



**Town of Westville
Committee of the Whole Meeting
Council Chambers
January 18, 2021- 6:00 pm**

1. Call To Order

Mayor White called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Lennie White, Deputy Mayor Meghan Bragg, Councillor Mitchell MacGregor, Councillor Clarrie MacKinnon, Councillor Betty Jean Sutherland, Chief Administrative Officer Linda Brown, Recording Secretary Kristen Reed, Matt Reid, Robert Sarson and Susan Adshead of Department of Lands and Forestry, Shawn Luker, Anne Scheid and Jane MacMaster of Eastern Mainland Housing Authority

Due to Covid Precautions, the 10 person limit was reached. Therefore, it was conducted on Zoom and live streamed on Facebook for others to take part.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

4. Presentations

a. Urban Deer- Department of Lands and Forestry

Matt Reid, Robert Sarson and Susan Adshead Technicians from the Department of Lands and Forestry presented information on Urban Deer.

It included that many deer are born here in town and that food is easily accessible and there are less predators. They love Hostas and tulips as well as shrubs. The availability of food all winter means more survive and more, healthier offspring in spring. In the wild deer average 1-4 year life span, where urban deer have a 9-10 year life span.

Conflict with deer includes vehicle accidents, resulting to damage to vehicles, injury or death to the deer and sometimes injury or death to people in the vehicles.

Damage to people's property mainly includes damage to gardens and lawns with plants being eaten but sometimes deer get caught in fencing as well. Some deer have been strangled in cable lines. Deer can have diseases and parasites, including ticks which can pass disease to people. It is about 50/50 with people either loving deer or hating them and can cause arguments between neighbours, especially in instances where deer are being fed, or some instances hunted.

It takes a community effort to limit urban deer, but they can't be eradicated. Education is the biggest thing. Don't feed wildlife is important, as it alters nature.

Deer's number one predator are coyotes. Coyotes are in Westville. They follow the deer but also get cats and other animals they come across. Clear cuts are not the reason for urban deer. As clear cut areas provide food as regrowth making them popular areas with wild deer.

Solutions include education to stop feeding deer. Hunting in town is not an option but bylaws against feeding can be useful if enforced. Provincial government is discussing legislation for stop feeding wildlife. If urban deer were trapped and moved to wild many wouldn't survive as many were born and raised in town and diets are not that of wild deer. Not feeding in hard winters helps weed out weak and old deer as well as reduce offspring that year. Some US States use birth control which is effective but very expensive.

Tracking urban deer can be beneficial, but it is a lot of work and would require partnership with multiple people. Also when Public Works picks up road kill it would be beneficial to let Department know where the carcass originated for more accurate location. This could help pinpoint locations to consider deer crossing signs.

Mayor White thanked them for the presentation and said they will be getting an invite back to further discuss deer and also the bears.

b. Eastern Mainland Housing Authority

Mr. Shawn Luker, Ms. Anne Scheid and Ms. Jane MacMaster were present on the Zoom call to discuss with Council their Authority's role and responsibilities to the citizens of Pictou County and Westville.

The core function is housing for low income. Applications can be found online or at the office in New Glasgow. Geared to Income housing is 30% for people under 58 years old. For seniors, over the age of 58, it is 25% of income. Enriched housing is often attached to long term care and is transitional housing. It can include cleaning assistance and nurses. Qualifiers for housing include reference checks, residency requirements and household income limits. There are 50 senior units and 45 family units in Westville.

There is a tremendous demand and a long waiting list, with certain buildings being more in demand and some exceptions with priority access. For example a person requiring daily medical treatment that wants to move closer to the treatments can jump the wait list. Seniors average waitlist is 1 to 2 years and families are an average of 2 to 3 years. There are only 3 to 6 vacancies a year, but with offering rent assistance the wait list is not expected to increase much.

Housing includes heat but not other expenses. The rent collector goes over budgeting with people to help them be able to handle the expenses. They hope to be able to offer other assistance such as help with resume's and interview preparation in future.

If a tenant falls behind there are two types of arrears. Reasonable arrears are 1 or 2 months behind. They will be flexible and arrange a payment plan. Unreasonable arrears are more than that and are less flexible. The repayment of those is often

more than the tenant can handle. If the tenant is able to get character reference or some assistance than sometimes agreements can be made.

Previously the Authority presents the Town with a bill each year and it is hard for the Town to be able to budget for it as it can change drastically from year to year. They are attempting to give communities, including Westville, an estimate of a minimum and maximum a year in advance to help the Town budget the expense.

Mayor White thanked the Eastern Mainland Housing Authority for the information.

5. New/Unfinished Business

a. Committee of the Whole

Mayor White commented on the ability to see the value of the Committee meetings with the information received at this meeting. Although department heads won't regularly be part of the meeting it is nice to have a place to talk to them about large projects or items that have a lot of questions. It also helps Council to have more discussion about items and to get more information out to the public.

b. Diversity Statement

Council has discussed ensuring diversity in its Boards and Commissions, the following statement is used by the Provincial Government when advertising for their Agencies, Boards and Commissions. Council can review and request changes, the statement will be placed on the January 25, 2021 Agenda for approval.

"In order to increase the diversity of agencies, boards and commissions, applications are encouraged from youth, women, Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous people, African Nova Scotians and other racially visible people, persons with disabilities, Acadian Nova Scotians, immigrants and newcomers, and persons from the 2SLGBTQ+ community."

c. Energy Drinks

The use of energy drinks by minors was brought up at the Mayors and Warden's meeting in November 2020 due to a student in New Glasgow ending up in hospital after consuming energy drinks. A draft letter, as well as additional information was available to review. The Town of Pictou and the Municipality of Pictou County have both submitted the letter already. Deputy Mayor Bragg announced she would be happy to make changes to the letter if other's preferred but no suggestions were made at the meeting. The letter will move to Council meeting next week for motion.

d. Unsightly Committee - Westville

In discussing Unsightly Premises complaints with the Building Official Mannie Withrow, he brought up the need for the Town of Westville to have an unsightly committee, which is responsible for hearing objections to his cleanup and demolition orders. It would basically be an appeal committee.

Deputy Mayor Bragg asked about the current steps taken and if assistance or direction given. It was discussed that it is actually dangerous/unsightly complaints together and that the main concern is the danger component. There are criteria for unsightly or dangerous complaints, not just opinion, un-mowed lawn, etc. A number of the unsightly complaints were vacant, but sometimes people are unsure how to

proceed or are unable to do repairs or deal with issues. Perhaps part of the Unsightly committee could be to direct people to additional resources as well as hear appeals. This item will be forwarded to Council meeting for motion.

e. Electronic User Policies

As shared on January 14, 2021 with Council, three policies have been drafted related to Paperless Council Meetings, Electronic Mail and Internet Usage for Council and Staff. The exception to the Electronic Mail and Internet Usage Policies is for the Police Department, as they must have specialized policies relating to their role in Protective Services. Supplemental to the policies is an agreement related to the release of the Tablets for Council's use. CAO Brown was thanked for her assistance in helping everyone get set up on the new tablets. The new tablets were purchased by the Town and are being loaned to each Councillor. They were purchased with funds reserved for Councillors travel and training that hasn't been available due to Covid. This item will be forwarded to Council meeting for motion.

6. Next Meetings

a. Police Commission

Westville Council Chambers
January 19, 2021 – 6:00 pm

b. Regular Council Meeting

Westville Council Chambers
January 25, 2021 – 6:00 pm

c. Committee of the Whole

Westville Council Chambers
February 17, 2021 – 6:00pm

7. Adjournment

Mayor: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Date Approved: _____