

Staff Report April 09, 2019

CAO – Alain Muisse

Municipal Administration Building *Council Priority

The municipal building design is going through a substantial change in order to ensure the budget set by Council will be attained. The net-zero components remain part of the project, however, there will be significant adjustments to material selection, the roof and the council chamber in order to bring the figures closer to expectations. The plan in its entirety will be presented to council and the municipal building committee in the coming weeks. It is anticipated that the major tender will be issued in January of 2020, with components on the land improvements and public road tender to be issued in 2019.

Affordable and Alternative Housing *Council Priority 2017

There is private company interest in two locations for affordable/alternative housing – with the planning work ongoing for their completion. Nothing significant to update from CHOICE Housing regarding their short- or longer-term plans.

Rural Internet – WREN *Council Priority

Nothing significant to update – Council considers this item a high priority and will be considering its financial involvement in a major upgrade that will require Provincial and Federal assistance.

Mariners Center expansion *Council Priority

The steering committee met on Friday, April 5th to discuss next steps. An official communication will be issued to the community at large. We are in the process of hiring a firm to assist us with the funding application, and there is work that will be done on the projected revenue and expenses for the project as well as the capital estimates.

Yarmouth International Airport Corporation *Council Priority

The 60-day extension is in effect, and the CAO's have not yet met to negotiate. Expected timeframe is this coming week with work ongoing. Council has committed to a smaller footprint should there be a continuation of support for this service.

Eel Brook Fire department – new fire hall

The Fire Department has selected the contractor to demolish and prepare the land for the new fire station. They have approved a rate increase to 12.5 cents to support the construction, and their request for funding has not yet been determined. Staff will be preparing information for the committee of the whole meeting.

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Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission (YAIC)

Nothing significant to update, draft budget will be presented at the next meeting, and the CAO's will be meeting to discuss the long-term plan for the Port.

Sea Cucumber appeal

The dates of April 24-26, 2019 for the appeal hearing have been changed at the request of the appellant. The revised date is May 14, with May 15-16 held if required.

Provincial Work, AMA and other

I will be chairing the AMA meeting this coming Thursday April 11th. The NSFMS wrote to the Province of NS identifying concerns with the total lack of consultation on the negotiated library funding. We have no recent information on the status of this funding and when, or if, it will increase for Municipalities

There is nothing significant to update on the future staffing needs of Senior Safety program. The Municipality of Yarmouth's Coordinator will be retiring this year.

Finance & Taxation Department – Marsha d'Eon

The Finance Department is busy working on the 2019-20 Draft Budget. The department is also working on year end/auditing preparations and HST Remittance. (HST Offset was submitted on March 11, 2019). Auditors will be here the week of June 17th, 2019.

Our advertising and mail out for the 2019 exemption is complete and applications are coming in. The deadline is May 3, 2019.

Address changes, appeal adjustments and other preparations are being worked on for this year's tax billing.

All services, including monthly reconciliations, accounts payable, and monthly financial reporting to staff and Council continues and is on schedule.

Community Development – Charlene LeBlanc

1. Assisted with AFF applications, valued well over 500k, and requests keep coming. Had requests to assist companies from both Clare and Barrington. I approached Dept of Fisheries & Aquaculture to do an information session next week in Barrington for those interested.
2. Assisted with a few Grants to Orgs
3. Attended a couple doc recruitment meetings
4. Attended a Business succession planning luncheon sponsored by WREN
5. Did some water testing for aquaculture; had a volunteer biologist with me
6. Webcam program is accepting applications

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7. Directional signage program is accepting signage
8. Received Fram Cruise schedule
9. Finalizing the Congres Mondiale 2024 site visit details
10. Judged at the Heritage fair at Drumlin school
11. Attended a town Hall meeting in Clarks Harbour Re: nature Trust purchase on Seal island
12. Housing in one of our communities is progressing nicely
13. The funding for aquaculture dev is almost exhausted and the project will be completed soon.

Department of Public Works – Hans Pfeill

West Pubnico Sewer Treatment Plant (WPSTP)

Plant Operations

The plant operates at a high level of efficiency and is compliant with NSDoE guidelines.

