

**RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF VICTORIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY JANUARY 9, 2024
6:30PM – OLD SCHOOL
730 VICTORIA RD., VICTORIA**

MINUTES OF OPEN SESSION OF THE MEETING

Attendance of Councillors: Mayor Martin Ruben, Councillor Eric Gilbert and Councillor Shelley Trainor; (via Zoom) Councillor Linda Gilbert and Councillor Tom Wright.

Regrets: Deputy Mayor Jean McCardle and Councillor Ben Smith.

Staff: CAO Anna Keenan, FAA Marsha Empson

Members of the public via Zoom.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Martin Ruben called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

2. Approval of agenda

Suggested amendments provided by Mayor Ruben:

- New Business - letter from Communities in Bloom.
- Correspondence - EMO training letter.

Motion moved by Councillor Eric Gilbert to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Councillor Trainor.

Motion carried unanimously (4/4).

3. Declarations of conflict of interest

None

4. Adoption of Minutes

a. 13 November 2023 Regular Meeting of Council

Motion moved by Councillor Trainor to approve the minutes of November 13 2023, seconded by Councillor Linda Gilbert.

Motion carried unanimously (4/4).

b. 20 November 2023 Special Meeting

Motion moved by Councillor Trainor to approve the minutes of November 13 2023, seconded by Councillor Linda Gilbert.

Motion carried unanimously (4/4).

c. 11 December 2023 Regular Meeting of Council

Motion moved by Councillor Trainor to approve the minutes of November 13 2023, seconded by Councillor Wright.

Motion carried unanimously (4/4).

5. Public Presentations/Petitions/Delegations & public comments questions

a. Brief period for comments from the public to Council

Henry Dunsmore read the following from a prepared statement:

*“I find it disconcerting that the **Dangerous and Unsightly Property Bylaw** was unheard of prior to it’s proposal for first reading at the October 18th, 2023 general Council meeting. Looking back at the agendas and minutes of Council from May to September 2023 there was no mention in any form that this bylaw was being considered.*

Also, there is no indication of who wrote the by-law, who directed the author of the by-law, and when it was written; all of which suggests a lack of transparency. I assume that the introduction of this by-law was only made public with the receipt of the October 18th, 2023 meeting Council package (Item 11a) allowing only a few days for Council and the public to review the by-law. This short lead time, in which to properly read and interpret the content and implications of the by-law, seems hasty and lacking in due diligence.

This is affirmed by the fact that the second reading of the by-law was scheduled for consideration at the December 11th 2023 meeting. Fortunately, there seemed to be greater thought put into the by-law (due to the amount of comments and questions recorded in the minutes of the December 11th, 2023 meeting).

*I am pleased that the Council felt it appropriate to delay the second reading of the **Dangerous and Unsightly Property Bylaw**, unanimously voted for in the December Council meeting, however I feel the recommendation that it be reviewed by a **Committee of the Whole Council** should be preceded by public input. Without additional input from other sources, it seems likely that the results of a closed-door meeting on the by-law would result in the same outcome.*

I recommend delivery of the proposed bylaw to all residents of the community for their consideration and response OR an invitation to an open public meeting to gather opinions and hear first-hand reactions to the proposed by-law.

I believe that this by-law would particularly have significant impact on the property owners of the Central Core (CC) of the community (more so than property owners in the sub-divisions) and requires comprehensive, careful and clear language specifically targeting the CC properties. To that end, I recommend a more CC-weighted committee of decision makers and I feel confident that there are members of the CC community that would come forward to sit on that committee.”

Comments:

- Mayor Ruben thanked Mr. Dunsmore for his comments and input and provided the following in response:
 - Procedural bylaw process was followed by council, as well as MGA requirements.
 - Concerns were raised in the community and brought to the province, who advised to form a bylaw.
 - The bylaw as written was adopted from another municipality for council to consider.
 - The process to ensure bylaws are fit for purpose will be followed by council.
 - Suggestions for public input or potentially having a committee are on the table.
- CAO Keenan explained that Committee of the Whole meetings are held publicly, and advance public notice would be given of the date, time and subject matter. She recommended that this type of meeting be held once the new CAO has been hired.
- A resident commented that there are more parts to the village than subdivisions and the central core.

6. Business arising from Minutes

None this month.

7. Reading of Correspondence

- a. From Scott Travers (CEO Amar Seafoods)** - forms part of meeting package.

Mayor Ruben indicated he would be meeting with Mr. Travers on January 10 for a tour of the plant and to hear what their proposal is about. Any council member is free to request more information about the proposal as well. No applications have been received to date, therefore no actions resulting for the municipality.

b. EMO training letter - tabled until EMO plan is in place. Letter forms part of meeting package.

