

VILLAGE OF NEW MINAS
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

JUNE 9, 2014

7:00 p.m.,

Conference Room, Louis Millett Community Complex (LMCC)

The regular monthly meeting of the New Minas Village Commission was held in the Conference Room of the Louis Millett Community Complex on Monday, June 9, 2014 at 7:00 p.m..

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair Dave Chaulk
Vice-Chair Maynard Stevens
Commissioner Mary Munroe
Commissioner Ken Pineo
Commissioner James Redmond
Clerk Treasurer Terry Silver

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Rec Director John Ansara
Mr. Gordon Lummis, Kings Citizens Coalition
Mr. Dave Ritcey, Kings Citizens Coalition
Mr. John Calpin, Kings Citizens Coalition
Mr. Lane Myers, Kings Citizens Coalition
Ms. Cathy Reid, Kings Citizens Coalition
Mr. Bruce MacArthur, Kings Citizens Coalition
Mr. Jim Winsor, Councillor District 11 and Kings Citizens Coalition
Mr. Tom MacEwan, CAO, Municipality of the County of Kings

CALL TO ORDER, Chair Chaulk

Chair Chaulk called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: June 9, 2014

It was moved by Commissioner Redmond, Seconded by Commissioner Pineo that the Agenda for the regular Commission meeting of June 9, 2014 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Commission Meeting May 12, 2014

It was moved by Vice-Chair Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Munroe that the minutes of the regular Commission meeting held May 12, 2014 be approved as circulated. MOTION CARRIED

PRESENTATION – Kings Citizens Coalition (KCC), Gordon Lummis/David Ritcey

Mr. Gordon Lummis addressed the Commissioners and started off by saying that he met with the Commission 25 years ago, and there was no “New Minas” in the phone book. Mr. Lummis then expressed opinions and points on behalf of the Kings Citizens Coalition:

- Concerned that the Kings Partnership Steering Committee does not recognize the Village of New Minas as an integral part of its Committee – New Minas is as large as Wolfville and Kentville.
- KCC would like to discuss the Village’s intention to consider a review of Town Status informally – this could be part of KCC study.
- There are “6” municipal units and “9” Villages in Kings County, all with high-paid managers and there could be a “few millions” saved in duplication of services.
- There needs to be a sense of community.
- Queens Municipality realized a 26% reduction in taxes.
- Wolfville has agreed to assist in the funding of a study.
- Berwick has not agreed to assist in the funding of a study.
- Planning is an issue in Kings County – Kings 2050 is “dealing with this”.
- A study would address such things for New Minas as:
 - The level of involvement and participation the Village would have.
 - Does the County adequately represent the Village in governing?
 - What do the Commissioners see in the future of governance?
 - The views on the Ivany Report
 - It is doubtful if the Provincial Government will permit more towns, and definitely they will not permit more Villages, in Mr. Lummis’ opinion
 - Should New Minas take a pro-active approach, or let the County and Province make decisions for New Minas?

Commissioner Pineo requested a copy of Mr. Lummis’ speech he just presented.

Mr. Dave Ritcey, KCC stated about a year ago he met with the Municipal Advisor and was advised that funding was available for studies of this nature. He stated that a study is important, to gather necessary information from experts. He stated that co-operation is important.

Chair Chaulk stated he has no problem with the concept (of a study) – if there is a better way of doing things, we should know. He noted he has not heard from anyone “on the street” as an elected official, that the public is concerned with the current governance structure. He said he is concerned as a Village Commissioner that we are denied a voice, and this very frustrating as elected officials for New Minas. He asked if they have looked at a model – if so, where would Villages fit?

Mr. Myers stated that KPSC turned aside a study on the notion they could expand shared services, expecting they would save “big dollars”, but nothing has been forthcoming from this group.

Chair Chaulk asked again if there was a governance model, and Mr. Ritcey replied there is no model – they need to have experts do a study to come up with a model. KCC is suggesting coming up with a “clean slate”. He stated that the Commissioners want what is best for their constituents, and there are a number of inequities he sees with the tax dollars not staying in New Minas.

Vice-Chair Stevens stated that the Village is in very good shape, and he stated that the worry is what happens in New Minas with a different governance scenario. Village taxes now help those in New Minas.

