

**Council Minutes - Special
February 16, 2011
Council Chambers**

Present

Mayor C. Chisholm
Deputy Mayor D. Roberts
Councillor S. Cameron
Councillor L. Chisholm
Councillor W. Cormier
Councillor D. MacInnis
Councilor J. MacPherson

D. Kampen, MPA, Chief Administrative Officer
D. Wilson, Deputy Clerk

Also Present

Presentation Delegates
Media
Observers

Call to Order

Mayor C. Chisholm called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Deputy Mayor D. Roberts
Seconded by Councillor L. Chisholm
"That the Agenda be approved as circulated." Motion carried.

Mayor C. Chisholm noted that at this meeting, Presentations would be made to Council and requested that they be kept to 15 minutes in length.

Presentations

- Mr. E. Thomason and Ms. T. Dickieson re Festival Antigonish
Ms. T. Dickieson provided information packages to Council and staff. Mr. E. Thomason acknowledged Council's past financial support of Theatre Antigonish and provided a breakdown of their budget for their previous and upcoming Season. He noted that the past Season was their best yet with over 20,000 seats being filled. He further noted that they endeavour to keep their prices low (less than the cost of production) in an effort to encourage attendance. Mr. Thomason advised that in six (6) weeks, they hope to bring in a balanced budget. He noted that he hoped Council would provide the same amount of funding as last year, and went on to review the line-up for this Season.

Mr. E. Thomason provided background information on a 'test' carried out last year via an Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) Outreach Program. The 'test' showed that they were at 69% of capacity last Season, and that this upcoming Season, their 25th Anniversary, they hope to hire an Outreach Co-ordinator to fill the empty seats by reaching out to the area easterly from Mabou-Port Hawkesbury and westerly to Truro. He noted that most of their budget is spent on personnel and production noting that only 8% is spent on marketing.

Mr. E. Thomason provided Council with information on the recently created (April 2008) Festival Antigonish Foundation, noting that it is currently at \$600,000.00, and they hope to reach one million dollars by 2012. He then provided details on the Foundation's Investment Committee. He further noted that, in an attempt to make the Outreach Program permanent (planned growth) that the Town consider a one-time \$2,000.00 grant which would assist them in funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency this grant would be in addition to the Town's usual contribution. He further noted that Festival Antigonish has a two-million dollar impact on the community.

Councillor J. MacPherson provided comment on the benefit that the Theatre has to the community.

At 4:22 PM, the Mayor thanked Mr. E. Thomason for his presentation and he left the meeting.

- Mr. M. Broomfield and Mr. E. Curry re Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourist Association (AESTA)

Mr. E. Curry addressed Council and provided positive comments of being both a resident and business person within the Town. He noted that the Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourist Association partners with all three (3) levels of government and stated that the Province had lost sight of the importance of tourism (re loss of ferry in Digby), and indicated that the loss of the ferry in Digby would have amounted to twenty million dollars and, as a result, the Province is now feeling a 'ripple' effect. He noted that both the Town and County decreased their funding toward the Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourism Association last year.

Mr. E. Curry noted that a proposal to change the name of the existing Association to Three Shores had caused some confusion with Truro/Colchester opting out. Meanwhile, the Pictou County Tourism Association (PCTA) and Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourism Association (AESTA) have agreed to amalgamate their resources (June 2011) and will be known as DEANS – Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores, Nova Scotia. Currently, local resident/business person, Ms. L. Delorey-Vasil has been appointed Vice-Chair. He noted that DEANS is a continuation of the Three Shores Marketing Association. He further reassured Council that there was no risk that any funds given would be lost, and, in fact, is used as leverage for additional funds from other levels of government.

In response to a query from Mayor C. Chisholm, Mr. M. Broomfield noted that it was not both the Town and County who had cut back funding last year but rather, just the County. He further noted that they have not requested an increase in funding from the Town in the past ten (10) years.

