

Monthly Departmental Report

Recreation / Culture / Programming / Communications

February 21, 2017

Marketing & Communications

The month included coordinating the logistics, planning and communications of the rescheduled Cumberland County Health Care meeting with the Health Minister as well as Great Amherst Mystery public meetings, presentation(s) to the Amherst Rotary Club, ACOA's announcement for the West Highlands Lions Park funding and African Heritage Month launch. Live streaming of Council meetings was researched. Marketing plans were developed for Outdoor Skating Surface "A...Place to Play" and the 2017 Winter Carnival. Ongoing communications such as AYTC monthly report, weekly column, radio updates, website and social media updates and news updates were shared with the appropriate audiences in addition to the promotion of the Town of Amherst and community activities and formal communications. Meetings were held with Business View Magazine representatives who will be featuring a Sustainable Communities article in their March issue on the Town of Amherst. Ads were developed and coordinated with several advertising groups such as Amherst Canadian Tire, Doers and Dreamers Guide and the Northumberland and Eastern Shore brochure. New decorative street banners were installed in time for Winter Carnival. Live, Work & Play is the current theme.

Active Living/Healthy Community

Several planning meetings were held including the West Highlands Project, ACOA funding announcement of \$90,000 to the project, and tennis court tender for the project. Other meetings in January were the Amherst Rotary Group to discuss Canada 150, Scott from Trider's Craft Beer, partnership and event ideas, and attending the African Heritage Month Lunch January 30. In partnership with Sport Nova Scotia for the Cumberland Multisport program, meetings were held with all partners that confirmed participation. A draft Multi-sport program schedule was developed for 2017-2018. Meetings were held with several community groups and organizations to develop a full exciting Winter Carnival schedule. The Physical Activity/Active Living Strategy plan was updated with Community, Culture and Heritage to assist with up-to-date information and format. Volunteer nomination applications were solicited for the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation week in April. Several meetings were held regarding the Great Amherst Mystery Project with a final report on the project to be presented in April. Meetings were held with Cumberland Kids, a proposed Rotary Club 150 project, the Syrian Market Project and the SOAR community health board.

Horticulturist

The Horticulturist has conducted research and the development of the annual hanging basket RFP and prepared the annual bedding plant RFP, which will be circulated in February with emphasis on displaying our community's pride of our nations' colours and 150th birthday for the 2017 growing season. Support was provided in the research for an off-leash dog park. Removal of dead trees in Beacon St. Park was coordinated. The horticulturist attended the Atlantic Canada Forest Health Conference in Charlottetown; this conference was to increase awareness and suggested proactive measures to those working within the urban forestry field. In particular, a key emphasis was held on the pests and diseases that are inevitably making their way to Atlantic Canada and threatening several tree species, much like Dutch Elm Disease did in the past 30+ years. An urban tree inventory will play a vital role in ensuring the health and longevity of Amherst's urban tree canopy. The horticulturist continued to work on the urban tree inventory, began work on Amherst's landscape management plan of parks and greenspaces and developed a Wood Sculpture Maintenance Plan with the assistance of Andrew Williams, the urban forestry coordinator for the Town of Truro.

Facilities

January 19, "A" Place to Play Outdoor Skating Surface opened downtown. Hours of operation for this facility are 10:00am to 10:00pm daily. During the first 22 days we periodically monitored the facility for ice conditions, usage, maintenance, and cleanliness. An estimated 800+ users have enjoyed the facility to date. In addition to local residents, visitors from other communities are enjoying the venue as well.

The Stadium hosted four Amherst Jr. Ramblers games in January. In total Stadium ice was used for a total of 281 hours which included 75.75 hours of family first no fee public skating, 95.5 rental hours to user groups, and 101 hours of Youth Ice Pilot Ice time, 39 hours for Amherst Skating Club and 70.75 hours for CCMHA. Discussions are ongoing regarding the evaluation model of the Youth Ice Pilot Project. Dalhousie University will be conducting the analysis with a report to be presented in the spring. The walking track was available for 445 hours at no charge to users. The Stadium's public skates, ongoing promotions, maintenance and flexible walking track hours are in support of Amherst's Physical Activity Strategy. The goal of being the most active healthy community in the province is communicated daily.

With little snow accumulation during the month of January, most of our parks and trails were used regularly. The downtown Big Block Walk continues to be a popular choice for those who live, work and play downtown. The public washroom at Dickey Park is opened daily from 10:00am to 6:00pm with outdoor lighting on until 10pm. When time permits Operations will clear the walking track at Dickey Park. This offers another option for citizens to be active. #seewhyweloveit

Business Development

Business Development continues to provide ongoing guidance and advice to existing and potential commercial development prospects, which includes the promotion of Amherst as an attractive place to locate, expand, and invest. This also includes the provision of general location and specific site analysis, as well as, providing referrals to other service providers in the area. Staff have played an active role in bringing together regional stakeholders including: ACOA, CBDC, CANSA, NSCC, Cumberland County, Chambers of Commerce, and the Business Connector to share information, ideas, and look for ways to collaborate. Staff have met with County counterparts to review the 2014 Community Economic Development Strategy. Specific ongoing projects include the train station transfer, the Net-Zero/Smart-Grid Energy project, and the Commercial Assessment Phase-In Bylaw.