that preserve the health, environmental, and economic legacy we wish to leave for future generations.

Sincerely,

Laurette Geldenhuys, MBBCH FFPATH MMED FRCPC MAEd
on behalf of CAPE Nova Scotia

c.c. Claudia Chender, Leader of the Opposition
Derek Mombourquette, Leader of the Liberal Party



March 3, 2025

Submission by Dr. Nancy Covington to the Standing Committee on Public Bills concerning Bill 6: An Act Respecting Agriculture, Energy and Natural Resources

Good morning, honourable members of the Legislature. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Dr. Nancy Covington, a retired family physician, a grandmother, and a member of the Nova Scotia committee of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE NS).

I was involved in the work that led to Nova Scotia's 2009 ban on uranium mining and exploration. This ban grew out of the long-standing moratorium, and was the result of extensive research and public engagement. In the end, it garnered support from all political parties, the medical society, and many citizen groups.

Shortly after this, mining companies started exploring for uranium near Sept-Îles in Quebec. When petitions to halt the exploration were ignored, 23 doctors in the community publicly announced that they were prepared to resign en masse and leave town if the project moved forward. They stated that the threat to their water supply posed too much risk to their families and communities. With 23 doctors representing a third of the area's total physicians, their stance had significant weight. As a result, in 2013, Quebec imposed a moratorium on uranium mining, becoming the third province to take this step, following British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

It's disheartening that today, Nova Scotia's ban on uranium mining is being challenged. However, I welcome the opportunity to refresh our thinking on this critical issue.

Even the act of exploring for uranium with boreholes can release radon. Radon is a radioactive gas arising from uranium underground. Radon has a half life of 3.8 days. As it decays, it emits radioactive particles which, if inhaled or ingested, can damage our DNA and other cellular components, potentially leading to cancer. Radon and its eight decay products are all classified as carcinogens.

The decay chain continues with each new radioactive product, having the potential to attach itself by electrostatic charge to dust particles. These can get blown around, washed away into ponds or wells, or settle on vegetation and crops. Of interest, one of the elements in this decay chain is Polonium 210, which was the substance slipped into a teacup that killed Litvinenko by radiation poisoning in 2006. (Litvinenko was a double agent spy in the UK). Only 10 micrograms of Polonium was needed to kill him; his body was so radioactive it had to be buried in a lead coffin.

Uranium mining is typically done through open-pit or underground methods, and occasionally by leaching. In Saskatchewan, uranium concentrations are high—up to 20%—so the mining is often carried out by robots due to the extreme danger to workers. While no leaching has been done in Saskatchewan so far, it has been used in Wyoming, where it resulted in major contamination of an aquifer. More commonly, uranium is found in lower concentrations, which requires crushing the rock to extract the ore, leaving piles of radioactively contaminated rock exposed to the weather. Tailing ponds created to contain the waste do breach, as happened in Elliot Lake.

Milling of the ore is usually done on site to reduce transportation costs. The resulting yellowcake is transported to Blind River (top of Lake Huron) for refining, and then sent to a “Conversion Facility” in Port Hope (Cameco) where it is made into uranium hexafluoride and some pellets made for Bruce Power. Every step in the process risks more scatter of the radioactive laden dust particles.

Most mining has historically taken place in remote, sparsely populated areas such as northern Saskatchewan. One study showed that lichens close to uranium mining sites are sufficiently contaminated by radioactivity that caribou that eat the lichens become contaminated, thus entering the food chain. This study calculated the additional risks of cancer for people eating different amounts of this traditional meat. Other studies show fish in the area have heavy metal concentrations. Watersheds near mines in both Saskatchewan and Ontario remain contaminated.

Saskatchewan is 12 times as large as Nova Scotia with approximately the same size population. Most Saskatchewanians live in the south and mines are in the north. Nova Scotia is the second most densely populated province in Canada with 40% of people dependent on wells. This means that a uranium mine anywhere in Nova Scotia would affect most of us – as would uranium exploration.

After the mine is closed, the tailings site with radioactive remnants and other toxic heavy metals would require monitoring for an indefinite period of time. The responsibility and cost of this care would be the province’s. Another long-term cost would be health care costs for delayed onset cancers.

Radon gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking and is why measuring radon in our basements is advised and remedial action recommended over a certain level.

Many of our buildings, including schools, have readings above this level, which is why an industry has developed in the province to help homeowners do remediation.

Uranium is used for either nuclear power or nuclear weapons. A minuscule amount ends up as radioisotopes for medical use. Most medical isotopes can be made in a cyclotron without using radioactive material. Large nuclear power plants like Bruce Power are not needed to make these tiny amounts.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission regulates the mining industry. Of note, permissible levels of radon in Canada – that is, what the industry is allowed to release into the environment – are twice as high as many other countries and twice as high as what the World Health Organization recommends.

Permissible levels are derived from data from survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These levels are based on “Reference Man,” ignoring the fact that low level ionizing radiation causes disproportionate harm to women and children.

The bottom line is that even with newer mining techniques, uranium mining and exploration will negatively affect our health and the environment in much of Nova Scotia for a long time. This will further strain the health care system and increase costs.

Lastly, after uranium is used in a nuclear power plant, it’s transformed into waste that is much more radioactive than the original uranium. It’s so radioactive, in fact, that it has to be kept out of the biosphere for hundreds of thousands of years. Nobody in the world has figured out how. This toxic legacy will haunt future generations.

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, I respectfully call upon the government to maintain Nova Scotia’s uranium mining ban.

For our health and for the environment, leave uranium in the ground.

Nancy Covington, MD, BSc Physics
on behalf of Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment Nova Scotia
n.i.covington@icloud.com

Recommended resources

https://www.pembina.org/reports/ClearingAir_UraniumMining.pdf

<https://www.ippnwcanada.ca/medical-isotopes>

For more information, contact:

Tynette Deveaux, Atlantic Regional Coordinator, CAPE
tynette@cape.ca, 902-719-9083

Schedule 6.5

From: [CYC Manager](#)
To: [Geraldine Pauley](#); [Geraldine Pauley](#)
Cc: [Heather McCallum](#)
Subject: Invitation: Thank You Appreciation Social for Chester Volunteer Fire Department at Chester Yacht Club
Date: March 6, 2025 8:44:36 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Dear Geraldine Pauley, Chair VOC Commission:

Chester Yacht Club is hosting a **Thank You Appreciation Social** for the **Chester Volunteer Fire Department** on **Friday, July 4th**, from 6 – 8pm, and we would love for you and the Village of Chester Commissioners to join us.

Our community is incredibly fortunate to have the Chester Volunteer Fire Department, a dedicated team that serves with unwavering commitment. This event is our way of expressing sincere gratitude for their service.

Please join us at Chester Yacht Club for an evening of appreciation, camaraderie, and complimentary appetizers.

We also want to recognize and thank VOC and the Municipality of the District of Chester for their role in supporting fire and emergency services in the Village.

Please let me know if you and the commissioners can attend. We look forward to thanking our local CVFD firefighters and hope to see you there!

