



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2018041

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RE: Town of Amherst agrees to rent land to Birkinshaw's

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst town council has agreed to enter into a five-year lease agreement with Birkinshaw's Tea Room, Coffee House and Restaurant that will enable the restaurant to open an outdoor patio for their customers on town-owned park land.

The agreement was approved by council at its May 28 session. It will see Birkinshaw's rent a portion of the park space at 12 Havelock St. for the outdoor patio that will be similar to those provided by Bella's Café and Bistro and Duncan's Pub.

Under the terms of the agreement Birkinshaw's will be responsible for maintenance of the leased area and will pay a rent of \$492 annually.

The agreement isn't finalized until both parties sign it.

Amherst takes steps to return money to the province

Amherst town council has approved the transfer of \$5,276.79 to its general operating fund from its capital reserve.

The transfer was needed so the money could be returned to the province.

The province gave the town the money in the 2015-16 fiscal year as part of the funding for the Terrace Street flood mitigation project. The project came in under budget and the money was placed in the capital reserve until it could be sent back to the province.

Attempts to return it were unsuccessful in the past because of issues with the province's financial systems. As of April 2018, those issues were resolved and the town can now return the money.

In order for it to be returned it had to be moved from the capital reserve to the general operating fund. This housekeeping move will have no impact on the town's bottom line.



Using surplus funds to pay for projects saves town money

Council approved transferring \$619,645 to its general capital fund from operating reserve in order to cover the costs of the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre and Mill Street projects without having to use long-term debt.

Initially, the two projects were to be partially funded by long-term debt. However, in March 2017 the town experienced a \$777,736 surplus, which was placed into operating reserves.

In the fall, council decided to use part of the surplus to cover the \$619,645 cost of the two projects instead of using long-term debt to finance them. The transfer to the general capital fund from operating reserve was a housekeeping move that enabled the town to spend the money.

By using the surplus funds to cover the costs of the two projects, the town will save about \$210,000 in interest that would have been paid if the projects had been funded with long-term debt. In addition, paying cash for the projects conforms to the town's long-term strategy of avoiding debt where possible.

Planning Advisory Committee to seek public input

Council was informed its planning advisory committee will hold a public meeting on June 4 to get input into a request to rezone 283 and 295 Church Street to highway commercial from industrial. The meeting is at town hall and begins at 5:30 p.m.

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