Chair Chaulk stated that he would only be satisfied with a governance change if it is in the best interests of the Village, if services would be at the same level as we have now or better, and first and foremost to look out for the best interests of the Village. He stated the Commission tried to be at the table of the KPSC so we could speak out as individuals, so there would be a record of what is being said. We were told that we are represented by our County Councillor, but that process does not serve us adequately.

Councillor Jim Winsor stated when he joined as a member of KCC, he was also frustrated that the Village was not recognized. He said part of the KCC’s mandate is to see that a governance study takes place, and he agrees with that, which is why he got involved. New Minas is a shopping center and the prosperity from this is tied to the rest of the County. It makes sense to look at how we do business, he said, and KCC advocates to review what things look like, not to have a full amalgamation.

Mr. Lummis stated that the Commission should be interested looking towards the future and the destiny of New Minas.

Commissioner Pineo took offense to this and stated emphatically that the future and destiny of New Minas is exactly why he and the rest of the Commissioners are here. He stated that for anyone to say otherwise is wrong and the mere suggestion offends him. He stated the shape New Minas is in speaks for itself.

Commissioner Munroe stated she has concerns with funding a study that doesn’t even include input from the Villages. She says she fears that something that works well (New Minas) might get broken.

It was stated that the reason Villages were not allowed to sit on the KPSC was that we were already being represented by our Councillor; however, our Councillor does not sit on the KPSC. Councillor Winsor stated that it may be comforting to the Commissioners to know that the KPSC may fizzle, due to issues surrounding their functioning.

Mr. Bruce MacArthur stated that if the Village Commissions had been made members of KPSC, a decision would have had to be made to do a study. KCC, he stated, is asking the Commission to consider making a motion to support a study by KCC. He said almost 20% of tax revenue for the County comes from New Minas tax payers. He said the Village Commission would be agreeing to support an unbiased study.

Chair Chaulk stated again he did not disagree with the concept.

Councillor Winsor suggested that within the next 3-4 years, or less, as the provincial government deals with municipalities currently in the dissolution queue, there will then be others following along. He feels it would be better for the study to come from KCC than for a forced provincial study.

Chair Chaulk stated his concerns that that we will not be allowed at the table. Dave Ritcey stated that these are legitimate concerns, and he asked the Commissioners to follow the lead of Kentville by moving the process along and agreeing to fund a study, in principle.

Chair Chaulk stated he, for one, is not ready to do that tonight. He stated the Commission will need time to think about the information.

Commissioner Pineo stated he has heard a lot of information, and he assumed there is a draft Terms of Reference for the study. Mr. Lummis stated there is no terms of reference at this point for the study. Commissioner Pineo said that someone has to start this ball rolling, he would like to hear what happens next. He said he would want to know what is going to be studied before he would feel comfortable funding a study. He has seen studies over the years be a total waste of time and money because there was no end in sight, and the Commission has an obligation to spend tax money wisely. He is not able to make the judgment call without knowing the terms of reference.

Chair Chaulk thanked the Committee for attending the meeting and for their presentation. He stated the Commission will consider the information and decide whether they can take a formal stand.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Sale of Civic Center – Update

Terry Silver stated there is nothing to report.

b) LED Lighting Program – Update

Terry Silver stated that the contractors, Black and MacDonald have started installing the new street lights, and the public has been advised of this.

c) Fire Department Capital – Update

Terry Silver advised she has received no new information with regard to the Fire Department Capital program. Commissioner Redmond stated he has not had any updates either.

d) Bylaw 63 – Open Burning – Update

Commissioner Redmond stated that Councillor Winsor was going to meet with County Operations Manager Brian Desloges to advise him that New Minas has concerns with several clauses in the revised Bylaw 63 – Open Burning, specifically he is opposed to open fires having to be 1,000 from a wooded area, and the mandatory spark arresters are not enforceable. They need to follow the Forestry Act, and that should be cited in Bylaw 63.

Councillor Winsor was invited to speak and he stated he had not had an opportunity to discuss this with Mr. Desloges yet, but he would.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Recreation Director's Report – John Ansara

The Commission referred to the Rec Director's Report, and Chair Chaulk asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Vice-Chair Stevens noted that the Rotary Club has confirmed a donation of \$25K for the Splash Park. Terry Silver mentioned the Lobster Take-Out supper was a success, and that staff fund-raising has netted \$5,000 to date. John Ansara thanked everyone who helped with the fund-raising efforts so far.