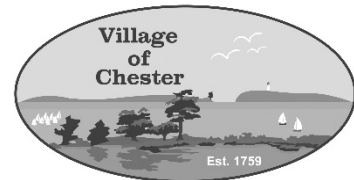
Best regards,

Kim

Kim Johnson
ChesterYC Manager
CHESTER YACHT CLUB
Phone Club 902-275-3747 **Mobile** 902-275-7824
21 South Street, PO Box 290, Chester, NS B0J1J0
www.chesteryachtclub.ca

Schedule 7.2(a)

Village of Chester Commission Clerk/Treasurer Activity Report Mar 12, 2025



- **Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage – Lido Repairs**
 - This update is re: the Province's \$150,000 grant for Lido Pool capital repairs.
 - The original due date for the project closeout report was Mar 1st. I provided the report to our contact at the Department as directed, flagging the less than 20% portion still to be completed in Spring. She responded by approving a final report extension to July 15, 2025.
 - J. Mason Contracting has the work scheduled for May. This is for the interior sealing for the pilaster that was fully replaced on the exterior last fall, the cleaning, sanding and coating of the pool walls, and repairs to the fill valve.
 - I will track the deferral through to the 2025/26 budget.

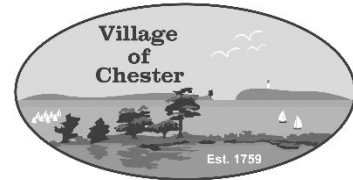
- **Enabling Accessibility Fund – Accessibility Retrofits**
 - This update is re: the Federal \$100,000 grant towards accessibility retrofits.
 - The Village has received approval from our program rep in Employment & Social Development Canada on the changes to the project scope and timeline. Most of this work must be deferred to the 2025/26 budget year for completion this spring (hopefully). This will be tracked into the budget as well.
 - The two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for (i) Washroom & Pool Exterior Retrofits (parking spot, path to washroom, washroom entrance, pool ramp) and (ii) Washroom Interior Retrofits (upgrades to universal washroom) went out on the Provincial tender site last month with a closing date of March 14th. I have not been contacted for an extension at this point. Several companies have come for site visits.
 - I am also awaiting separate costs for the tactile washroom signage.

- **Property Maintenance Update**
 - I have reached out to suppliers for the EHS building exterior painting, Public Washroom roof insulation, and replacement of the deck awning, as discussed last meeting. These will be part of budget deliberations.

Report completed by:
Heather McCallum, Clerk/Treasurer

Schedule 7.2(b)

Village of Chester Commission Clerk/Treasurer Financial Report Mar 12, 2025



- **Scotiabank:**

- The Feb 2025 bank statements have been reconciled. The Village main operations account opened the month with \$485,745 and ended with \$443,412.
- Account balances as of Mar 4, 2025 were:

Banking Accounts	
• Daily Operations account	\$ 441,562
Investment Accounts	
• Operating reserve	\$ 83,652
• Lido Pool reserve	\$ 164,159
• Utilities reserve	\$ 40,189
• EMC Building reserve	\$ 16,891

- **Reserves**

- Planned reserve deposits will be made before the end of the month.

- **2025/26 Village Budget – Status**

- The Draft Budget has been updated in the 2024/25 YTD column with Feb 28th figures (11 months) for a closer comparison.
- 2025/26 expenses have been updated as much as possible at this time, but costs are still coming in for requested new items and revisions. A review is scheduled for later this evening.
- A Special Commission Meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, Mar 26, 2025 at 6:00 pm for review/approval of both the Village budget and the Fire & Emergency Services budget.

Report completed by:

Heather McCallum, Clerk/Treasurer

Schedule 7.3 (a)



Minutes

Chester Fire Services Committee (CFSC) Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, Feb 5, 2025 at 5:00 pm

Village Commission Boardroom (27 Pleasant Street, Chester)

Present	Norm Countway, Vice-chair Kirk Collicutt, Treasurer-Secretary Wilson Fitt Nancy Hatch
Other	Cody Stevens, Fire Chief, Chester Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) Heather McCallum, Clerk/Treasurer, Village of Chester (VOC) Maxine Veinot, Recording Secretary
Regrets	Colin MacDonald, Chair Greg Conron, Deputy Fire Chief, CVFD
Guest(s)	Tom Bremner, Chester Municipal Councillor, District 3 Randy O'Malley, Chester Village Commissioner

#	Agenda Item
1	Call to Order The meeting was called to order by the Vice-chair at 5:05 pm.
2.	Approval of Agenda Motion: Moved by Ms. Hatch; seconded by Mr. Collicutt: That the Committee approves the Agenda of the Wednesday, February 5, 2025 Monthly Meeting as presented. <i>Motion carried.</i>
3.	Approval of Minutes
3.1	Regular Meeting: Jan 8, 2025 Motion: Moved by Mr. Collicutt; seconded by Ms. Hatch:

	<p>That the Committee approves the Minutes of the Wednesday, Dec 4, 2024 Monthly Meeting as presented. <i>Motion carried.</i></p> <p>3.2 Special Meeting: Jan 22 2025</p> <p>Motion: Moved by Ms. Hatch; seconded by Mr. Collicutt: That the Committee approves the Minutes of the Wednesday, Jan 22, 2025 Special Meeting as amended. <i>Motion carried.</i></p>
<p>4.0 Business Arising</p> <p>4.1 Fire Station Annual Costs</p>	<p>Mr. Fitt reviewed various rough calculations for the overall project and for the 2025/26 fiscal year and the potential impact on the tax rate. He noted that identifying an overall project ceiling on costs is needed. It was discussed that the Project Manager should work for CFSC, not the architect or builder.</p> <p>Mr. Fitt also noted that this is an uncertain economic climate, particularly with possible United States tariffs coming into effect, which would affect the costing of this project.</p> <p>4.2 Draft 2025/26 Budget</p> <p>Mr. Collicutt reviewed the updates to the draft budget. The Committee agreed by consensus that this draft is approved to go to the AGM for presentation and to Municipal Council and the Village Commission for information. (Note: See AGM Agenda package.)</p> <p>There remain a number of “TBDs” in this draft. Another version will be prepared for final approval in March.</p> <p>4.3 Annual General Meeting (AGM) Planning</p> <p>Mr. Countway reported that plans and presentations are in progress for the AGM. The Agenda and ad were provided for information.</p>
<p>5.0 Chester Volunteer Fire Dept: Activity Report</p>	<p>Chief Stevens presented his monthly report (<i>Schedule 5.0</i>).</p>

6.0	Reports
6.1	<p>Treasurer-Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Financials <p>Mr. Collicutt presented his monthly report (<i>Schedule 6.1.a</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserve Funds & Investment Policy – for approval <p>Ms. McCallum re-presented the draft policy for approval (<i>Schedule 6.1.b</i>).</p> <p>Motion: Moved by Mr. Collicutt; seconded by Mr. Fitt: that the Reserve Funds & Investment Policy be approved as presented. <i>Motion carried.</i></p> <p>Action: The policy must go to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval.</p>
6.2	<p>New Fire Station Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Swap Update <p>Mr. Countway reported that the delay continues with the other property owner’s lawyer. The other owner may have to re-start with a different representative.</p> <p>Action: Mr. Robert continues to reach out/wait for lawyers’ responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP Status <p>Ms. McCallum reported the Phase 2 RFPs are close to completion thanks to Mr. Fitt’s assistance and will be sent to Procurement at the Municipality for review in the coming days. There are two RFPs: one for the architects/engineers, and another for project management.</p>
6.3	<p>Communications Sub-Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for Decision: Michael Broley Development Contract Renewal <p>Mr. Countway presented a request to extend Mr. Broley’s contract to the end of this fiscal and renew for the 2025/26 fiscal (<i>Schedule 6.3.a</i>).</p>

