



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2018076

DATE: 25 September 2018

RE: Request for garden suite given first reading by Amherst town council

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst town council, at its Sept. 24 council session, gave first reading to a development agreement at 99 West Victoria Street that would result in a garden suite being built in the property's backyard.

A staff report indicated the proposed 109-square-metre suite would be located about 14 metres from the main dwelling unit and about 20 metres from the dwelling next door. It noted the driveway can accommodate about six vehicles, which exceeds the minimum requirements for parking.

"Staff feel the proposed garden suite conforms to the intent of the town's municipal planning strategy and other regulations," the report states. "The potential for negative impact on the town's financial capacity, infrastructure or street networks is negligible. Given the size of the subject lot, ample separation from the adjacent dwelling and ample parking, the impact on nearby land uses would also be negligible."

The development agreement will be the subject of a public hearing that will be held on Oct. 22. Council must also approve the second reading of the development agreement before the agreement goes into effect.

PACE bylaw given first reading

Council gave first reading to a bylaw that would enable the town to run a Property Assessed Clean Energy Program.

The program allows municipalities to offer financing to homeowners for energy efficient retrofits that are paid back via their tax bill over a period of up to 10 years.

There will be a \$14,000 cost to the town to get the program started, but the funding can be recovered from the province. Once it is operational, all costs of the program are paid for by the participants and there is no cost to property owners who do not participate.



Similar programs already exist many Nova Scotia communities including Bridgewater, District of Lunenburg, Richmond County and Halifax Regional Municipality. The Municipality of the County of Cumberland is also adopting the same program.

The new bylaw would support council's priority to develop a community energy strategy.

Prior to going into effect, the public must be notified about the proposed bylaw, and council must give the bylaw a second reading.

Amendments to community support grants policy approved

Council approved amendments to the community support grant policy that would refine sections outlining the operation of the 'A' Fresh Start Initiative, which is aimed at encouraging organizations and individuals to develop new events in the town or enhance existing ones.

The amendments outline the amount of the awards given out by the initiative, the decision-making process and the disbursement of awards.

Application can be found on the Town of Amherst's [website](#) or be picked up at the town hall, located at 98 Victoria St. E. Completed applications must be returned to town hall and labelled attention 'A' Fresh Start c/o Amherst Recreation Department, emailed to amherstrecreation@amherst.ca, faxed to 902-667-5251 or mailed to Town of Amherst, P.O. Box 516, Amherst, N.S., B4H 4A1.

The deadline for application is Oct. 3.

Amherst Youth Town Council appointments

Council approved the appointment of Rohin Minocha-McKenney, Allie Degenstein, Olivia Pulsifer, Rajan McKenney, Mason Carter, Grace Doncaster, Braeden Lines, Salem Dimichele, Adrianna O'Quinn and Dan Osborne to two-year terms with the Amherst Youth Town Council.

Two positions remain open on the youth council and efforts are being made to fill them.

Amendment made to Traffic Authority Policy

Council approved an amendment to its Traffic Authority Policy that states whomever holds the position of police chief will be the town's traffic authority. Previously, the police named an individual to the post.

Cumberland YMCA Contribution Agreement

Councils approved a five-year contribution agreement it has reached with the Cumberland YMCA that sees the town providing the YMCA with an annual \$100,000 contribution, adjusted for inflation. The contribution replaces \$100,000 in in-kind services the town had previously provided to the YMCA, such as solid waste collection and accounting services.



Heritage Gas memorandum

Council approved a memorandum of understanding it reached with Heritage Gas Ltd. for the provision of asphalt patching services that will see the town repair service cuts made by the gas distribution company then bill the firm for the work.

Staff indicated the new process will see the Heritage Gas service cuts repaired in a timelier manner.

Debenture approval

Council approved a resolution for pre-approval of debenture issuance in the amount of \$916,677 for the long-term financing of the water main replacement and street reconstruction of East Victoria Street, from Rupert Street to Civic #250, and the storm water separation on Station Street.

The long-term financing would come from the Municipal Finance Corporation. Staff indicated this form of financing is a well-established process for borrowing funds for capital purposes.

Motorized Scooter Strategy update

Council received an update on its motorized scooter policy that was designed earlier this year after the town received safety concerns about their use within the community.

The strategy developed uses a combination of education and measured enforcement to ensure scooter users and the general public are aware of the laws and regulations governing the use of motorized scooters on Nova Scotia highways and roads.

As part of the strategy, a mobility scooter and wheelchair fact sheet that provided information on the regulations and safety tips was developed. It was distributed to retailers who sold or rented scooters with the intention the fact sheet would be shared with clients.

The police department also initiated a media blitz that included public service announcements on the local radio stations and a news release to the local paper that stressed the safe use of motorized scooters and wheelchairs.

Officers also made presentations on the issue at several senior-care homes. Patrols also stopped users who were using the roadway and officers advised them of the strategy.

The report indicated most scooter users were compliant with the regulations.



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