



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2021044

DATE: 22 June 2021

RE: Revisions to Amherst's unsightly premises policy sent to council for approval

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Proposed revisions to the Town of Amherst's Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Policy are headed to Amherst town council's June 28, 2021, meeting, with a recommendation that they be approved.

The decision to send the revisions to council was made on June, 21, 2021, during a session of the council's committee of the whole.

The current policy reflects a level of dangerous or unsightly premises that is complaint based rather than proactive. One of the revisions will require the dangerous and unsightly premises administrator to survey all town streets at least twice a year in order to identify dangerous or unsightly premises.

The revisions also outline the priorities the administrator is to follow, with the top priority being dangerous properties, followed by properties for which a written complaint has been received and then properties identified by the administrator.

Staff have indicated this proactive approach should eventually reduce the volume of complaints and the severity of some cases as offending properties will be identified earlier.

Lions Park

A staff recommendation to forward a memorandum of understanding between the town and the Amherst Lions Club on the future operation of the Lions Park on Hickman Street to the June 28, 2021, council session was also approved by the committee.





Both parties felt a memorandum was required as the development stage of the park will be completed with the installation of a basketball court this summer.

The memorandum focuses on the requirements needed to operate and maintain the facility in the future and identifies the obligations of both parties, which sees the town continue to maintain the park while the club contributes financially to the park's repair and improvements.

Foundation request

A staff recommendation to send a request by the Dr. & Mrs. H.E. Christie Foundation to the June 28, 2021, council meeting for approval was approved by the committee.

The request would see the town accept a \$12,500 donation from the foundation, with the condition that it be forwarded to the Amherst Little League Baseball Club.

Provincial regulations prevent the baseball club from directly receiving the funds from the foundation because the club is not a registered charity. However, because the town is a registered charity, the regulations allow it to accept the donation and then direct it directly to the baseball club.

The town has done this in the past, and like previous occasions, the transaction will help improve access to physical activity and group program for Amherst and area youth.

Mi'kmaw flag

The committee directed staff to forward a request to permanently fly a Mi'kmaw flag at the corner of Church and Albion streets to the town's Diversity and Inclusion Committee for review and a recommendation.

The request noted there are many Mi'kmaw people living in Cumberland County and this initiative would foster reconciliation, particularly during these unsettling times of disclosure of the tragedies associated with residential schools.





Solar Community buildings

A staff recommendation to send changes to the town's Solar for Community building sites to the June 28, 2021, council session for approval were approved by the committee.

The sites initially selected for the projects were the Amherst fire and police department buildings. However, further investigation of those sites revealed neither site is usable because each building has a natural gas line on its roof.

Under its agreement with the Clean Foundation and the Nova Scotia Energy Department, the location for the solar panels can be moved. Staff are recommendation the solar panels now be erected next to the town's water reservoir tanks and on the access road to the town's wastewater treatment facility.

Once completed, the propose solar panel sites will produce electricity that will be sold to Nova Scotia Power via a 20-year power purchase agreement that will generate about \$68,000 in revenue for the town over the life of the project.

Staff noted the Solar for Community Buildings program is a unique opportunity to produce and sell green energy for profit and provides the town with a way to show leadership in emission reduction and addressing climate change.

Spring Street traffic review

The committee received an update on the motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic review of the area around Spring Street Academy. It indicated the work was stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic, which altered traffic patterns in the area due to the closure of the school and other COVID- related restrictions.

The committee deferred this issue until staff can investigate the matter further and instructed the project be included in the project discussions for the 22-23 budget year.





Lease and management agreement

The Cumberland Community Business Development Corp. informed the committee it wishes to renew the management and lease agreement it has with the town for the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre for another five years.

Noise bylaw

The committee approved a staff recommendation to send a proposed Noise and Disturbances Bylaw to the June 28, 2021, council meeting for its first reading.

The bylaw defines the activities that unreasonably disturb the peace and tranquility of a neighbourhood as well as exemptions to the bylaw.

The proposed bylaw was reviewed by legal council. It can be seen at <https://amherst.ca/agendas.html>.

Lord Amherst Drive

The committee directed staff to begin the process of renaming Lord Amherst Drive.

They also instructed the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, which is currently under development, to recommend a new name for the street.

In issuing the directive, the committee indicated changing the name was important due to the ongoing revelations surfacing from residential schools across Canada, the need to examine the impact colonization had on Indigenous communities and the need for reconciliation.

The committee also noted the three businesses affected by the renaming of the street understand the issue and are prepared to see the street renamed.

Capital Paving Tender

The committee approved a staff recommendation to send the awarding of the capital paving tender to the June 28, 2021, council meeting for approval.





Staff is recommending the tender be awarded to Classic Construction, the lowest compliant bidder, in the amount of \$627,700 plus HST.

Spring Street infrastructure renewal

The committee approved a staff recommendation to send the awarding of the Spring Street Infrastructure renewal project tender to the June 28, 2021, council meeting for approval.

Staff is recommending the tender be awarded to Bowers' Construction Ltd., the lowest compliant bidder, in the amount of \$373,891.

The project will see the water and sewer mains, the subgrade and the asphalt replaced on Spring Street, between Croft and Church Streets.

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