	<p>MOTION: Moved by Vice-Chair Countway; seconded by Mr. Collicutt: That the Chester Fire Services Committee extend the 2024/25 contract of Michael Broley Development to the end of the fiscal year for a total cost of \$2,300.00 + HST. Further, that the Committee pre-approve his proposal dated Jan 15, 2025 for a cost of \$14,452.20 + HST in the 2025/26 Draft Fire & Emergency Services Budget. <i>Motion carried.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates Analytics <p>The online analytics for the month of February for Facebook, Instagram, and the website was provided for information (<i>Schedule 6.3.b</i>).</p>
6.4	<p>Fundraising Sub-Committee</p> <p>Ms. McCallum reported that she contacted the Canada Revenue Agency regarding the status of the Committee’s application to be registered as a “qualified donee” but was told it was too soon for a decision.</p>
7.	<p>New Business</p>
7.1	<p>Minor Vehicle Collision</p> <p>Chief Stevens reported on an incident where a vehicle was ‘rubbed’ by a fire truck as it was proceeding to a call. The car was on the side of the road, which left very little room to get by. There was minimal damage. Insurance was notified.</p>
8.	<p>In Camera – None</p>
9.	<p>Resumption of Public Meeting – N/a</p>
10.	<p>Other Business – None</p>
11.	<p>Adjournment</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm.</p>

Next Meeting(s):

- **Annual General Meeting:** Feb 11, 2025 at 6:30 pm; St. Stephen’s Community Centre, 54 Regent Street
- **Regular:** March 5, 2025 at 5:00 pm; Village Commission Boardroom, 27 Pleasant Street

CFSC Secretary
Kirk Collicutt

VOC Clerk/Treasurer
Heather McCallum

DRAFT

Schedule 7.3 (b)



Minutes

Chester Fire Services Committee (CFSC) – Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, Feb 11, 2025 at 6:30 pm

St. Stephen's Community Centre (54 Regent Street, Chester)

Video archive: <https://www.youtube.com/@ChesterFireCommittee>

Present Norm Countway, Vice-chair
Kirk Collicutt, Treasurer-Secretary
Wilson Fitt
Nancy Hatch

Other Cody Stevens, Fire Chief, Chester Volunteer Fire Department
Greg Conron, Deputy Fire Chief, Chester Volunteer Fire Department
Heather McCallum, Clerk/Treasurer, Village of Chester (Committee Administrator)
Maxine Veinot, Recording Secretary

Regrets Colin MacDonald, Chair
James Robert

#	Item
1.	Welcome and Opening Remarks Ms. McCallum read the land acknowledgement and reviewed the meeting agenda (<i>Schedule 1, p. 1-2</i>). The 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was called to order by Vice-chair Countway at 6:30 pm. He provided some opening remarks on the role of the Chester Fire Services Committee, its goals, and the changes and growth in the service area with new developments, etc. (<i>Schedule 1, p. 3-9</i>).
2.	Chester Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) – 2024 Activity Report Chief Stevens delivered his annual activity report for the CVFD (<i>Schedule 1, p. 10</i>).
3.	New Fire Station Project - Status

	<p>Mr. Fitt, who will be the Committee’s Project Director on the fire station project going forward, reviewed where we are in the process and put it in context including the need for a new building, cost and funding considerations, and a rough timeline <i>(Schedule 1, p. 11-12)</i>.</p> <p>This is meant to be a 50-year building. The Phase 1 concept design and functional plan set a benchmark but are not the final design.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Financial Report 2024/25 and DRAFT Fire & Emergency Services Budget 2025/26</p> <p>Mr. Collicutt, the Committee Treasurer, discussed planning considerations for the 2025/26 budget and the proposed fire rate <i>(Schedule 1, p. 13-16)</i>.</p> <p>Ms. McCallum noted that the 2025/26 budget document includes the current 2024/25 fiscal year actuals to the end of Q3, the most recent reporting period. She reviewed the budget <i>(Schedule 1, p. 17-25) and (Schedule 2)</i>.</p> <p>Mr. Collicutt made some final comments on the draft budget <i>(Schedule 1, p. 26)</i>.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Q & A</p> <p>Vice-chair Countway facilitated the question-and-answer session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philip Stevens questioned if the project would be a ‘design build’ approach. Mr. Fitt said not with the unknowns such as tariffs, product needs made outside of Canada, etc. • James Barkhouse questioned if the hall would be built to accommodate a future aerial truck. Chief Stevens said yes. With the history of the Chester Playhouse fire, it is clear that an aerial truck is essential in close proximity of homes and businesses with greater density. • Sharon Cornelius-Church asked if there are plans to replace the fire boat for the islands. A rescue boat report with options to discontinue or replace the boat will come before Municipal Council shortly for decision. • Andre Veinotte suggested the tax rate could be raised more to be able to have reserves more quickly for the new fire hall build and a replacement pumper truck. • Both Mr. Collicutt and Mr. Countway stated that as the fire service area (Districts 3, 7 and part of 1) grows, the demands on the fire department will also grow.

6. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

The Vice-chair thanked the attendees for coming and commented that there will be further opportunities for public consultation as the fire station project progresses.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Note: Visit the CFSC's website for agendas, minutes, and more:

<https://www.chesterfirecommittee.ca/>

CFSC Secretary
Kirk Collicutt

VOC Clerk/Treasurer
Heather McCallum

Schedule 7.4

Minutes of the Meeting of Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee (LCAAC)

Held online via Zoom.

February 5, 2025, from 7-8:30pm

Members Present:

Louise Hopper (Community Member), Peggy McCalla (Community Member), Scott Lutes (Community Member), Teresa Alexander-Arab (Community Member), Councillor Penny Carver (TOMB), Councillor Gale Fullerton (TOL), Chair Geraldine Pauley (VOC), Councillor Jennifer McDonald (TOB), Councillor Kacy DeLong (MODL).

Staff Present:

Tammie Bezanson (CET-MOC), Ellen Johnson (Regional Accessibility Coordinator), Tissy Bolivar (Recreation-MODL), Dylan Heide (Policy-TOMB), Heather McCallum (VoC).

Guests Present: None.

Regrets:

Councillor Abdella Assaff (MODC), Mark Flint (Deputy CAO-TOB)

The meeting began with a land acknowledgement read by Chair Penny Carver.

1. Meeting Called to Order:

Meeting called to order by Chair Penny Carver.

2. Acknowledgements and Protocols:

2.1 Penny read reminder of accessibility as a human right.

2.2 Penny also reminded participants to please raise their hand (virtually or physically) and wait to be called on to speak and to also state their name before speaking.