In response to a query from Councillor W. Cormier on where the Visitor Information Centre may go once the TransCanada is twinned, Mr. E. Curry noted that they would look at the best place to 'pull people in' and that the decision would be made locally but no discussion on the matter has taken place yet. Councillor W. Cormier raised some concern that no discussion has taken place on this matter yet.

In response to a query from Deputy Mayor D. Roberts, Mr. M. Broomfield stated that audited financial statements would be available next month.

Mayor C. Chisholm thanked the delegates for their presentation and they left at 4:40 PM.

- Mr. G. Grant re Antigonish Regional Development Authority (ARDA)

Mr. G. Grant thanked Council for their financial support and acknowledged Councillors L. Chisholm and W. Cormier as members of the Board. A copy of their Income Statement to January 31, 2011, was distributed. He then provided highlights from some of the projects that the Antigonish Regional Development Authority were involved with over the past year, including:

- Gateway Project
- Exhibition Master Plan
- Wayfinding
- Investment Attraction (not finished yet)
- Strategic Planning
- Social Media (student)
- Community Projects including:
 - o Turf Field Project
 - o Downtown Merchants (ongoing)
 - o Kraft Hockeyville

Mr. G. Grant reminded those in attendance that CBC Television would be in Antigonish next Wednesday shooting footage the area for Antigonish's bid for Hockeyville.

Mr. G. Grant stated that receiving financial support from the Town and County is key as it is used to leverage additional funding from other levels of government and noted that \$10,000.00 from each municipal unit last year toward the Gateway Project brought \$80,000.00 in leverage. He noted that they are one (1) of twelve (12) Development Authorities that receive Performance Based Funding which is based on a written submission, scored on ambition, prioritization, and, achievement, noting that this year they received the highest points in Achievement. He noted that this year they are eligible for \$159, 002.00 in Community Based Funding. He further noted that they are still developing their Business Plan which should be complete by March 11, 2011, and that the Business Plan is reviewed quarterly. He provided details on other ventures they are or have been involved with including:

- Review of the Town and County's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)
- Development of the Town's Strategic Plan
- Core activities including BRE (Business Retention and Expansion)
- St. Andrew's Strategic Plan
- Community Groups i.e. Antigonish Highland Society, Festival Antigonish
- Heritage Preservation (Town)
- Keppoch (application for basic infrastructure funding)
- Their own Strategic Plan
- Population Attraction (immigrants); Note: newcomers typically bring in \$10,000.00 per person – trying to be more pro-active
- Exhibition Grounds – Arena is core – all groups involved i.e. Farmers Market, Skateboard Group need assistance
- Gateway Strategy
- Investment Attraction

Mr. G. Grant commended the Town on developing their Strategic Plan noting that, in reviewing the document, they looked at six (6) areas and identified four (4) in which the Regional Development Authority may be able to assist. He further noted that the Antigonish Regional

Development Authority is seeking \$79,501.00 from the Town which would assist them in accessing the available funding of \$159,002.00.

In response to a query from Deputy Mayor D. Roberts, Mr. Grant stated that they met with merchants this past November and they have a desire to focus on the Christmas Season and are talking about strategic planning.

Mayor C. Chisholm thanked Mr. G. Grant for his presentation and he left the meeting at 4:59 PM.

- Ms. Lise de Villiers re Antigonish County Adult Learning Association (ACALA)
Ms. L. de Villiers thanked Council for the opportunity to make her presentation and distributed information; financial and programming. She noted that the organization needs the Town's financial support to leverage additional funding and that, in the past, the Town had contributed \$2,000.00.

Ms. L. de Villiers noted that we are losing the labour market to the West and that locally, there are people underemployed and living in poverty. She noted that the Special Programs are poorly funded and costs aren't covered. She noted they have lots of good Programs but are operating on a shoestring budget. She further expanded on the Labour Market Agreement. She noted that they also try to assist those who want to move on to post-secondary education (almost like a scholarship) and that they are not reaching everyone – due to a lack of promotion as most awareness of their programs are by word-of-mouth.