Operations are running smoothly and within budget so far.

All 12 pumping stations are being monitored on a regular interval and everything seems to work normal. We experienced a few minor issues due to heavy rainfall but were able to resolve the issues at very low cost and within a short time. Residents were not majorly affected except a few slow flushing toilets. A review of our main lines via video should be scheduled over the next year or two.

We published a tender for the construction of the Dewatering truck Garage. Closing is scheduled for end of April and we are anticipating to present an award recommendation to council at the end of April. Detailed drawings and specifications were provided by WSP Canada Inc. and construction should start mid May. We anticipate to have the new garage available for spring/summer 2019. In the meantime we found storage space for the truck over the winter at Comeaus Seafood in Middle East Pubnico.

We submitted our annual NSDoE report ahead of time this year and are awaiting to hear back from the local office. We are operating far under the NSDoE effluent limits set out in our license agreement and hope for a good record from NSDoE.

Past Initiatives

We had ordered a new mixer for the SBR2 tank to replace the broken one and the new item was shipped to us within the last week. KRC Controls updated the Computer system at the plant and the system is running better now and increases the operator's safety during bad weather situations.

Future Initiatives

The new mixer will be replaced as soon as the weather gets warmer and allows for safe work within the SBR2 Tank. To further optimize our operation we may look into testing of different polymers to help with the dewatering process or re-purposing the drainage pads for further sludge holding and aging.

Tusket Sewer Treatment Plant

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Plant Operations

The operation of this system continues in a relatively orderly basis, with our permit good until 2024. We are in compliance with NSDoE operating parameters. We submitted our annual NSDoE report and are awaiting to hear back from the local office. According to our records we are operating far under the effluent limits set out in our permit and we are hoping for a good record from the department. This month we did not experience any interruptions and the system is running smoothly.

This month we did not receive any connection request.

Past Initiatives

Louis is actively working on improvements on the plant and overall system and operations are getting less expensive.

Future Initiatives

Staff is preparing to fix the overflow at the plant to avoid future flooding and breakdowns and we will take a more active approach on controlling grease and storm water infiltration. We are also focusing on some minor repairs on some tank manholes to improve the systems and lower the impact of storm water infiltration. This all will help to assure the full life expectancy of the overall system.

Municipal Administration Building

The public works department is available to support the CAO with the next steps of the process. As a result of recent meetings and discussions with the Architects we were able to resolve some communication issues and will take on a more active role in the process to support in the project management efforts. The CAO will have more information on the project status and future progress. In general, we tightened up the reporting structure and established clear milestones to stay on track for the next good tendering opportunity. Some simplifications to the building envelope will be necessary and internal modifications possible to potentially lower the overall construction costs. Maintaining the Net-Zero technology was never of discussion in order to maintain the federal funding through FCM. All changes will be double checked with FCM if it will have an impact on our contract or not. All project team members and staff are eager to move forward and successfully build the new building in the very near future.

Staff is also involved in developing the remaining land beyond the new building location and we engaged ABLE Engineering to support us with detailed road and sewer design information to extend the road further east to allow for more developments. This will open up the opportunity to use the land sale to support the road establishment and lower some costs for the new building construction. We are aiming to have the new subdivision approved within this summer and can tender the road construction soon after. This development will allow for potential low-income housing initiatives and an appropriate public land sale procedure will be published as soon all administrative work is approved, registered and legally deeded.

Policy and By-Law Working Group

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Due to a high priority on construction projects we postponed the process of registering our By-Laws for the use of SOT's. We are still recommending to review our by-laws in close coordination of an experienced lawyer before starting the registration process. This task is scheduled for summer/fall 2019.

We started preparing a new policy for the dangerous and unsightly by-law to better assist our residents with the clean-up efforts and cost relief considerations. This policy may be the first of its kind in NS and will take a bit of time to complete due to its complexity and new context. The policy is currently under review by the CAO and our legal team to verify wording and intent.