3. Welcome

3.1 Penny noted that there are several new members on the committee following the 2024 municipal election and subsequent committee appointments. New elected official members and alternates are as follows:

- MOPDL: Councillor Kacy DeLong, Alternate: **Councillor Morgen Reinhardt**
- MB: Councillor Penny Carver, Alternate: **Councillor Rebecca Twanow**
- TOB: Councillor Jennifer McDonald, Alternate: **Councillor Stacey Colwell**
- TOL: **Councillor Gale Fullerton**, Alternate: **Councillor Debbie Dauphinee**
- MOC: Councillor Abdella Assaff, Alternate: **Councillor Tom Bremner**

3.2 There is also a new staff resource representing recreation and MODL, Tissy Bolivar.

3.3 All present introduced themselves.

4. Approval of Agenda:

MOTION TO APPROVE the agenda, moved by Gale Fullerton, seconded by Kacy DeLong. ALL IN FAVOR, SO MOVED.

5. Approval of Minutes:

MOTION TO APPROVE previous meeting minutes for October 2, 2024, moved by Teresa Alexandra-Arab, seconded by Scott lutes. ALL IN FAVOR, SO MOVED.

6. Accessibility Coordinator's Update

- Ellen explained that the new LCAAC Community Member appointments will take place at the Mayors and Wardens meeting on March 5.
- Ellen also noted that she has reached out to MODL for an update on the letter the committee sent to MODL Council about the MARC Playground. Kacy added that her understanding is that the issue that happened with this process has been recognized by MODL and that accessibility is now more embedded in projects.
- Community Engagement Sessions: Ellen explained that she and Gem Roberts, the Regional Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator, have been doing community engagement sessions around the region regularly. There has been good attendance and lots of feedback. They will continue to do these sessions with the intention of having four per month. Kacy noted that she attended one of the sessions and found it impactful. Sessions are scheduled for February and March.

7. Matters Arising

7.1 Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan Update: Ellen explained that the update to the plan is well underway and that it must be submitted by the provincial deadline of April 1, 2025.

Ellen presented the outline of the plan including:

- Introduction: who is involved in the regional work, what is the purpose of the work
- What we Believe: Shares several statements about the guiding values that shape this work. Most of these were in the 2021 plan: Equitable Access, First Voice, Flexibility, Collaboration, Intersectionality (added in this update).
- Glossary of Terms
- Evaluation: Annual progress reports, tracking specific actions
- Progress: what has happened to improve accessibility since the last plan?
- Plan Development: public engagement
- What we will do 2025-2028: What will each municipality do and what regional actions are planned.

- Conclusion
- Appendices: Progress from each municipality

Feedback from the committee included:

- Recommendation to add a recognition of accessibility as a Human Right in the plan.
- It is important to ensure progress is reported to the community, which contributes to accountability.
- Recommend reaching out to the Ark or Bonny Lea for more feedback.

Ellen will send out a draft of the plan to the committee by February 14 and requests that members send any feedback.

8. New Business

None.

9. Roundtable Discussion

Teresa asked about whether services would be relocated from the hospital to the new health centre in Osprey Village. This area does not have as many transportation options. Kacy and Louise responded that their understanding is that the new health clinic is intended to be complementary, not a relocation and that transportation is certainly an issue to ensure access to health care. Tissy volunteered to ask MODL about this for clarity.

Tammie from Municipality of Chester provided an update on the Wild Rose Park project in Western Shore. Most pathways have been completed in addition to the accessible washroom upgrades. Additional work will complete the pathways through the entire park, fix stairs, add a ramp to the beach, and add Mobi mats. Work will happen this summer.

Dylan described some work happening in Mahone Bay Town Hall. Following an accessibility audit, Public Works staff have been carrying out work to address the identified accessibility barriers. Examples include painting doorframes to increase colour contrast, installing lever door handles, putting colour contrasting strips on the stairs, adding signage and wayfinding, replacing mats, and exploring options for new chairs in Council Chambers. He noted that Public Works staff are enjoying this work over the winter and also increasing awareness about accessibility issues. An additional project planned for the summer is renovations of the public washrooms on Edgewater Street.

10. Date of Next Meeting: March 5, 2025

11. Meeting was adjourned as all items on agenda were completed.

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF CHESTER
Minutes of Meeting of the
VILLAGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Council Chambers
Tuesday, January 14, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 P.M by the Chair.

PRESENT

Members	Sara Filbee	Carol Nauss
	Randy O'Malley	Hassen Hammond
	Syd Dumaresq	Tom Bremner
	Brenda Mulrooney	

Staff Garth Sturtevant, Senior Planner
 Chad Haughn, Director of Community Development & Recreation
 Lori-Ann Harnish, Administrative Assistant

Regrets: Hassen Hammond

Gallery: 5 persons

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

2.1 We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work in Mi'kma'ki as a steward of the ancestry territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people.

3. PUBLIC INPUT SESSION (15 MINUTES TOTAL)

3.1 Do any members of the public wish to address the Committee?

3.2 None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2025-023 MOVED by Randy O’Malley SECONDED by Brenda Mulrooney to approve the agenda. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

5. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (CONFIRMED APPOINTMENTS)

5.1 None

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

6.1 Approval of Minutes dated December 10, 2024

2025-024 MOVED by Randy O’Malley, SECONDED by Brenda Mulrooney to accept the minutes from December 10, 2024 of the Village Planning Advisory Committee as presented. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

7. BUSINESS ARISING:

7.1 Coastal Protection Regulations Discussion (materials circulated in advance)

A discussion was held surrounding how the Committee would move forward with a recommendation to Council regarding the Coastal Protection Regulations. Senior Planner Garth Sturtevant explains that Council has identified Coastal Protection as an issue in which they want to review and consider. Prior to the Provincial election, following the axing of the Coastal Protection Act, the Province hired a consultant to work on a Model By-law that would be available to Municipalities for consideration. It was put on hold right before the Provincial election. After a discussion with the project lead for the Consultant team doing the work, it’s been determined that it is being discussed as a priority again. There was not an exact timeline given by the project lead. Council previously discussed that they would like to wait until the Model By-law is available to see if we should adopt it as is, if changes need to be made, and if we should be referencing the Municipality of Lunenburg’s Model.

Comments from the Committee

- Work should be carried out proactively to protect the coastline, such as public input, assessments, and surveys to understand the circumstances that we are dealing with.
- Areas were highlighted across the Municipality where flooding, drainage problems and high-water levels already exist.
- A living and longstanding document will need to be created.

- This is a province wide issue. The responsibility should not reside solely on the Municipalities.
- We want to ensure that our neighboring Municipalities Acts are cohesive. Highlighting the importance of waiting for the Model By-law.
- It was strongly suggested to urge the Provincial Government to pick up the act again and adopt the Coastal Protection Act.
- The issue of infilling in coastal areas was brought forward.

The Senior Planner explains that this is cross jurisdictional between the Municipality and the Province's Department of Nature Resources. Enforcement and regulations were discussed, and how they would be incorporated into the Land Use By-law with a new Coastal Protection Act coming.

We are taking a different approach in the Land Use By-Law Draft by proposing not to regulate infill anymore because it has always been a difficult jurisdictional piece where normally our jurisdiction ends at the high-water mark. When the new document gets adopted, we will have the shoreline mapped very precisely with GIS mapping. Any lands presumably created through infill beyond the high-water mark will be marked with a new zone which will not permit them to do anything on the infilled land. They can still infill, but they won't be permitted to build, it won't count towards their yard setbacks, so they won't be able to relocate a structure closer to the water. By doing this it allows the infill to be regulated by the Department of Natural Resources. We are hoping in taking a different approach it will create a precedent for infilling.

