



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2023017

DATE: 28 February 2023

RE: Amherst town council February meeting highlights

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – The Amherst town council repealed three town policies that council felt were out of date or no longer serving a purpose when they met on Monday, Feb. 27, 2023.

The Community Arts Council Committee Policy was repealed because the committee, which was formed in 2007, has fulfilled its mandate and hasn't met for several years.

Councillors stressed the repeal does not reflect an unwillingness to support the arts in the town. They noted Coun. Dale Fawthrop and staff are currently working with various members of the arts community to host a general meeting and to provide input on future initiatives. There are also plans underway to look at a way to provide recognition of the arts community in a meaningful way.

The COVID-19 Property Tax Financing Program Policy was repealed because the payment terms related to the policy ended in January 2023.

The policy was implemented in the fall of 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to allow taxpayers, who were in good standing, the opportunity to extend their payments for their 2021-22 taxes over a 30 month period.

The Downtown Business Advisory Committee Policy was repealed because the committee hasn't been active since 2015.

Councillors did note that a group of downtown businesses formed the Amherst Downtown Business Association last year and it is engaging with town staff for the promotion of the downtown on an ongoing basis.





Community Support Grants Policy Amendment

Council approved amendments to its Community Support Grants Policy. The major amendment resulted in the end of the 'A' Fresh Grants, which were created in 2018 in an attempt to encourage new and innovative events.

However, interest in the grants lessened over the years, with no applications for the grant being received in 2022.

While the 'A' Fresh Grant no longer exists, the funds for those grants will continue to be available through Community Support Grants.

The process for applying for those grants was also streamlined and the town will continue to support applications that enhance the overall well-being of the community and elevate the social determinants of health, such as reducing food insecurity and provide opportunities to positively impact the health of local residents.

Transfer of Title Approved

Council approved transferring the ownership of 8-10 Prince Arthur Street to the Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association, also known as Cornerstone.

Council had acquired the property via tax sale with the intention of making it available for affordable and/or supporting housing. The association plans to renovate the building so that it contains affordable, supervised apartments, overnight accommodations, a resource room, kitchen and office space for administration and support services.

Councillors believe the project will assist in providing much needed support to those needing affordable and supportive housing.

Councillor appointed to Cornerstone Board of Directors

Council appointed Deputy-Mayor Leon Landry as the council's representative on the Cornerstone board of directors. The appointment fulfills a condition of a memorandum of understanding between the town and the Cumberland Housing and Homelessness Support Association that was reached in 2022. The goals of the memorandum include establishing and operating a multi-use facility that will assist citizens who are homeless, precariously housing and those who require affordable housing.





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