



MEDIA RELEASE

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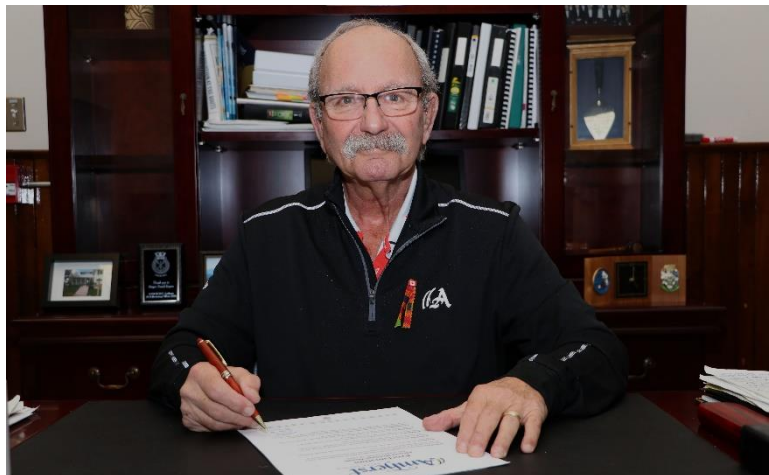
DATE: 28 January 2022

RE: African Heritage Month proclaimed in the Town of Amherst

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – The month of February has been proclaimed African Heritage Month in the Town of Amherst.

Noting this year's theme is Through Our Eyes – The Voices of African Nova Scotians, Mayor David Kogon said it is important that "we are willing to hear, share and learn from stories as presented from the African-Nova Scotian perspective.

"It is the only true way that we can achieve inclusivity, justice and equality for all."



Amherst's Black community has contributed greatly to the community over the years, though that contribution has not always been recognized, Kogon added, as he signed the proclamation on behalf of the Amherst town council on Friday, Jan. 28, 2022.

MAYOR DAVID KOGON SIGNS A PROCLAMATION ON BEHALF OF THE AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL THAT DECLARES FEBRUARY TO BE AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN THE TOWN OF AMHERST. (TOM McCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)

In an effort to ensure that contribution is recognized and in effort to ensure everyone's voice is heard, Kogon said the town recently created an Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee.

"Its purpose is to advise the Amherst town council on matters related to inclusion and diversity within the community and within the Corporation of the Town of Amherst," he





said. “The town is committed to hearing the stories, working together, to learn from our shared history so that we in Amherst can say that this town, as the great Martin Luther King Jr. said, judge people ‘not by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character.’”

Elizabeth Cooke-Sumbu, executive director Nova Scotia Works CANSA, said this year’s theme reflects what is happening in our world today.

“The 2022 theme, ‘Through our Eyes – The Voices of African Nova Scotians, is sending a message that we want to be heard and need to be heard – if change is going to happen,” Cooke-Sumbu said.

Noting that this year’s African Heritage Month poster contains an intergenerational visual of listening and learning, Cooke-Sumbu said, “What we recognize so clearly today is the effect and impact the deletion of Black History has had on individuals, not only in our province but worldwide.

“We, as Black People, can tell the story as we continue to research that history, which was erased. It is important that others hear our stories first-hand as well.”

Cooke-Sumbu said she has always believed learning is a life-long experience.

“There is no better time than the present to continue to understand this history, good, bad or indifferent,” she said, adding, “We all have a responsibility to pass on, from generation to generation, those learned lessons.

“Black Lives Matter is not new but understanding the terminology and the back story behind it is important. It is our history. Truth and reconciliation are not new, but understanding the connection between the harm that was done and why the reparation discussion is so important to Black Nova Scotians.

“Every citizen has a role in dismantling the effects of colonization – another new word for our vocabulary. Let us continue to share the history and share the stories because a true lesson learned prepares your tomorrow for a better lived experience.”

As part of African Heritage Month, the town is holding an essay and poster contest for students. The essay contest is for those in grades 7-12, while the poster contest is for those in grades Primary-6. Details can be found on the Amherst Recreation Department Facebook page and the town website.





The town is also offering an African Heritage Month take and make craft. Details on how to obtain the craft can also be found on the recreation Facebook page and town website.

In addition, the town will post an African Heritage Month video tribute on its website and social media on Feb. 2.

CANSA will produce two community panel presentations, one from youth perspective and one from community leaders. More details can be found on the CANSA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CANSA.NSWorks/> in the days to come. A concert is also being planned for Springhill, but whether it goes ahead will be determined by COVID restrictions in place at the time.

Lastly, Darlene Strong will release a new exhibit at the Cumberland County Museum during the month entitled: Maria's Place – The Path to the Past – Feb. 1 to Feb. 28.

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