



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2022002

DATE: 18 January 2022

RE: Town of Amherst to seek public input on town council size

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst residents will soon be asked to comment on the size of the community's town council.

At its Jan. 17, 2022, meeting, the Amherst town council's committee of the whole directed staff to hold a public participation session in the near future that will seek input from the public on the size of council.

The public session is part of a review on the size of council the Municipal Government Act requires the town to conduct every eight years. The last review took place in 2014.

The act also requires the town to apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for approval to maintain the size of council or make a change.

The committee believes, subject to the upcoming public participation session, the status quo – six councillors elected at large – should be maintained because the town's population has remained stable, the town's boundaries have not changed and the number of councillors per electorate has remained relatively static.

After considering the public's input gleaned from the public participation session, the council will make a decision on whether the status quo should be maintained or changed.

Once that decision is made, the town will then file an application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. The board is also required to hold a public hearing on the application. After considering both the application and the public's input, the board will render a final decision on the size of the council.

A date for the public participation session being held by the town will be announced in the near future.





External Committee Policy Review

The committee of the whole is going to take another look at the Town of Amherst's Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members Appointed to External Boards policy.

Committee members are to provide feedback on any possible changes they would like to see in the policy and present them at a future committee of the whole meeting.

The review of the policy is being conducted as part of the Amherst town council's strategic initiative to review all of the town's policies.

Meeting dates

The committee approved sending a staff recommendation to change the dates of the February and April committee of the whole meetings and the May regular council meeting to the Jan. 24, 2022, council meeting for approval.

Staff recommended the changes because the normal meeting dates in those months fall on statutory holidays. They recommend the February committee of the whole meeting be held on Feb. 22, the April meeting on April 19 and the May council session on May 24.

Presentations

Presentations were made to the committee by the Amherst Heritage Trust and the Amherst Little League.

The trust asked the town to participate in renewing/rewriting the town's Built Heritage Bylaw, reinstating the Heritage Advisory Committee and actively demonstrate support for the town's built heritage.

The league asked the town to help develop a mini-baseball field for children between the ages of four and eight. They would like to see the field built in the park on Beacon Street.





They also asked the town to consider providing financial assistance to purchase a lot near the little league fields that they would use for parking and an outdoor training facility that would include batting cages and bullpens.

The committee directed staff to review the requests from the two organizations and to provide a report to the committee in the near future.

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