2025-025 MOVED by Syd Dumaresq and SECONDED by Carol Nauss for the Village Planning Advisory Committee to recommend to Council to urge the Province to adopt the Coastal Protection Act, to start preparing, conducting research, and collecting data for the whole Municipality if required, and to reference the Municipality of Lunenburg's Model. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

7.2 Definition(s) for density for consideration

A discussion took place surrounding the definition for density, examples of the definition were circulated to the committee members in advance. For interpretation purposes, committee members expressed that they would like to see it in the Secondary Planning Strategy. The importance of understanding and viewing it through a water shortage lens, how fire protection plays an important role, and the stress it puts on the environment. In terms of density as a definition, Committee members agreed that it does not need to solely focus on water. Senior Planner suggests that this issue should be viewed as regulations and policies as opposed to a

definition in the Land Use By-law. Currently we do not have a definition section in the Secondary Planning Strategy. It was suggested that the definition be added to part of the section on page 84 pertaining to Potable Water, it could also be added to various other sections in the Secondary Planning Strategy to address it at multiple angles. It was clarified that we don't require a definition in the Land Use By-law for it to be effective, and for it to regulate how many units per lot. We can't regulate the number of people per lot, therefore even if we define population density, it is not in our authority to limit how many people per lot. If the committee feels we have a unique definition of density that differs from the standard dictionary, and they also feel it is important to be included with the other terms in the Land Use By-law, then it is suggested to add it in. The Senior Planner suggests in terms of the discussion being held; it may be better suited in the policies section of the Secondary Planning Strategy. It was then determined that it should be added to policy SI-5, looking at overall water stress on the environment.

2025-026 MOVED by Carol Nauss, SECONDED by Brenda Mulrooney for the Village Planning Advisory Committee to recommend to Council to add a definition for density to policy SI-5 in the Secondary Planning Strategy, and to include the term and understanding of water stress in terms of density, not solely in terms of potable water but also in terms of Fire Safety and other factors. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

7.3 Water Strategy Discussion

A discussion was held identifying the importance of Water Strategy and how it is a municipal wide issue. A suggestion was made for a ground water study to be conducted. During the previous ground water study, conducted in 2018, it was reported that the Village take a cautious approach to density, and that certain areas of the Village are not appropriate for higher levels of density. The question was proposed as to how a Water Strategy can be incorporated in the most effective way. The urgency of this matter was highlighted.

The Senior Planner explains the previous work done called the "Chester Water Strategy" only reached as far as a resident survey and then work was abandoned. That work has been sitting there inactively since 2020-2021. The Water Strategy then became part of several projects such as the Well Improvement Program and the Community Well Program. The question was raised about the quality of the outflow of effluent from the sewer treatment plants. The Public Works Department would have to speak on the specifics of this matter, the outflow into the ocean would be meeting standards and compliant with regulations.

2025-027 MOVED by Carol Nauss, SECONDED by Brenda Mulrooney for the Village Planning Advisory Committee to recommend to Council to restart work on a Water Strategy for both the Village and the Municipality. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

7.4 Any other issues or topics related to the draft Village SPS and LUB

7.5 Council has provided direction for the committee to finish up the work by January 31, 2025. This will be the final meeting before it concludes. A discussion was held surrounding the draft amendments to the Village SPS and LUB and it was determined that the Senior Planner will provide a summary report to Council with each motion that was made, also referencing which meeting the motion occurred in, and including the highlighted paragraph of the minutes where it is referenced.

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

8.1 Nicola and Brett Mudford – Email correspondence: Lot coverage & what is included in lot coverage calculations (email)

The Senior Planner gives an overview of the email received. A discussion was held, and it was determined that historically we have always counted decks as part of lot coverage, as well as anything within five feet of the main building. It affects the character and streetscape which is why we limit them. The R1 Zone is proposed to have a new lot coverage of 25% of the total lot area, there is also a maximum allowable footprint.

Following some recent Developments, we received some public feedback through the office and through Council, and it was thought that some buildings constructed were too large. An architectural study was conducted by a consulting company, the recommendations that followed included the 25% lot coverage, maintaining lot coverage in that zone. In the R2 Zone we have always maintained a form of lot coverage as well, but we changed it to a flat number of meters squared rather than a percentage of a lot. This moves us away from a formula that was based on the size of the lot, the larger the lot, the smaller percentage of lot coverage allowable. There were some conflicts in table 5.6.2 CVR Zone in the current Village Land Use By-Law which resulted in some lots falling under two categories.

In making this change and using a flat number versus a table, the consulting team felt it was more equitable and reflects the existing character of the Village. The Senior Planner suggests that if we change it to a consistent 30% lot coverage across the board which was outlined in Brett's email, it will create incentives for property owners to amalgamate lots and tear down

existing homes. Although it is understood and admired to keep the coverage simple, it is suggested to keep lot coverage on the zones the way they are, which is different in each zone. The committee agreed that lot coverage laid out in the draft Village Land Use By-law should remain the same.

8.2 Response from Nova Scotia Environment – Request for information on On-Site Well Regulations (email)

The email response was circulated. No further discussion was held.

8.3 Direction from Council – conclude recommendations to Village Review Drafts by January 31, 2025

Q. Can we circulate a draft report to the Village Planning Advisory Committee with the motions attached?

A. Chad Haughn, Director of Community Development & Recreation, explains that there won't be an appropriate time to meet and give feedback on the report before it goes to Council. The Senior Planner suggests a representative from the Village Planning Advisory Committee go to Council and speak before the recommendations are given to them. The Senior Planner can then provide any context when necessary.

Q. Is public circulation of the agenda and related documents in advance of the meeting date, similar to what Council does, possible?

A. The Senior Planner explains that the committee will require Council approval for this topic. This is a matter in which all committees are treated equal so a request to Council would need to be made. Director of Community Development & Recreation, Chad Haughn, explains that even though it may be challenging and there may be delays, it is possible. It is not something that has been previously done. The Village Planning & Advisory Committee does need to be consistent with how other committees operate and function.

After a brief discussion, the committee determined that they would be more comfortable with discussing this at a future meeting, when they've had more time to think about it, as well as the impact it may have on staff and Council.

A question was raised about the frequency of future meetings for the Village Planning Advisory Committee. The Senior Planner explains that the standard practice has always been that if

nothing is received from staff, a notice would be sent out saying that the meeting is cancelled. There is always an open call in that email for future agenda items, so we could still hold a meeting without receiving any applications as per the mandate, to discuss planning related issues and make recommendations to Council. We will keep in touch and make that decision before cancelling.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

9.1 Proposed amendments to add residential use permission for "Maple Cottage" at the Lordly House Museum lands, Chester Municipal Heritage Society.