Ms. de Villiers noted that Mr. B. MacPherson from St. FX University is helping with on-line teaching. Further, they are being contacted by more people who want to make a change in their lives and are also receiving more referrals from various agencies. She noted more older workers are also now involved in their programs.

Ms. L. de Villiers noted that they are trying to promote Antigonish Poverty Reduction and Antigonish Sustainable Development. She further noted that there is never enough educational material.

In response to a query from Councillor W. Cormier, Ms. L. deVilliers confirmed that they would be forming part of the new Library and that they would continue to pay rent similar to what they are paying now. Councillor J. MacPherson commended the Antigonish County Learning Association for their Outreach Program whereby computers are available at the RK MacDonald Nursing Home. Deputy Mayor D. Roberts noted that she had been on the Board of the Antigonish County Adult Learning Association in the past and commended them for their efforts, with Ms. de Villiers stating that the strength of the Association is its volunteers.

Mayor C. Chisholm thanked Ms. L. deVilliers for her presentation and she left the meeting at 5:16 PM.

- Ms. J. MacLellan re Music on Main
Ms. J. MacLellan circulated information on Music on Main and noted that the financial statement would be available next week. She stated that Music on Main is going into its seventh Season and has been fighting back from losses from the past year and a half but they are now out of debt. She noted that last year they found out shortly before the season began that the County was not going to assist them financially which resulted in other applications for funding not being approved. She spoke on the groups' efforts to get out of debt and scaling

back of concerts with only two (2) concerts held last year. She further noted that they cannot move forward without financial assistance from both the Town and County which assists them in qualifying for additional funding.

Ms. J. MacLellan stated that they have advised potential musicians that they will not/cannot sign agreements in the month of March as funding is not secured and they would be held to any contracts signed. She noted that if they do not receive funding the free concerts would have to stop and that they are at a crossroads this year.

A brief question and answer session took place.

Mayor C. Chisholm thanked Ms. J. MacLellan for her presentation and she left the meeting at 5:28 PM.

- Ms. S. Henderson re Northumberland Windfield re Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF)

Ms. S. Henderson distributed information related to the Community Economic Development Investment Fund and noted that just this afternoon she had received a letter of support from local businessman Mr. S. Smith of Central Supplies.

Ms. S. Henderson noted that Northumberland Windfield is a community economic development corporation operating in Pictou and Antigonish Counties. It was established to make investments in renewable energy and, in particular, wind power. She then provided information on the make-up of the Board of Directors, of which she is President. She noted that they are currently looking at two (2) areas; one on either side of the Antigonish/Pictou County line, both of which already feature road access. She further stated that when Nova Scotia Power Inc., puts forth a call for proposals, they intend to bid on the project.

Ms. S. Henderson noted that her Board of Directors is seeking the Town's support (by way of a Resolution).

In response to a query from Councillor D. MacInnis, Ms. S. Henderson noted that support from the County was not necessarily needed and that by providing support, and environmental benefits would be for both the Town and County. She provided comment on the success of Pictou County where windmills are to be commissioned.

Ms. S. Henderson noted that in reviewing the Town's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan that by investing in Northumberland Windfields, the Town could meet some of the goals set out in the Plan. She further suggested that perhaps the Town's gas tax dollars could be used or, perhaps, that the Town's Electric Utility might be interested in investing.

Mayor C. Chisholm spoke briefly on the six (6) municipal units which own their own electric utility and suggested that Ms. S. Henderson contact Mr. J. Wentzell to arrange a presentation to that group.

The Mayor thanked Ms. S. Henderson for her presentation and she left the meeting at 5:53 PM.

Adjournment

Moved by Councillor L. Chisholm

Seconded by Councillor S. Cameron

"That the meeting be adjourned." Motion carried.