We are also reviewing the Tusket Waste Water Management By-law to improve the administration and allow for further development within the community. Council had approved our new snow removal policy, which provides proper guidelines and protection for our field staff.

East Pubnico Water Utility

System Operations

Staff continues to monitor and make repairs as necessary. Meter readings are performed on a regular basis. This month we came across some leakage around the Middle East Pubnico System and were able to repair the issue within normal cost and within budget. We engaged WSP Canada Inc. from Dartmouth, NS for the repairs of Popes Road Pumping station. Design work and equipment recommendations for the electrical components were provided and we will prepare for a tender to initiate the comprehensive repair work. Budget meetings will be prepared for mid - April to receive feedback from the users regarding this years repair work.

Past Initiatives

Staff finalized the service agreements in close coordination with the users and our legal team. We met with two users and agreements have been signed. We still need one signature and will be meeting the user separately.

Future Initiatives

We engaged WSP Canada Inc. to support our team with a well assessment to determine a proper size for the Willet Road Tank. This may save substantial amounts of dollars for the construction work. This will help us with closing the current funding gap and initiate the project this year. We are hoping to receive funding from ACOA and the users. Once funding is secured, we will be preparing the replacement of the 500,000GAL water tank. Further updates will follow soon.

Wedgeport Sewer Improvement Program

System Operations

This month all 42 systems are operating well. The construction on the last 3 systems were completed and we are awaiting the final drawings to close this phase of the project. Invitations for the Wedgeport Sewer Committee have been sent out to involved residents in order to get the committee activated and we received 3 interested parties. The first meeting should be scheduled for mid-April to set the budget for this fiscal year.

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Past Initiatives

42 Systems have been installed and are operational.

Future Initiatives

Staff is committed to support the owners of the new systems with the lawn re-instatement and will provide help with over-seeding some sites to ensure even grass growth. These efforts will be performed during spring 2019. We submitted an application to the Province under the ICIP funding stream and ask for support to install another 50 new sewer systems. If funding is approved we would be able to roll out another phase by spring 2020.

Animal Control

We didn't receive any complaints over the last few weeks and it seems that the residents are keeping good care of their animals. With the loss of the Yarmouth Dispatch center we also lost the service for dog control issues. The SPCA can be directly reached under 902-307-0475 in case of any dog issues.

Garbage Handling

This month all pickups were performed as per schedule. We received one complaint but were able to solve the issue asap. Waste Check and PW staff are working on ideas to improve future garbage handling and pick up practices to lower the environmental effects of blown away garbage or rodents spreading household garbage. With potential new regulations from the federal government we are monitoring the potential outcome and availability of funding to support our ideas.

Building Inspection Report

To date in this calendar year, 29 building permits and 12 development permits have been issued. There is a good mix of permit interest in residential dwellings and larger commercial/industrial operations. Last year the building season turned out to be very busy with 109 building permits issued and a further 29 Development Permits issued. Note that a Demolition Permit is tallied under the Building Permit numbers.

Last year there was more activity in medium sized commercial and industrial projects than in previous years. This trend is continuing again this year. Several years ago permit values were skewed by construction of free standing windmill towers.

Fire Inspections

We are currently working on a shared service solution, for some portions of the NS Fire Code Act, with the Municipality of Barrington.

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Sub-Division Activity

To date in this calendar year we have taken in 3 Instrument of Subdivisions and 4 Final Plan of Subdivision, with a few waiting for more information to proceed. In comparison, we had 21 subdivision files on the go in 2018. The type of subdivision, be it Instrument of Subdivision or Final Plan of Subdivision, is pretty well equal last year.

Last year we had several multi lot subdivisions with the largest being 40 lots. All this activity was on or just off Route 308, north of the 103.

The majority of subdivision activity continues to be 2-3 lot subdivisions or consolidation of existing lots.

Note:

The 2018 Year End Report comparing the previous year to this past year will be produced for the year end in April.

Unsightly or Dangerous

We followed up with the two previous complaints and the resident in Tusket is actively cleaning up and we agreed on a time frame till end of May 2019. The house in Sluice Point will be demolished by a local contractor with agreement of the owner and council. We are trying to minimize cost and are reviewing the option of partially demolishing the front of the house and leave the smaller addition as it is not in disrepair.