Planner Paul Riley gives an overview of the proposal provided by the Chester Municipal Heritage Society to permit one Residential Rental Unit in the Maple Cottage Building. Current Policies and Zoning do not permit this use in the Institutional Area. This was brought forward to Council for direction in November and the decision was made specifically to permit this one unit in the Institutional Zone as opposed to making a change to the entire Institutional Zoning. The property is a designated Heritage property but there are no proposed changes to the exterior of the building, ensuring that the character of the building remains intact. Currently, there is a washroom accessible to the public that will now serve the Residential Rental Unit. One parking space is required, which will be reviewed by a Development Officer at the time of the Permit Application.

Based on the nature of the proposed use, it doesn't appear to create any land use conflicts with the surrounding uses. A public information session was held on December 4th, 2024, with no public in attendance. There have been no comments received from the public on the proposal. The draft amendments pertain to section 3.5 -Parks, Recreation & Institutions in the Secondary Planning Strategy, and will include adding a couple sentences to the section to describe the proposal and what the rationale was for Council approving the proposal. There will also be a new policy within that section that states one Residential Rental Unit may be permitted through the Land Use By-law on the property. The draft amendment in the Village Land Use By-law is proposed to add to the permitted uses in section 8.2.1 -Institutional (I) Zone, a subsection (C) to permit one Residential Rental Unit with a maximum permitted square footage. The options are, to make a recommendation to Council, to request more information or, to have Council re-consider whether they want to proceed or not.

Q. I thought the washroom was for the use of the Lordly House. So, if that becomes part of the Residential Unit, Lordly House will have no washroom.

A. Representative of the Municipal Heritage Society, Wayne Cameron, explains the intent was to explore the ability to install a washroom in Lordly House, however that option was very costly. Alternatively, the option to install a washroom in the basement of Maple Cottage was more cost effective as the plumbing is pre-existing. We will be proceeding with the alternative option to install one in the basement of Maple Cottage which will serve Lordly House.

Q. It says with maximum floor area, but it doesn't say floor area 'of' so many, is that intentional or how is it to be interpreted?

A. Senior Planner clarifies the proposed draft amendment to the Land Use By-Law, which is a maximum floor area on the main floor of 52 square meters. The policy amendment doesn't specify the number, it is included in the Land Use By-law amendments sent to committee members.

Q. Is the person in the Residential Unit going to go to the basement to use the washroom?

A. Representative of the Municipal Heritage Society, Wayne Cameron explains, no, there is currently a washroom on the main floor of Maple Cottage utilized by Lordly House & Maple Cottage. With the Residential Unit being created, we will no longer have a public washroom available.

Q. Why is it being done by changing Land Use By-Laws versus a Variance?

A. Senior Planner explains that the MGA which gives us our authority specifies what is eligible as a Variance and the number of dwelling units on a lot is not something that is eligible for a variance.

2025-028 MOVED by Syd Dumaresq and SECONDED by Tom Bremner for the Village Planning Advisory Committee to recommend to Council to approve one Residential Rental Unit at Maple Cottage without a square footage limit. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

10. ANY OTHER PLANNING MATTERS:

10.1 Call for any other Planning Matters

10.2 None

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

11.1 February 11, 2025 (tentative) - beginning at 3:00 in Municipal Council Chambers

12. ADJOURNMENT:

2025-029 MOVED by Syd Dumaresq meeting adjourn 5:15 P.M. MOTION CARRIED.

Sara Filbee
Chairperson

Lori-Ann Harnish
Administrative Assistant

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF CHESTER
Minutes of
EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
151 King Street, Chester
Tuesday, February 4, 2025

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:01 p.m. by the Chairperson.

PRESENT

Members Present:

Lorraine Burch
Carol Millett
Joud Alouch
David Broome
Councillor Clarissa Coolen
Councillor Andre Veinotte

Staff:

Erin Lowe, Deputy CAO
Jennifer Webber, Communications Officer & Outreach Coordinator
Pamela Myra, Municipal Clerk
Ashley Marlin, Community Economic Development Officer (Virtually)
Gem Roberts, Regional Anti-Racism & Diversity Coordinator (Virtually)

Regrets:

Charlie McInnes
Robert Young

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS/GUESTS

- Heather McCallum, Village Commission Clerk/Treasurer.
- New member Councillor Clarissa Corkum (District 2).

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

November 5, 2024

Lorraine Burch asked about the 2025/26 Budget.

Lorraine Burch commented on action items from minutes noting that at some point we should send an invitation to the person from Yarmouth (Manny) regarding vocabulary and words to substitute that are no longer acceptable. The Deputy CAO noted that the vocabulary information was provided to the Policy Analyst to ensure those words are not included in any policies. It will also be taken to the Executive Management Team.

Lorraine Burch asked about staff training and the Communications & Outreach Coordinator indicated that she and Gord Tate, Active Living Coordinator, have interviewed three consultants and with regional partners thought we would open it up to all staff and committee. She has a report prepared with pricing and the recommendation but in the meantime, Gem Roberts, Regional Coordinator applied for a grant and that was included in the grant – we still have the information and are just waiting to see what comes from there – it is digital training that is also supported with printed material and videos. They have an onboarding specialist to help map out training. They also have micro-learning – so we could offer as a lunch and learn or at a staff meeting. Staff will hear back within a month or so and will be included in the budget.

Lorraine Burch noted that Robert Young had brought up the incident of a KKK costume worn at Cape Breton over Halloween and suggested that be included as part of awareness for the public and the Deputy Clerk asked how best to educate the community regarding that or use it as an example in educating the community.

2025-111 MOVED by Carol Millett, SECONDED by David Broome the Minutes of the November 5, 2024 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting be approved as circulated. ALL IN FAVOUR. MOTION CARRIED.

BUSINESS ARISING

5.1. Regional Anti-Racism Agreement.

Gem Roberts, provide an overview of plans/conversations from a regional perspective. Since November has been working on the regional plan with Ellen Johnson from an accessibility perspective. Sometimes that is policy review from a regional perspective – template creation, and other things more pointed for municipalities – understanding the current dynamics of

relationships – for a path forward. There is a regional effort in terms of a plan but there are some things that are focused/prevalent based on the communities within the regions.

She and Ellen Johnson have set up some In Community dates for February and March – both are in different community spaces in Lunenburg County. The information is in the newsletter. She asked for ideas where there is a lot of engagement when spring/summer starts to roll around so that they could hold the events in other locations.

5.2. FHCS Job Fair/Booth

She was asked to reach out to Jody regarding jobs and volunteer opportunities or ways we can invite community into the municipality. Since then, it is one of the things that has come up at some of the business open sessions held. That may also be something that we develop if a student wanted a Councillor to mentor them regarding local government. The job fair is in April at Forest Heights Community School.

5.3. Human Resources Framework

This is ongoing as staff are working on it.

5.4. Arts & Culture Strategy update

Ashley Marlin indicated that the Arts and Strategy is nearly ready to go; she is doing some final tweaks. She felt it was a solid and thorough document with a whole section dedicated to EDIA. This will go to Council on February 27th. She asked Committee Members to look at the EDIA section and provide some feedback. Gem Roberts and Ellen Johnson have also taken a look at it. Ideally she would like to get it to the Directors by end of this week or Monday at the latest.

5.5. Truth & Reconciliation Working Group

Ashley Marlin talked about a sub-group and sent an email out to the committee to see who would like to sit on it and will also reach out to Student Council and First Nations. If there are things we would like feedback on, they are able to provide for that.

