



**Draft Minutes
Town of Westville
Committee of The Whole
Council Chambers
January 16, 2023 – 6:00 pm**

1. Call To Order

Deputy Mayor MacGregor called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. Roll Call

Deputy Mayor Mitchell MacGregor, Councillor Clarrie MacKinnon, Councillor Meghan Bragg, Councillor Bernie Murphy, Chief Administrative Officer Scot Weeres, Recording Secretary Kristen Reed, Joe Kippax Vice-chair of the Westville Accessibility Committee, Adam Hanna and Paul Beazley of PVSC (virtually) and 1 member of the public.

Regrets

Mayor Lennie White

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

4. Territory Acknowledgement

Deputy Mayor MacGregor read the Territory acknowledgement and also acknowledged the history of African Nova Scotians.

5. Presentations

Accessibility Committee

Joe Kippax, Vice Chair of the accessibility committee shared that Councillor Meghan Bragg and Public Works superintendent Sam Graham are the other members of the committee. Their objective is to provide Council with a proposed accessibility plan that will assist the Town in meeting its obligations under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act by 2030, and to be more planful when making investments in infrastructure.

The Accessibility Committee is mandated by the Accessibility Act to provide advice to Council regarding identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. The committee can play an important role in helping the Town become a barrier-free community. Westville, together with Stellarton, Trenton and New Glasgow, for part of the third largest urban area in Nova Scotia. Based on the 2021 Census, Westville has a population of 3,540 with 995 residents over the age of 60.

The Plan focuses on Awareness, Goods and Services, Information and Communication, Transportation, Employment and Built environment. Each area has a proposed commitment statement and documented Westville's Status with regards to recent

achievements, remaining barriers and proposed action items. The Awareness includes promoting awareness throughout the Town and the importance of accessibility. The Goods and Services are equitable access to the goods and services provided by the Town of Westville, including the office front counter. The Information and Communication is ensuring that all people can receive, understand and share the information provided by the Town. Transportation is the equitable access to transportation service for everyone, and Employment is making the Town an accessible workplace and fair employment practices. The Built environment is ensuring that the Town owned buildings and shared public spaces are accessible to all.

Westville is on the right track and has been making acceptable progress, but there is more to do. All residents, including those over the age of 60 will directly benefit from a more accessible community. It will take a focused commitment and a willingness to make annual investments over the next seven years for Westville to become compliant with the Accessibility Act.

The next step is for Council to approve the proposed Plan and submit it to the Minister for review. Then the budget allocation for accessibility will need to increase for the next seven years, and a concerted effort to tap into provincial, federal and private funding sources to leverage Westville's municipal accessibility budget.

Council thanked Mr. Kippax and a discussion took place regarding the Town is currently getting quotes for work to be done so that they will be available for budget discussions. It is easier and cheaper to design new environments to be accessible, rather than convert and retrofit the aging buildings that we have. Many of the areas overlap with other plans making more options for grants and funding. The committee still needs community input and involvement and so if anyone is interested please contact CAO Scot Weeres.

Property Valuation Services Corporation

After a technical issue we were able to join Paul Beazley, Regional Manager at PVSC and Adam Hanna, Assistant Director. They shared that Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) provides property assessment services and information for Nova Scotia's municipalities and property owners in accordance with the Nova Scotia Assessment Act. It was created under the terms of the Property Valuation Services Corporation Act, and is municipally funded. They deliver Assessment Rolls to all 49 Nova Scotia municipalities, that is over 630,000 notices to owners. PVSC Does not set the tax rates, collect taxes, create tax policy or provide tax relief.

Property Values are influenced by many factors including property type and size, location, building size and style, land features, construction quality, effective age/condition and market value. Property Classifications are Residential, Resource and Commercial. They use three approaches to valuating properties. Sales approach compares recent sales to similar properties common for houses. Income approach is used on properties whose value is based on ability to generate revenue, such as apartments, office buildings, etc. Cost approach is used when there aren't many comparable sales or if your property is unique. Determine the value of the land and calculate the current cost of replacing the buildings and apply a deduction for depreciation due to age or economic conditions.

The Assessment Cycle is as follows. The 2023 Assessment Roll reflects market value as of January 1, 2022 based on market value sales that occurred during the 2021 calendar year.

The roll accounts for physical changes like renovations, additions or demolitions in value of property by December 1, 2022. The 2023 Assessment Roll was sent to the Municipalities on December 30, 2022. Over 638,000 Property Assessment Notices were mailed to property owners on January 9, 2023. Assessment Appeals must be received by PVSC on or before February 9, 2023.

Looking back at 2021 material costs were high and home prices and sales were high. Westville roll has 205.5 million total assessed value. The residential value is 181,139,700 and the capped value is 158,413,700. The Commercial value is 24,393,200. Last year there were 12 appeals.

If a property is owned at least 50% by a Nova Scotia resident, has less than 4 dwelling units or vacant resource property, is occupied by the owner and has been owned for at least a year or ownership remained in the family it qualifies for Capped Assessment Program. If the assessed value is less than the CAP value there will be no cap value. The Taxable amount is the lower of the 2. They currently have all Service reps and Assessors Monday to Friday and Appeals can be emailed, faxed or mailed. The three levels of appeal are the PVSC initial assessor review. Assessors review each appeal and will confirm or amend the assessment based on their review. If not satisfied it can be taken to the Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal (NSAAT). It is an independent third party. If you are still not satisfied with the decision it can be taken to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

For questions about your assessment or appeals you can see the website www.pvsc.ca, call 1-800-380-7775 or email inquiry@pvsc.ca or fax 1-888-339-4555. There is a pin code on each assessment to log into the website to see more information.

To assess Hurricane Fiona damage they flew over high impact areas. They used building permits and people called in. They captured quite a bit of damage but if your assessment doesn't reflect it call them. If you repair or rebuild to the same level you had prior to Fiona immediately than the CAP would be applied to the same level. If you make additions or higher market rate the CAP level will be applied at the new market rate.

Provincially market value is up 20% but Consumer Price Index is 7.7% which is what is used for the CAP rate.

Municipal Report

The Municipal report was sent out for Council to read. A couple of highlights:

CPI is raising faster than the tax rate. This can be a red flag.

There is no Outstanding Operating debt and the operating reserve is in the moderate risk.

There is some risk as most of income is from residential taxes and government transfers.

The Town has gone from an overall rating of High risk to Moderate risk.

6. New Business

7. Next Meetings

a. Board of Police Commissioners Meeting

Westville Council Chambers
January 17, 2023 – 6 pm

b. Planning Advisory Committee

Westville Council Chambers
January 18, 2023 – 6pm

c. Council Meeting

Westville Council Chambers
January 30, 2023 – 6pm

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16pm.

Mayor: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Date Approved: _____