



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2025012

DATE: June 24, 2025

RE: June 23, 2025 Amherst Town Council Meeting – Highlights

AMHERST, Nova Scotia –

Change to the Municipal Boundary

In the fall of 2024, the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of the County of Cumberland signed an intermunicipal agreement that will result in a change to the municipal boundary on the south end of town, on lands of the former Dolan soccer complex.

The municipal boundary is being changed in order to facilitate development of up to 600 homes on the property that only partially lays within Amherst boundaries at present.

In exchange for this boundary change, the Town has agreed to provide access to our sanitary sewer system for up to 400 homes in the area of the County in proximity to the town of Amherst.

Several motions were passed by Council on Monday night to facilitate this undertaking.

First, Council approved the application to the Nova Scotia Energy and Regulatory Boards Tribunal for a change of boundary to the town of Amherst, by taking into the town the 47-hectare lot owned by Shaw Rural Housing Limited, which is the site of this current and future housing development.

Second, Council approved First Reading of the bylaw to Amend the Discharge into Public Sewers.

And third, Council approved amendments to the User Fee Policy, the Building Service Connections Policy, the Sanitary Sewer Service Connection to County Residents Policy, the Standard Specifications for Municipal Services Policy, and further, approved a new Sewer Connection Policy.

Amendment of Building Bylaw and Repeal of Vacant Building Bylaw

On April 1st, 2025, Nova Scotia adopted the latest edition of the National Building Code of Canada and new Building Code Regulations. Due to changes in the new regulations, the Town of Amherst's current Building Bylaw is no longer aligned with the updated codes. Council gave second reading to the proposed Building Bylaw amendments on Monday night, mostly housekeeping in nature, to update definitions to align with the National Building Code and corresponding regulations.

The Town of Amherst Vacant Building Bylaw, adopted in 2011, sets out requirements and standards for vacant buildings. The Bylaw includes maintenance standards and provisions for





boarding up vacant buildings that are already provided for by the Dangerous or Unsightly Premises provisions of the Municipal Government Act. As such, the Vacant Building Bylaw does not serve a useful purpose at this time. At Monday night's meeting, Council give second reading of the Bylaw to Repeal the Town of Amherst Vacant Building Bylaw.

Dr. & Mrs. H.E. Christy Community Foundation Donation

Council approved a request to receive a donation of \$26,500 from the Dr. & Mrs. H.E. Christie Community Foundation to fund several specific grants. The Town of Amherst has accepted donations of this nature in the past and has provided a donation acknowledgement letter to the donor and disbursed funds to the requested recipients. The following grants will be funded by this most recent donation: \$15,000 to the Amherst 50+ Seniors Club; \$10,000 to the Amherst Pre-School Association; and, \$1,500 to the Fibre Arts Festival Society of NS.

Capital Paving

The approved budget for the 2025/26 capital paving program includes \$973,700 for the asphalt paving of 13 streets. A tender was issued on June 5, 2025, and on Monday night, Council awarded the Capital Paving Tender to the lowest compliant bidder, Dexter Construction.

Summer Camp Students

Since 2022 the Town of Amherst's Summer Park Program registrations have been increasing steadily. This year registration has skyrocketed for the program and many parents have expressed disappointment and concern about not having the ability to successfully register their children.

At Monday night's meeting, Council approved the transfer of \$18,000 from the Social Equity Reserve to cover the wages for three additional summer students for eight weeks, to accommodate an additional 27 students per week to help meet the increase in demand for this program. In addition, staff have been directed by the CAO to look into our registration process to ensure it is as fair and equitable as possible.

Multicultural Association of Cumberland Community Support Grant

Council approved funding in the amount of \$2,500 to the Multicultural Association of Cumberland under the Community Support Grants Policy, for an event celebrating Welcoming Week in September.

[More information about the Town of Amherst's Community Support Grants Policy is available on our website.](#)

Ice Allocation and Sign Rental Policy Amendments

The Ice Allocation Policy was originally approved by Council in 2016 and was directly related to the introduction of the no-fee ice program for our youth. The main purpose of the policy now is to set consistent guidelines to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of ice time for all user groups. Revisions approved by Council on Monday night include: revision of dates in the ice allocation process to be in line with actual practice; addition of exemptions to the User Fee Policy; and, revision of the section relating to non-payment of ice time.





The Sign Rental Policy provides an opportunity for the Town, local teams, and other tenants of the stadium to raise money by selling advertising in the Amherst Stadium. In general, all advertising sales are billed and collected by the Town, and each organization receives a 50% sales commission. Council approved minor amendments to the Sign Rental Policy on Monday night.

Territorial Acknowledgement Policy

Through the collaborative work of the newly formed Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee, the current Territorial Acknowledgement Policy and statement was reviewed. At their meeting on May 28, 2025 the Committee passed a motion to recommend that Council update the territorial acknowledgement to remove the words “the Indigenous Blacks of Nova Scotia” and replace them with “the people of African descent.”

Smoke-Free Workplace Policy

The Smoke-Free Workplace Policy was originally developed to support a healthy and safe environment for all employees, contractors and visitors. Since its last update in 2014, there have been significant changes in public health legislation, smoking trends, and workplace expectations, particularly with the rise of vaping and the legalization of cannabis.

Council approved amendments to the policy on Monday night that include an expansion of scope to cover vaping/e-cigarettes and cannabis use; cessation support, encouraging employees to access available resources; and, legislative references.

Procurement Policy

Staff have been working towards improving the procurement policy for both staff and vendors. At Monday night’s meeting, Council approved the recommended changes geared towards internal process improvements to expedite transactions and ensuring compliance with existing legislation.

Significant changes to the existing policy include increasing the purchasing threshold limits for staff. The amended limits are expected to expedite transactions in the majority of cases. Other minor amendments included title changes, and updated names of Trade Agreements.

New Affordable Housing Fee Forgiveness Policy

The Town has been awarded over \$2.2 million through the federal Housing Accelerator Fund to implement initiatives – such as the new Affordable Housing Fee Forgiveness Policy – that will result in more new housing.

Under this new policy, the Town will waive development & building permit fees and water & sewer servicing fees for projects where at least 25% of units are supported by senior government affordable housing funding. Only new developments approved after the policy’s adoption will be eligible, and all must comply with Town bylaws. The Chief Administrative Officer may, at his discretion, exclude projects already receiving other Town funding.





Waived fees will be covered by the Housing Accelerator Fund for the next four years. Fee waivers will be tracked, and the policy reviewed and evaluated at 6- and 12-months post-implementation, and again before the funding program term ends in four years.

[Please visit our website for full details on the June 23 regular meeting of Amherst Town Council.](#)

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