The sub-group will be Lorraine Burch, Robert Yount, and Joud Alouch. Ashley Marlin will send an email and start to get organized.

5.6. Place naming

- Existing list review
- Policy

Carol Millett noted that we were going to contact someone, however there was a hold on moving forward. We have the list but we couldn't, on our own, make any changes or recommendations without contacting First Nations. Ashley agreed to follow up and asked for a copy of the place names.

Jennifer Weber wondered if it might be easier to think of municipal properties such as the property that recreation is developing in Beech Hill could be on the list and propose a traditional name or an honorary name of the elder who lived in the community and approach it that way.

Erin – we can look at a policy approach. On a regular basis has an employee come forward with road name requests – there is no vetting of those road names from an EDI lens and wondered if there was wording in existing policies to pull in and recommend to council adopt. Have a junior policy analyst and she can do research and jurisdictional scanning to determine what infrastructure names and EDI.

NEW BUSINESS

6.1. Letter from Village of Chester Commission.

Jennifer council met and approved membership of the Village Commission. Heather their next meeting is February 19th – they have been notified that the request was approved. She will probably continue to accompany whichever commissioner attends. Jennifer will be making an amendment in the terms of reference to include the village. There are some wording changes that will need to be made and then it will go to Council.

6.2. EDI Plan Review

- Information report (Jennifer Webber)
- Timeline

Jennifer Webber reviewed the feedback from the public through events and popups, 18 surveys, and business feedback. The amount of feedback wasn't tremendous so we might want to look at how we get input/feedback next time.

Comments and feedback are meant to help us decide how we are moving ahead with the action plan. She explained how she colour coded things – what we have done, what hasn't been done and if want to change it, committee feedback (coming from your communities).

Erin Lowe indicated that the next steps would be to take the action plan back to Council as a recommendation from the Committee. Jennifer Webber will get the information from the Committee tonight and will revise the plan with the items discussed. There is a bit of urgency with it because we are submitting a Regional Plan and also submitting our own plan which is this one. We can keep our goals and objectives but will take what the Committee feels we should keep, remove, and send it around again for a final review and then take to Council on March 13. There are also some provincial requirements we need to approve.

It was explained that the plans align but the Regional Plan is more high level. We have been doing the actions we are committed to but not all units have a local EDI Committee. The Regional Plan will indicate what is going to happen in the next three years – training, etc. We will be included. For example, engaging with Chester Art Centre for an exhibit or engaging with the Playhouse is our own individual thing in our Municipality.

Erin Lowe noted that with the accessibility work we formed a Lunenburg Regional Accessibility Plan. This is our implementation plan and should align with the Regional “big picture” piece and then have each unit create their own plan. The deadline is April 1, 2025.

Erin Lowe commented that it seems backwards because we started our work first. We don't see it conflicting with anything on the regional side.

Jennifer Webber noted that the Village of Cheser is also included in our plan.

There was discussion regarding the two separate but “tied together” plans. We can be as specific as we want – the Regional Plan and work that Gem carries out in our municipality is work she is going to do - we will support her and she can assist us. If this Committee and Council want to do specific things in Cheser, it isn't going to change anything.

It was clarified that the Municipal Plan is a work in progress and as long as it doesn't go outside the Regional Plan's scope can have our own plan, personalized for our municipality. Gem Roberts will fine tune for specific communities and that is where our action plan will come into play – for this Municipality rather than the entire region.

It was noted that if it is stated in the goals that it is already understood it is in the Regional Plan as well.

The Objectives were reviewed and discussed as follows:

Goals were reviewed and discussed as follows:

Objective #1: ENGAGEMENT – Develop, where relevant, communications plans, social media content, and community engagement strategies that feature our communities as respectful and equitable places for all to live and work.

- Add a note that we are aligned with the Regional Plan.
- An annual review – keep it in.
- Public awareness – add more specific programming and include in the newsletter. Work with staff to complete a programs and services review – more specific because that is a big thing and also recommended in our accessibility implementation plan and may be seen in the Arts and Culture Strategy.

Objective #2: SERVICE DELIVERY

Work to eliminate barriers to public-facing programs, services, and facilities.

- When talking about policies we need to have a conversation about what triggers a policy/by-law review – if that can be included in the wording. If public works needs to review a policy/by-law review is there a policy they can look at using accessibility and EDI lens.
- Heather McCallum noted that at the AMANS conference she went to a procurement workshop and noted that HRM has a section in their procurement processes to assign a value to community value as a way of incorporating EDI into their internal processes. As part of the evaluation – part of the request to the supplier is asking whatever their firm does to further community goals and is part of the scoring.
- It was noted that the units have the same actions – to complete a programs and services review. Gem noted that when using the terminology “complete” that is very grand and that completion of all reviews is not feasible.
- It was suggested that staff identify and Council determine if developing guidelines for booking events and meetings we could take regional guidance which we already do for accessibility.
- Review the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action – we have subcommittee set for that.
- Develop a welcome program – we haven’t done that but we do have a welcome guide. It was agreed to leave it as there is more we can do.

- How do we go about identifying new residents? That is not a municipal initiative, but there are groups out there. The goal is to identify and welcome people properly – making sure no one gets missed in the process. We can provide updates to groups such as the South Shore Multicultural Association. Gem Roberts noted that there is a Settlement Coordinator for SSRCE services who hosts the newcomer’s café in each of the areas. She shares resources with them. Apart from Starfish we are looking at a needs analysis regarding food, schooling, etc. Joud noted that a Newcomers Café happens at Chester Family Resource Centre. She or Ashley Marlin can forward the posters for the next few months so members know of the dates and times. The host can’t go to a private location unless she is partnering to some extent.

Objective #3: GOVERNANCE

Continue to develop internal governance and administrative capacity, practices, and tools that proactively counter, and enable immediate reaction against, all forms of discrimination, exclusion, and racism in our communities.

- These are all ongoing items.

Objective #4: RELATIONSHIP

Develop a network of agencies and organizations active in equity, diversity, and inclusion work in order to share information, opportunities, and resources with community organizations and businesses that will advance and support their EDI initiatives in our communities.

- Training was discussed for within the organization as well as other organizations and businesses. A working group has been struck and share with other municipalities. If we offer workshops everyone will be sharing the same information.
- It was suggested to post on our Engage Chester website regarding possible grants and other opportunities.
- It was also noted that for small businesses ISANS offers quarterly courses for free for businesses and organizations. There are other supporting organizations out there that can help. It was suggested to compile and share opportunities for local guest speakers to speak to Council, community groups, businesses – can that be folded in with the training for opportunities and awareness.
- Explore a possible program scope to connect businesses with ... she will be doing some matchmaking – example she has been making recommendations/connections for Lunenburg pride to have things happen our way.
- Review the Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation and identify strategies. Lorraine Burch suggested that if it says Recreation maybe it shouldn’t be here. It says EDI Committee can share information on our page – we can remove that.

Objective #5: COMMUNITY

Provide advice and recommendations to elected officials concerning opportunities to create welcoming and inclusive cultural and social spaces ensuring a respectful and equitable community for all to live and work.