It was moved by Vice-Chair Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Redmond that the report of the Recreation Director be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED

b) New Minas Water Commission Report – Vice-Chair Stevens

Vice-Chair Stevens read the New Minas Water Commission Report (attached to original minutes).

County CAO, Tom MacEwan requested permission from the Chair to speak. He stated he was attending this meeting to answer any questions regarding Regional Sewer allocations, and to hopefully clear up any misunderstandings.

Vice-Chair Stevens asked Mr. MacEwan if the ACA's allocation has been taken over by the County. Mr. MacEwan responded that this assumption is incorrect. He said that last year, ACA was billed, as was every other partner and in accordance with their Agreement, however, nothing was paid by them. This year, rather than recalculate everything, the County took over the financial payment of the Capital amount in the Regional Sewer Budget, and the operation responsibility for ACA was distributed amongst the remaining partners.

Vice-Chair Stevens asked again about the capacity and allocation of same. Mr. MacEwan stated that nothing has changed in this regard. He stated that the governance review will determine how capacity is going to be determined, etc.. He further stated that partners each have a “license” to use the capacity in the system.

Vice-Chair Stevens asked Mr. MacEwan if he did not state at the Regional Sewer Meeting that the County would be taking over ACA’s capacity. Mr. MacEwan stated that when Kim Durling presented the budget, it was made clear that this was for budgeting purposes only. Vice-Chair Stevens said he asked the question at the RS meeting, “is the County taking over ACA’s capacity”, and he (Mr. MacEwan), stated they were. Mr. MacEwan stated that that comment was only in reference to the budget. He stated the capacity/allocation issue would be dealt with when the terms of the inter-municipal service agreements are developed. He went on to say that we (the governance committee) has recommended that an inter-municipal service agreement be developed for each of the partners, and that long term leases to operate and manage the facility would come from that.

Terry Silver asked Mr. MacEwan if the consultant has been hired to review the Agreements. Mr. MacEwan stated he didn’t know anything about hiring a consultant. He said it was the decision of the Governance Committee to enter into inter-municipal service agreements, similar to Valley Waste and Kings Transit. Terry stated that, although she was on the Governance Committee, she was not involved in any discussion where a decision was made to recommend to the Regional Sewer Committee this process. She stated she wasn’t opposed to the idea, she just wasn’t aware that this had been presented. Mr. MacEwan disagreed and stated that’s what had been decided.

Chair Chaulk thanked Mr. MacEwan for his information.

It was moved by Vice-Chair Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Redmond, the report of the New Minas Water Commission was approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED

c) New Minas Planning Advisory Committee – Commissioner Dean Hatt
There was no NMPAC meeting since the last Commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Motion to approve Village Tax Rates 2014/2015

It was moved by Commissioner Redmond, seconded by Vice-chair Stevens, that the Village Tax rates for 2014/2015 be approved as follows: Residential and Resource – 43 cents/\$100 of assessment, Commercial .592 center/\$100 of assessment. MOTION CARRIED

b) Motion to approve 2014/2015 General Operating and Capital Budgets

It was moved by Commissioner Redmond, seconded by Vice-Chair Stevens, that the General Operating and Capital Budgets for the Village be approved as presented, and as attached to the original minutes. MOTION CARRIED

c) Motion to approve expensing Capital Budget items from Capital Reserve

It was moved by Commissioner Redmond, seconded by Vice-Chair Stevens that expenses for Capital Budget items in the 2014/2015 General Budget be expenses from the General Capital Reserve. MOTION CARRIED

d) Motion to Transfer 2013/2014 Surplus to Capital Reserve

It was moved by Commissioner Redmond, seconded by Vice-Chair Stevens that the 2013/2014 surplus in the General Operating fund be transferred to the General Capital Reserve. MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

Councillor Jim Winsor – Councillor Winsor stated he had received a call from David Brown Trucking representative to see if any constituents have any concerns about their proposal to locate at the former ACA Co-Op. He stated there is a PIM (Public Information Meeting), and at 6:00 p.m. on June 17th, and there will be further public meetings. He urged the Commissioners and anyone from the public to come out to these meetings.

Councillor stated that there is a meeting being held to discuss complaints from noises and odors from the Dexter's Asphalt Plant.

Chair Chaulk thanked Councillor Winsor for his input.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Redmond that the meeting adjourn.

Dave Chaulk, Chair

Terry Silver, Clerk Treasurer