Recreation Committee Meeting
April 15, 2026
Town Council Chambers

Present
Chair, Councillor J. Pelly
Councillor D. Roberts
Community Member, T. Angustia
Community Member, J. Ruebener

M. Fougere, Municipal Clerk
C. Rankin, Manager of Parks and Recreation
A. MacKay, Active Living Coordinator

1. Call to Order & Introductions/Welcome

Chair, Councillor J. Pelly, called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.
Moved by: Councillor Roberts
Seconded by: T. Angustia

Motion carried.

3. Acceptance of the Minutes from February 11, 2026

Minutes of the February 11, 2026, meeting were accepted as presented.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

4.1 Active Living Coordinator Update

A memo from the Active Living Coordinator, Alana MacKay was circulated in advance of the meeting.

Ms. MacKay provided an overview of the position and its role within the Municipal and Mi'kmaq Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program, a provincial initiative led by the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. The program supports municipalities in promoting physical activity through accessible and inclusive opportunities, with a focus on making movement an easy and accessible choice for residents.

An update was provided on recent activities and initiatives, including the completion of the Multi-Sport program, ongoing MPAL planning and reporting, summer programming and hiring, youth engagement efforts, and the Equipment Loan Program. It was noted that equipment loans have increased from the previous fiscal year.

The Committee discussed program accessibility, promotion of community activities, and opportunities to support active transportation and movement. Questions were raised regarding equipment availability, program registration, and communication of program schedules to residents.

Discussion also included community gardening efforts, youth engagement opportunities, and considerations for use of municipal facilities during off-season periods.

It was noted that the current Active Living Strategy has reached the end of its term, and work is underway to develop a new strategy.

4.2 Unsightly Issue at the Regional High School

This item was deferred from the previous meeting.

Colin Rankin, Manager of Parks and Recreation provided an update, noting that follow-up with By-Law Enforcement was initiated; however, due to the timing of the request, information was not available in advance of this meeting.

It was further noted that seasonal conditions, including wet ground, have limited the ability to proceed with maintenance at this time. Staff will assess the site to determine what areas can be maintained once conditions improve.

The matter primarily involves debris removal.

This item will be brought forward to a future meeting for further update.

4.3 Dr JJ Carroll Awards Policy

Mr. Rankin presented a memo on the Dr. J.J. Carroll Awards Policy, which was included in the agenda package. The award, supported through a trust, aims to encourage youth participation in sports and recreation within the Town and surrounding area. The total funding available for distribution is $5,000.

The Committee discussed ensuring equitable access to the program.

It was noted that additional time is required for staff review of the policy, and this item was deferred to the next meeting.

A recommendation was brought forward that the Recreation Committee accept the J.J. Carroll Awards application as presented.

Recommendation: That the Recreation Committee accept the JJ Carroll Application be accepted as presented.

Moved by: Councillor Pelly
Seconded by: J. Ruebener

Motion carried.

4.4 Regional Fields Portable Washrooms

A memo was circulated in advance of the meeting.
Mr. Rankin advised that following a review of the Regional High School fields, the current number of portable washrooms is not adequate to meet usage demands. This aligns with previous feedback received by the Committee.

The Committee discussed the need to increase capacity, including accessible units. A recommendation was brought forward to add two additional accessible portable washrooms at the Regional High School fields.

Recommendation: That the Recreation Committee recommend that Council approve the proposed allotment and placement of two (2) additional portable washrooms for the Town of Antigonish Regional Fields to improve facility services.
Moved by: Councillor Roberts
Seconded by: T. Angustia

Motion carried.

Some discussions took place on the Maintenance of the portable washrooms and the purchase of the portable washrooms by the Town.

4.5 Greening Drive Demographics

Mr. Rankin provided an update on efforts to obtain demographic information for the Greening Drive area, noting that data was not available through Statistics Canada. The Committee agreed to address the Greening Drive and Whidden Park engagement under this item.

A memo outlining a proposed engagement plan for the refurbishment of the park and parkette on Greening Drive and Whidden Street was circulated. Engagement options discussed included online surveys, door-to-door outreach, community mail-outs, and on-site staff engagement.

The Committee discussed the proximity of existing recreational facilities and considerations regarding the need for additional park infrastructure in the area. It was also noted that residents have inquired about the removal of previous playground equipment.

Councillor Roberts asked about the Stan MacKinnon plaque located at the Greening Drive park and whether there is any record indicating Mr. MacKinnon's intentions for the space, particularly regarding its use for children. Mr. Rankin advised that he was unsure but would review available records if anything on file and report back at the next meeting.

Recommendation: That the Recreation Committee recommend to Town Council that $5,000.00 be put in the 2026-2027 Operating Budget for redevelopment plans and community engagement for Greening Drive Park.
Moved by: Councillor Roberts
Seconded by: J. Ruebener

Motion carried.

4.6 Greening Drive Swings

This item was addressed under Item 4.5.

5. New Business

5.1 Greening Drive & Whidden Street Parkette Redevelopment Proposal

This item was addressed under Item 4.5.

5.2 John's Pass

Mr. Rankin provided an update on maintenance at John's Pass, noting that the pathway is included on the annual summer maintenance list, including the application of crusher dust.
It was also noted that one board on the bridge requires replacement and has been added to the maintenance work plan.

Discussion included funding considerations for ongoing maintenance of the pathway.

5.3 Play finder

J. Ruebener raised concerns regarding the registration process through Play Finder, noting difficulties with the system and the length of time required to complete registration. Ms. MacKay responded that system capacity can become overloaded when a high volume of users are accessing the platform simultaneously.

There were also questions regarding where to locate a list of available programs for registration.

Ms. MacKay advised that she would make note of these concerns and report them to the Play Finder support group. It was further noted that a support email address is available for Play Finder, and that responses are typically provided promptly.

6. Next Meeting Date

Next Committee meeting will be held June 17 at 5:15 p.m.

6. Adjournment

With no further business, T. Angustia moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m.