



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2019061

DATE: 18 September 2019

RE: Border Enhancement Committee presents report

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – A three-phased approach to enhancing the border entrance into the Town of Amherst is being proposed by the Municipality of Cumberland's Border Enhancement Committee.

The phases would include the creation of a greenbelt corridor, maintaining that corridor and planting aesthetic enhancements, committee representatives told Amherst town council's committee of the whole on Sept. 16.

As part of Phase 1, the committee is proposing a pilot project on Highway 2 that would extend between the Fort Lawrence Road and the Highway 104 overpass. The work would include ditching, hydroseeding and traffic control at an estimated cost of \$26,500 to build and \$10,000 per year to maintain.

Doing the same work between the Fort Lawrence Road and the Amherst town boundary would cost \$52,000 and the annual maintenance cost would be \$20,000, committee spokespersons Keith Thompson and Chelsea Bair added.

They also said the project's success relied heavily on property owners in the area maintaining their own properties.

Phase 2 of the plan would see annual maintenance, while Phase 3 would look at additional aesthetic enhancements of the area such as tree and shrub plantings, and the use of banners and/or flags.



Debenture Issue

A staff recommendation to send a resolution for pre-approval of a debenture issue for \$141,825 to the Sept. 23, 2019, session of council for approval was approved by the committee of the whole.

Provincial regulations require such a resolution now in order for the debenture to be issued this fall.

The money, which will be borrowed over a 15-year period at a maximum interest rate of 5.5 per cent, covers the cost of replacing the water main on East Pleasant Street between Church Street and Central Avenue.

As this is a preapproval process, it is expected the interest rate will be much lower than 5.5 per cent given the borrowing power of the Municipal Finance Corp. This allows the debenture to be signed at any rate below 5.5 percent.

'A Fresh Start Initiative

A lack of qualifying applications for the fall staging of the 'A Fresh Community Initiative has led the committee of the whole to instruct staff to postpone the event.

The committee also instructed staff to issue a call for 'A Fresh Community Initiative applications in the spring. It also indicated that a lack of applications at that time would result in the town examining the possibility of discontinuing the initiative.

The 'A Fresh Community Initiative was established by the town in 2018 as a way to provide funding for new and innovative initiatives in the town. Council anticipated the funding would help get these initiatives up and running prior to the initiative becoming self-sufficient.

Christie Foundation Funding to aid minor hockey

The committee of the whole agreed to send a request from the Dr. and Mrs. H.E. Christie Foundation that would aid minor hockey to council's Sept. 23, 2019, meeting for approval.

The request would see the town receive a \$12,500 donation from the foundation, which in turn would give the money to the Cumberland County Minor Hockey Association for the training of referees.

This route was requested because the foundation can only give donations to registered charitable organizations, which the Town of Amherst is under the Income Tax Act.

Staff indicated there would be no financial implications for the town. However, the donation would help the minor hockey association improve its ability to provide a quality program, and it would help the town achieve its goal of being a health, active community.



Fundy GeoPark letter of support

The committee of the whole recommended that a letter of support for the Fundy GeoPark project be sent to council's Sept. 23, 2019, session for approval.

They noted the project – a joint effort of Cumberland and Colchester counties – would enhance the region's tourism offerings and draw global attention to the area while helping to promote and protect environmentally significant natural areas.

More testing of Oxford sinkhole supported

The committee of the whole recommended that Amherst town council, at its Sept. 23, 2019, session, approve a letter to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities that asks the federation to support local efforts to have additional testing conducted on the impact the Oxford sinkhole will have on Highway 104.

Strategic Priorities

The committee of the whole approved sending the town's strategic priorities to the Sept. 23, 2019, council session for approval. The priorities include economic development, understanding population change, community well-being and environmental stewardship.

North Adelaide Street sidewalk project

Staff updated the committee on a planned change to the North Adelaide Street sidewalk project. The change would see the sidewalk built on the west side of the street and not the east side.

The change will ensure that no power poles interfere with the alignment of the sidewalk and would eliminate the need to replace several service laterals.

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