



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2020054

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RE: New sign directs traffic to Laplanche Street

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – New signage has been erected at the provincial COVID-19 checkpoint informing motorists they have the option of using Laplanche Street to enter the Town of Amherst.

The sign, which also informs motorists they can enter Amherst via Exit 3, follows a lobbying effort put forth by several downtown businesses and the Town of Amherst.

The town received a letter signed by 30 downtown businesses on Aug. 9, 2020, that expressed concerns about the lack of traffic entering the community via Laplanche Street and the negative effect that was having on their businesses.



This sign directing motorists to downtown Amherst via Laplanche Street or Exit 3 was installed at the COVID-19 checkpoint at the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border on Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2020. (Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst)



They noted the problem was caused by the fact Exit 1A on Highway 104, located near the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border, had been blocked so vehicles entering the province could be routed through the COVID-19 checkpoint the provincial government set up at the Nova Scotia weigh scales, which is accessed via Exit 1B. In blocking Exit 1A, the province effectively prevented motorists from entering the town via Laplanche Street.

The letter said the group would be expressing their concerns to provincial officials and urged the town to support their efforts at finding a solution.

The same day Mayor David Kogon scouted out the situation and noted the vast majority of traffic at the checkpoint was redirected back onto the Trans Canada Highway, with only a handful of cars directed onto Laplanche Street via a road identified on maps as Fort Lawrence Scalehouse 4.

“In talking with a person at the COVID-19 checkpoint, I learned they were allowing people who knew about the connection to Laplanche Street to use it, but he didn’t have the authority to change the way the pylons were situated or to erect a sign that would give motorists the option of using Laplanche Street to access the downtown,” Kogon said, adding he informed council members and town staff of the issue.

Over the next two days, town officials contacted the departments of Environment and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal offering support for the downtown businesses and their suggestion that signage be put up at the checkpoint informing people of the option to use Laplanche Street or Exit 3 to enter the Town of Amherst.

Provincial officials responded quickly, promising to look into the matter. By the end of the week, the town received notice from those official that changes to the checkpoint would be made to allow motorists to use the Laplanche Street entrance into town and direction signs would be erected showing people they could enter the town via Laplanche Street or Exit 3 would be erected on Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2020.

“We want to thank the departments of Environment and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for their quick action on this,” Kogon said. “It shows what can be achieved when we work together to find a solution to a problem.”

Those comments were echoed in an email the mayor received from the downtown businesses.

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Direct enquiries to:
Tom McCoag,
Corporate Communications Officer
902-694-6265
tmccoag@amherst.ca