- Facilitate art installations from BIPOC artists – Jennifer Webber noted that Nadine Hackney had been taking that on but is on maternity leave at the moment.
- Lorraine Burch noted that it talks about grant opportunities.
- Ahley Marlin commented that this is part of the Arts and Culture Strategy.
- David Brome noted that staff and students are taking on a project to invigorate the trail system at FHCS – they have grant money and have talked about introducing artwork and aesthetics into that – it is happening in the community too. It was noted that if it is happening in the community it is relevant.
- It was agreed to keep reviewing the naming of infrastructure, facilities, roads.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair read the land acknowledgement.

Lorraine Burch realized she didn't state the Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of the meeting and proceeded to read the Land Acknowledgement.

Lorraine Burch noted that Council is going through new Strategic Plan and Jennifer Webber noted that they have a section on strong community that includes EDI. Our plan will align with Council's priorities, the Arts and Culture Strategy, and the Regional Committee.

Jennifer Webber reviewed the feedback for the EDI Action Plan Report and noted that some of the feedback was a little startling – someone mentioned their concern for their own personal safety. She also found it surprising that their own workplace didn't have discrimination but other places had discrimination.

David Broome noted that at FHCS they just got results and talked about them yesterday – there is a survey for students every year and they get feedback. There is, without a doubt racism – it happens in places you don't think it is happening. Bullying is prevalent as well as some students feel there are safe places and unsafe places but sometimes have to go to those places. Students (68%) do feel that they have a safe person they could go to and talk to if they felt they were in danger or were in a compromised position. There is a lot of information about where mental health is right now in the schools – we are not meeting the needs of the

students. We take the survey and try to implement what we can. We shift courses to make them more reflective of what students want. The develop groups or committees so people feel safe there. They also try to find things that students will get involved with. Most students said they were happy with community involvement with the school. There are a lot of things in the surveys that aren't different from some of the stuff we have seen here at this Committee.

Groups facing barriers list – David Broome noted that seniors are the highest demographic right now. Starfish has done things to target seniors to get them involved with new residents. Jennifer noted that Lisa Bennet at the South Shore Seniors Safety Program have programs but a lot of their problem is capacity. They have different programs. Have ways to show people what barriers there are and workshops and training courses for information sessions for seniors on scams or how to do different things.

Lorraine Burch noted that there are so many seniors who are isolated. David Broome noted that there are a lot of programs in New Ross for seniors but there is still more to be done. Carol Millett commented that the further away you go from a centre the more issues there are. She knows of small pockets of women who support each other. Morning coffees are a big thing in the New Ross area. There are three different groups – they started with 4 but now are 30 who meet at the Legion on Monday mornings. There are two different coffee groups that go to the Ross Farm Outer Foyer to meet and another group that goes to the café twice a week. They are all older women and men. Sometimes she will notice that people will ask on social media “is someone going to such and such a place”. They are helping one another. David Broome suggested that the housing project in New Ross that might help in the process. Carol Millett noted that it is taking a very long time. Doesn't understand why it isn't happening – the community has done all the legwork – she wasn't sure why province isn't involved.

Joud Alouch noted that she was talking to a resident at Shoreham about the Ross Farm and they said they would like to see the farm - how could we help them. The person was also surprised that there was something happening. Could we have a booth at Shoreham and outline the things we are doing in the community so and they can know what is happening. They are unable to get out and about. If we post something or put something on social media they don't have the computer/phone to see it. She would like to show the residents there what we are doing. She would love to be a volunteer to tell them what we are doing for the community here. They would like to be updated on the things we are doing.

David Broome suggested we could take their feedback on what they are missing and what we could be doing and support them, i.e., going to Ross Farm. Or there could be other more applicable events that they could get to.

Erin Lowe noted that sounded like an action of outreach to the senior community – how do we best reach them and communicate with them. Not just for this Committee but for municipal outreach as well. We are missing an audience and connection.

Jennifer Webber also noted that during the election she was at the apartments and was told that the residents don't get newsletters or publications so she took newsletters to the apartment/senior's centre.

Erin Lowe noted that this is a communications program area and is one of the items.

David Broome asked Gem Roberts' thoughts on the senior's demographic and she noted that South Shore Multiculturalism was mentioned earlier – something they are doing is that they received funding through the Credit Union Atlantic and produced packages for seniors not able to leave their home – it was art engagement. There is quite a bit of uptick from a regional perspective. Understanding demographics is important and connecting with the Mahone Bay Centre is a good idea as they have had a lot of engagement with the senior community, i.e., Mah Jong and badminton, coffee sessions, and understanding the key gaps.

Suggestions

Jennifer Webber asked if there were any comments about the suggestions – some are within the municipalities framework and some are not and mostly individual suggestions.

Provided suggestions with highest importance:

Question that was rated – numbered 1-5 and were the ones that were rated as most important. They will collect more data about people who are accessing municipal service – though economic development, stats Canada, recreation programs. Engage Chester collects some. It all depends on what kind of data we want to collect and for what reasons.

Facilities and programs accessible to everyone is important as “accessible” isn't only the built environment – it is transportation, childcare, vision, mental health. One comment was that they found it difficult to find childcare because their child has autism. There are some programs that South Shore Autism offers but we can advertise it. Another suggestion was structuring fees based on the ability to pay and they actually saw an example of that in the Valley where they said had levels of gold, bronze, and silver and people paid what they thought the workshop was valued at. Erin Lowe noted that Chester Playhouse does that as well. Jennifer Webber noted that Gord Tate was looking at options for subsidizing and Erin Lowe noted that promoting organizations that do that would be helpful. Lorraine Burch noted that Sherbrooke Lake Camp has tiered fees.

Gem Roberts noted that she has some best practice she can share.

It was suggested to run an anti-stigma campaign and review municipal programs to identify barriers.

David Broome commented that some people may need to be educated on what racism really is. Hiring processes are not diverse enough that we are seeing diverse employees in processes. If you go to Park View they have a much more diverse clientele.

Joud Alouch noted that schools that have students from more countries tend to have students who are more accepting and understanding and are more aware and excited about meeting other students. Right now, other students get excited when someone comes from another country. Forest Heights doesn't get a lot of students with different backgrounds.

Lorraine Burch noted that is because people are no exposed to it.

David Broome noted that this year at FHCS they have more exchange students than they ever had but not enough host families. Parkview has been a part of what has always happened. Heather McCallum commented that she has been a host since 2019.

Gem Roberts noted that it is super important to have diversity and work force and culture in schools. One of the things we have been talking about is individuals who don't see the value about diversity work. Trying to find diversity in schools is helpful for us to focus on. There is not much diversity in businesses. Having those numbers to say the data is there would be helpful and making sure we are creating a community of care for those persons.

BUDGET

There was a discussion of the past budget and what might be needed in the upcoming year. It was noted that training also has to be considered and the suggestion for training was \$10,000. We may require less if the funding for the regional grant is approved.

ROUND TABLE

There were no items of discussion.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on February 25, 2025 at 6 pm.

Lorraine Burch noted that we didn't have Christmas dinner and may want to consider a spring social.

ADJOURNMENT

2025-112 MOVED by Carol Millett, SECONDED by Clarissa Coolen, that the meeting adjourn.
MOTION CARRIED. 8:01 p.m.

Lorraine Burch
Chair

Pamela Myra
Municipal Clerk

DRAFT