Action - CAO to share EMO letter to community so that members of the public, as well as council, who would like to take advantage of the training can do so.

8. Reports from Standing and ad hoc Committees

- a. Water & Sewer Corporation** - *No meetings since last Council meeting.*
- b. Planning Board** - *No meetings have been held since the last Council meeting.*

The January 16 public meeting, for public comment on the draft Official Plan and Bylaw, has been rescheduled to January 23 @ 6pm. The meeting will be held at the Old School, 730 Victoria Rd., Victoria.

9. Report from CAO

- a. Activities report (includes update on reports)**
- b. Actions list**

- c. Development permits report**
- d. Financial update**
- e. Water test results transparency**

CAO Keenan provided a brief update and thanked community members for words and gifts of support over Christmas.

- Very few work hours due to being away through December.
- Standard reports form part of the meeting package.
- W&S projects (wharf and generators) continue to move ahead.
- The Causeway project is now complete with no issues. Stantec final inspection remaining before sign off.
 - Capacity not available for a project evaluation report, will attempt to include learnings in February CAO report.
- Currently working for the municipality ~1.5 days/week.

10. Inquiries by members of Council

None

11. Introduction and Reading of Bylaws

(None this month.)

12. Appointments to Committees

(None this month)

13. Introduction of New Business

- a. Motion #2024-01 Recognizing 75 years of the Victoria Volunteer Fire Department**

Motion moved by Councillor E. Gilbert, seconded by Councillor Trainor.

WHEREAS the Victoria Volunteer Fire Department celebrated 75 years of operation in 2023, and held an award ceremony in December for this purpose.

BE IT RESOLVED that Council thanks all current and former volunteers with Victoria's Volunteer Fire Department who have served the community, and congratulates the Fire Department on their significant milestone of 75 years of operation.

Discussion:

- Gratitude offered for all the work done in the community by the FD.

Motion carried unanimously (4/4).

- b. CAO Seeks Direction from Council RE expectations for content of meeting minutes.**

- Current style, developed over the last year, is more than the required minimum.
- Full notes may still be taken by staff, but may not be published in minutes. A more abbreviated version would save a couple of hours of staff time per month. Largest benefit would be faster completion for faster provision to Council, and less time required by Council to review the written record.

7:07pm - Councillor Wright left the meeting, due to a warning to seek shelter from a tornado in his area. A quorum of 4 was retained, with 3 Councillors and the Mayor present.

Council discussion resulted in agreeing to shorter written minutes, with audio (not video) recordings to be saved to an internal archive held by staff. Consideration may be given by Council in regard to publishing the audio/video recordings for public access at a future time.

13b. Communities in Bloom

Correspondence received was tabled by Mayor Ruben, with encouragement as a municipality to participate.

JOIN US FOR A FREE CiB WEBINAR!

GROWING GREAT PLACES IN ATLANTIC CANADA!

Join four successful Communities in Bloom communities on January 25th where they share information on the CiB program and how it has benefited all aspects of their community.



MAUREEN LEAHEY
CHAIR, PUGWASH
COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM



MARY MARON
PUGWASH COMMUNITIES
IN BLOOM



DAVID SWALLOWS
YARMOUTH, NS



CHARLOTTE NICHOLSON
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS COORDINATOR
CHARLOTTETOWN, PE



RON DELANEY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM DIRECTOR
BAY ROBERTS, NL



DATE
JAN 25, 2024

TIME
11:00AM AST

REGISTER NOW

Action - CAO to forward Communities in Bloom correspondence to council members.

Public comments prior to moving to closed session:

- Resident Henry Dunsmore stated that while Zoom participant audio is beautiful, audio from room participants is terrible. In particular he couldn't hear CAO Keenan, as there is an echo or distortion present. He wouldn't be able to make a decision if he was on council due to not being able to understand the words.
- Councillor L. Gilbert confirmed that she also had a hard time hearing the audio while participating through Zoom so she phoned in to connect to audio instead, in an attempt to hear better.
- Susan Oxley indicated that Zoom has a Closed Captioning feature.

Action - research how to improve sound on zoom recordings. Henry Dunsmore is willing to assist.

Motion moved by Councillor Trainor to close the meeting at 7:28pm.

Motion seconded by Councillor E. Gilbert.

Motion carried (3/3).

7:34pm - Councillor Wright returned to the meeting via Zoom.

Motion moved by Councillor Trainor to open the meeting @ 7:44pm, seconded by Councillor E. Gilbert.

Motion carried unanimously (4/4).

15. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm.

Submitted by CAO Anna Keenan

Approved by Mayor Ruben