



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2026005

DATE: March 24, 2026

RE: Amherst Town Council Highlights – March 23, 2026

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst Town Council held its regular March meeting on Monday night to address items including:

Volunteers of the Year

In November 2025, a public call was issued for nominations to celebrate volunteers. After thorough review, Council nominated Paul Cormier as the Amherst Volunteer of the Year, Arilynn Menzies as the Youth Volunteer of the Year and the Short family as the Family Volunteers of the Year, to be recognized at the Nova Scotia Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony.

The Town thanks all volunteers within our community who go above and beyond to make Amherst a truly special place to live. The Town of Amherst will be honored to recognize all nominated individuals at an event hosted in Amherst on April 21, 2026.

Appointment of Citizens to Boards and Committees

Alex Harrison and Chris Johanneson were each appointed to the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners for a one-year term, beginning April 1, 2026.

Jim Lamplugh was re-appointed to the Planning Advisory Committee for a two-year term, also beginning April 1, 2026.

Policies and Bylaws – Amendments and Adoptions

The Street Light Policy has been amended to better reflect current practices. The updates clarify the purpose of street lighting and how decisions are made, with a focus on safety, accessibility, responsible fiscal management, and long-term asset management.

Recently, staff have been working towards improving the procurement process for both staff and vendors. Changes were approved for the Procurement Policy that include bringing the purchasing threshold limits in line with the limits of the Atlantic Trade and Procurement Partnership and Canada Free Trade Agreement. This change is expected to expedite transactions in the majority of cases and reduce the legal risks to the Town.

Council approved the new Performance Management and Development Policy, which advances an action item identified in the Town's People Strategy and supports the continued modernization and strengthening of our HR practices.

The purpose of the Inquiries From Council Policy is to ensure that all inquiries or requests for information are consistently directed through the Chief Administrative Officer or, in their absence, the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer. Updates were approved that include points of clarification, use of proper pronouns, and adding the Deputy CAO as someone who may receive inquiries or requests for information from Council.



Council approved amendments to the Snow and Ice Management Policy after having directed staff to complete a review, with a focus on road salting service levels. Salting will be expanded to include priority-2 streets, and the term “as needed” has been replaced with “when conditions warrant,” which is now clearly defined in the policy. Overall, the updates provide clearer direction and greater flexibility in managing winter operations.

The Commercial Development Support Program Bylaw was adopted in September of 2017 and allows a property owner who is undertaking a new construction or a significant expansion to phase in the increased taxes over a ten-year period. Amendments include phasing in taxes for the new assessment over five years and capping the maximum payable annual rebate at \$100,000. These changes will only impact new agreements from May 1, 2026. Given the significant capital investment in the new business park, these changes will allow the Town to recoup costs earlier and grow the assessment base to the benefit of all taxpayers. The amended bylaw has been adopted.

Parish of Christ Church Parking Lot

Parking spaces throughout the downtown are leased by the Town, including spaces owned by the Parish of Christ Church. A new agreement has been prepared that addresses administrative updates and does not introduce any new obligations or financial impacts. The parking lot lease agreement between the Parish of Christ Church and the Town of Amherst was approved by Council, and the Mayor and CAO were authorized to sign on behalf of the Town.

Housing Accelerator Funding

After receiving \$2.26 million in 2024 through the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund, the Town’s Housing Action Plan targeted approval of 177 housing units over three years. Significant progress was made in the first year alone – 158 net new housing units approved. Council approved applying for additional Housing Accelerator funding by undertaking an initiative to adopt the CMHC Housing Design Catalogue, which would help speed up the process from planning to construction of new residential units. Also approved was exploring the option to digitize the Town’s planning documents as an optional initiative, to make land use regulations easier to access and more user-friendly.

[Find full details of the March 23, 2026 meeting of Amherst Town Council in the agenda package, linked here.](#)

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