

**CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**  
*Special Council Meeting – Minutes*

**Monday,  
November 22, 2021  
1:07 p.m.  
Council Chambers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
320 Esplanade Sydney, NS**

**Mayor Amanda M. McDougall called the meeting to order.**

**Council:** Mayor Amanda M. McDougall  
Councillor Gordon MacDonald  
Deputy Mayor Earlene MacMullin  
Councillor Cyril MacDonald (arrived at 1:27 p.m. – 3:23 p.m.)  
Councillor Steve Gillespie  
Councillor Eldon MacDonald  
Councillor Glenn Paruch  
Councillor James Edwards  
Councillor Ken Tracey  
Councillor Darren O’Quinn  
Councillor Lorne Green (arrived at 3:22 p.m.)

**Staff:** Marie Walsh, Chief Administrative Officer  
Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial Officer  
Deborah Campbell Ryan, Municipal Clerk  
Demetri Kachafanas, QC, Regional Solicitor  
Michael Ruus, Director of Planning & Development  
Mike Targett, Community Consultation Coordinator  
Sharon MacSween, Senior Administrative Assistant  
Tanya Nicholson, Recording Secretary

**Absent:** Councillor Steve Parsons (Regrets)  
Councillor Darren Bruckschwaiger (Leave of Absence)

**Summary of Decisions**

**Land Acknowledgement**

**Roll Call**

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Motion** to approve the November 22, 2021 Special Council Agenda as circulated.  
**Carried.**

**2. PROCLAMATION:**

**2.1 United Way Cape Breton Giving Tuesday:**

**Motion** that Mayor Amanda M. McDougall and CBRM Council hereby recognize November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, as **GivingTuesday** in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.  
**Carried.**

**3. Overview of Meeting Process and Expectations:**

The Mayor provided an overview of the meeting process and expectations.

**4. NS Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:**

Representatives from the NS Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) provided a presentation on recent developments regard Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia.

**5. Council Discussion:**

Council discussed the DMAH presentation on Affordable Housing.

Continued...

**Summary of Decisions (Cont'd)**

**6. Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission:**

- Homelessness Perspective: “*Homelessness and Housing in CBRM*”  
Fred Deveaux, Executive Director - Cape Breton Community Housing Association

Mr. Deveaux provided a presentation on Homelessness and Housing in CBRM.

- Municipal Perspective & Work of Commission: Marie Walsh, CBRM Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer, and member of the Affordable Housing Commission, provided an update on the Province’s response to the Commission’s recommendations.

**7. Seton School Affordable Housing Project/North Sydney Food Bank:**

The President/CEO of New Dawn Enterprises provided a presentation on the Seton School Affordable Housing Project/North Sydney Food Bank.

**8. Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid re: Affordable Housing/Homelessness:**

Dr. Leviten-Reid provided a presentation on Affordable Housing/Homelessness.

**9. Review of Action Items from the Meeting:**

Mayor McDougall reviewed action items from this meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Land Acknowledgement**

**Roll Call**

**1. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion:**

Moved by Deputy Mayor MacMullin, seconded by Councillor Paruch, to approve the November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 Special Council Agenda as circulated.

**Motion Carried.**

**2. PROCLAMATION:**

**2.1 United Way Cape Breton Giving Tuesday:**

**Motion:**

Moved by Councillor Gillespie, seconded by Councillor Eldon MacDonald, that Mayor Amanda M. McDougall and CBRM Council hereby recognize November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, as **GivingTuesday** in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

**Motion Carried.**

**3. Overview of Meeting Process and Expectations:**

Mayor McDougall provided an overview of the meeting process and expectations, noting that representatives from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing would present first, followed by Council discussion.

Then the remaining presenters would follow, after which Council would engage in a wider discussion.

Continued...

**4. NS Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH):**

Mayor McDougall welcomed Deputy Minister Paul LaFleche and Associate Deputy Minister Mark Peck who provided a presentation on Recent Developments in Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia, highlighting the following:

- Housing Spectrum
- Housing in CBRM
- What is Affordable Housing?
- Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission (NSAHC)
- Cape Breton Regional Municipality: What We Heard
- NSAHC – Recommendations
  - Short-Term 2021/2022
  - Mid-Term 2022/2024
  - Long-Term 2024/2026
- CBRHA – Public Housing
- CBRHA – Rent Supplements
- New Support for Community Housing Sector
- A Healthy Nova Scotia: Solutions for Housing and Homelessness
- New Housing Investments

**5. Council Discussion:**

Council discussion on the DMAH presentation included:

- Inclusionary zoning flexibility so municipalities can negotiate with Developers (Province devolved the responsibility to municipalities)
- Donating land for Affordable Housing
- For-profit companies' involvement with Affordable Housing
- Affordable Housing crisis is recent issue
- Public Housing is Provincial responsibility - not Municipal
- Municipality's role in Affordable Housing is voluntary
- Shortage of Building Inspectors - impacts

Continued...

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION (Cont'd):**

- Consider CBRM Advisory Committee or Task Force consisting of CBRM representatives and Community Stakeholders
- Average income stats are for all of Nova Scotia - not specific to CBRM
- Affordable Housing in the private rental market
- Affordable Housing projects are determined by areas of high demand and applications submitted
- CMHC Eligibility
- CBRM applications have been approved but not announced
- Impact of CAP – CBRM willing to conduct a CAP Pilot Project
- CMHC Definition of Affordability – 30 percent of income one would pay in housing costs
- Direct financial support – will there be a limit in legislation for direct funding?
- First time home ownership market data in HRM versus market data in CBRM (re: \$5,000 rebate)

Mayor McDougall thanked Deputy Minister Paul LaFleche and Associate Deputy Minister Mark Peck for their presentation.

