



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2020001

DATE: 23 January 2020

RE: **Committee of the whole recommends taking steps to help the environment**

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst town council's committee of the whole took several steps during its Jan 20, 2020, meeting it says will help the town become a greener community and directly address council's declaration last summer of a Climate Change Emergency.

The committee directed staff to prepare a report on the implications of the town becoming a signatory of the David Suzuki Foundation's Blue Dot program, a program that is working towards ensuring there is legal protection for every Canadian's right to live in a healthy environment.

The report is to include the Canadian communities that have already joined the program, whether there have been any positive or negative impacts on those community as well as the ability of those communities to attract businesses or residents.

Directly in response to council's declaration of a climate emergency, the committee is recommending that council, at its Jan. 27, 2020, meeting, authorize the CAO to enter into an agreement with EfficiencyOne to hire an on-site energy manager.

The contract with EfficiencyOne would have a two-year term to identify and implement energy efficiency projects, update the town's 2010 emissions inventory and assist in developing a community energy strategy.

While the primary objective of contracting the services of an on-site energy manager is to find ways to reduce the town's carbon footprint, it was noted during the meeting that several other municipalities and institutions in the province have hired on-site energy managers through EfficiencyOne and have experienced some savings as a result of being part of the program.

The town currently spends \$800,000 to \$900,000 per year in non-renewable energy costs.



The cost of the contract with EfficiencyOne will be \$100,000 per year and will include all employment related costs. It will be funded from operating reserves and offset by any direct energy cost savings that are not reinvested in energy retrofits.

If approved by council, it is expected the agreement with EfficiencyOne would be signed immediately and the on-site energy manager would begin work in April. The on-site energy manager will be an employee of EfficiencyOne.

The committee is also recommending council approve, at its Jan. 27, 2020, meeting, a resolution that would see the town join the Partners for Climate Projection program.

It was indicated during the meeting that joining the program would formalize the town's commitment to green-house gas reduction and action on climate change.

Joining the program is free and provides the town access to tools, resources, funding opportunities and a guidebook that outlines how municipalities can develop a local action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Street name changes

The committee directed staff to investigate the possibility of renaming two of the town's streets.

The action was taken following a request to change Copp Lane to E.J. Mills Lane in honour of Ernie Mills, a local craftsman and tradesman who contributed greatly to the town, and a desire by the town to pay tribute to wrestling legend Rocky Johnson, an Amherst native who passed away earlier this month, by renaming Lord Amherst Drive as Rocky Johnson Drive.

All members of the committee supported taking steps to honour Johnson, but some expressed concerns about changing Copp Lane to E.J. Mills Lane because it runs counter to the town's street naming policy, which aims to avoid confusion. The town already has a Mill Street and a Mill Avenue.

As part of the direction to staff, the committee suggested they look into whether changing the name of Copp Lane to Ernie Lane would be acceptable.

Staff are to bring back a report on the possible name changes to the committee in the very near future. The process of investigating street name changes includes consultation with property owners to seek their input. No final decisions have been made at this time.

Meeting dates

The committee is recommending that council, when it meets on Jan. 27, 2020, change the dates of two upcoming committee of the whole meetings because the scheduled meeting dates fall on statutory holidays.



They noted the February meeting is scheduled for Feb. 17 – the Heritage Day holiday – and suggested it be changed to Feb. 18. They also noted the May meeting falls on May 18 – Victoria Day – and suggested that month’s meeting be held on May 20.

Policy amendments

The committee recommended that council, at its Jan. 27, 2020, meeting amend the town’s Community Support Grant and Athletic Achievers policies.

The change to the support grant policy would give ‘A’ Fresh Start Initiative grant recipients 12 months, after the approval date, to plan and execute the event.

The change to the Athletic Achiever policy would enable the town to recognize athletes who win bronze, silver or gold at national and/or international competitions. Currently, only gold winning athletes can be honoured.

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