**6. Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission:**

- Homelessness Perspective: *“Homelessness and Housing in CBRM”*

Fred Deveaux, Executive Director of the Cape Breton Community Housing Association and member of the Provincial Affordable Housing Commission, provided a presentation which included the following:

- Research Context: Homelessness in the CBRM
- Housing Stock Research Conducted by Cape Breton University
- Housing Stock Research Results
- Who are these Units for? Targeting Renters in CBRM
- Who are these Units for, by Type of Provider?
- Median Shelter Costs Versus Shelter Allowances
- Vacancies: One Bedroom Market Rentals by Cost

**Continued...**

**Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission (Cont'd):**

- Municipal Perspective & Work of Commission:

Marie Walsh, CBRM Chief Administrative Officer and member of the Provincial Affordable Housing Commission, provided supplementary information to the Deputy Minister's presentation on the Commission's Recommendations, as follows:

- Government introduced legislation to strengthen tenant protections and provide clarity for landlords. It addresses the Commission's recommendation to modernize provincial legislation to protect renters against evictions due to renovations. The measures include:
  - Evicted due to renovation
  - Mutual agreements to terminate a lease between tenants and landlords must be in writing
  - Landlords must give the tenant between one and three months rent as compensation for the eviction
  - Landlord violations of the new protections can lead to additional compensation for tenants such as covering moving expenses or paying the difference between the tenant's new unit and the rent paid for their former unit, for up to one year.
- Potential strain on availability of rental properties when NSCC opens in Sydney (i.e. student residences)
- Concerns about the potential long-term impacts of extending the CAP on rental increases on housing supply (Commission not in agreement with that)

Ms. Walsh noted the formal progress report will be released the end of November and Council will receive a copy when available.

**Continued...**

**7. Seton School Affordable Housing Project/North Sydney Food Bank:**

Erika Shea, President/CEO – New Dawn Enterprises, acknowledged two members of her team that were in attendance: Mr. Lawrence Shebib, North Sydney Food Bank and Mr. Clayton Bartlett, Dora Construction. Ms. Shea then provided a presentation highlighting the following:

- New Dawn Enterprises
- What is the affordable housing goal? What is the extent of the need in CBRM?
- Why Should CBRM be Involved in the Provision of Affordable Housing?
- Economics of Affordable Housing: Two-bedroom Unit
- Building Healthy Communities
- Seton Capital Costs – Financing (Housing Only)
- Seton Operating Costs – Revenues (Housing Only)
- Conclusions
- Cautions
- Recommendations

**8. Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid re: Affordable Housing/Homelessness:**

Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid provided a presentation on Affordable Housing Research and the CBRM, highlighting the following:

- Presentation Outline
- Research Projects Involving the CBRM
- Why Affordable Rental Housing Matters: Local Findings
- In Designing Responses, the Non-profit Sector Plays an Important Role in Affordable Housing
- Proximity to Amenities and Service Needs to be Considered
- Neighbourhood Context Needs to Be Considered
- Neighbourhoods Need to be Considered in Designing Responses
- Reviewing Who the Proposed Affordable Housing is for is Also Important
- Other Considerations
- Homelessness and Emergency Responses

It was *agreed* to relax the speaking time rules for Council discussion.

Continued...

During Council discussion on the above presentations, some of the matters raised included:

- Possible future use of the Northside and New Waterford hospitals for affordable housing, and redirect monies earmarked for demolition to renovations for same
- Scattered site approach for Affordable Housing - not just in one location
- Setting Affordable Housing targets
- Stigmatized housing developments in our community
- Scoring criteria for national funding for Affordable Housing
- Redirect Homes on Tax Sale to Affordable Housing, noting that not all buildings can be renovated for safe, dignified housing
- Options to explore (i.e. existing dwellings - not just new builds)
- Outreach to the community
- Student demand for rental units in the CBRM could be impacting housing shortage
- Conversations with NSCC re: housing students
- Need for more diverse housing in the CBRM

Mayor McDougall thanked all of the presenters for their presentations.

**9. Review of Action Items from the Meeting:**

Mayor McDougall noted the following items would be addressed:

- 1) Take an inward look to see if CBRM has buildings such as the Northside and New Waterford Hospitals that could be considered for housing projects and include a look at the financial analysis in terms of Municipal contribution to financing these projects.
- 2) Council workshops in the coming weeks and months focused around vacant CBRM buildings for Affordable Housing.
- 3) Suggestion that a Council Colleague may want to bring a Resolution to the next Council meeting to write to the Provincial and Federal counterparts to recognize that affordable housing is a fundamental human right, and ask the Clerk to add the issue on the agenda.

**Continued...**

**Review of Action Items from the Meeting (Cont'd):**

- 4) A Housing Task Force – formulate community consultation i.e. survey, series of community-based meetings.  
*(Note: referred to the Community Consultation Coordinator, Mike Targett)*
- 5) Jurisdictional and national scan on what other Municipalities are doing in terms of Advisory Committees and Task Forces.  
*(Note: for Mike Targett, Community Consultation Coordinator)*
- 6) Ask a member of Council to bring a Resolution to the next Council meeting in regard to student housing.
- 7) Share with Council the information and resources from the most recent poverty conference held locally.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.**

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**Mayor Amanda M. McDougall**

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**Deborah Campbell Ryan**  
**Municipal Clerk**