In addition to the existing complaints we received another complaint about an unsightly situation on the Argyle Head Road. This case was reviewed and determined to be a case for Environment Nova Scotia. Wetland is being infilled with unsuitable material which may cause contamination to water courses.

The order of remedy for the property in Pleasant Lake has been expired without actions by the owner. Gary d'Entremont excavating has been awarded the contract to proceed with the cleanup. Most of the other cases have been resolved or are under review due to safety issues. We are working on the dangerous situations first with unsightly complaints receiving attention later.

The new dangerous and unsightly committee is actively involved and is helping with reviewing several cases that need attention and a long term strategy for full clean up. This includes the property in Glenwood and one in Comeau's Hill.

The dangerous and unsightly committee is working on ideas to help people in need to stay on top of property maintenance or litter clean up to help with community beautifications. A proper policy is in the works.

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Maintenance

Winter season is upon us and the final pieces of gear are being gathered. We are using an older but suitable ride on lawn mower from our West Pubnico Sewer Plant to be transformed into a snow plow for our Tuskett Sidewalk operation. The sewer plant will be equipped with one of our zero-turn mowers, which is due for replacement because of end of life cycle. The field maintenance team will receive a new commercial zero turn mower with the new spring season.

During our first safety inspection for the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee report we came across a long list of deficiencies and will work on rectifying the most severe first and then the minor ones later. This work will continue over the next few weeks and will be in need of some additional funding as we have to replace some life safety equipment and other gear that is not in compliance at the moment. We are still working on our Safety Program and will report back once the program is completed and ready to be rolled out.

Industrial Park

Several lots are pending sales and staff is actively supporting the CAO with the process. 3 lots are under review by the UARB and development on hold for now. There are a few lots left for sale and more interest from developers is existing. More updates will follow once the UARB review is over and a decision is made.

Staff

Kim Rowley is leading the Community Litter Clean up project. So far she managed to increase participation and can report 32 groups that are willing to help in cleaning up our municipality. Out of the 32 groups she attracted 7 new groups to the program. We conducted community inspections and identified several severe areas that need cleanup. Goal is to get groups out earlier this year to avoid flies and ticks. We are still in the sign up phase and more updates on the program will follow soon.

During our JOHSC meeting we identified several safety training deficiencies and staff will be following up on the missing certificates very soon. Louis, Vaughn and Wayne finished their Fall Arrest Course successfully end of February. Wayne will be joining a 2 day confined space training course in early April to help Louis and Vaughn during this work as a spotter and safety person.

Software

All software is up to date and working good for us. The PC to run the SCADA software for our plant was replaced and the system is running more reliable than before and the contractor added a few features at no cost to make the operation even better for Vaughn.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

The Municipality initiated a new Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee at the end of October 2018 as required by Provincial regulations. A special bulletin board has been established

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in the Kitchen of the Municipal Admin. Building and information about the regulations, local inspectors, committee members, first aid staff, agendas and meeting minutes are being posted on a regular basis. Any safety related issues should be reported immediately to your supervisor or committee member!

We are actively working on our Safety Program and will report back once the program is completed and ready to be rolled out. Each month we are reviewing policies and program rules to make this program fit our needs. We are still in process of establishing the last few items and are actively reviewing our work safe procedures. New procedures will be established over the next months to create a high level standard for a safer work environment. Most of the previously identified safety issues have been resolved. Next goal is to review and improve our workplace violence protection program. A questionnaire will be rolled out soon to assess current issues and needs for the future.

During our last meeting we determined that all staff should have the latest version of WHMIS and we will provide more information about available e-learning programs via email soon.

Miscellaneous

1. Staff is working on the New Administration Building committee as well by providing guidance and explanations to committee members during the project.
2. Staff is also helping out with tender administration work for the Eel Brook Fire Department for their new Fire Hall in SAR.
3. The support work for the Airport has been reduced due to potential changes of the operation of the Airport.
4. Staff and CAO attended an Asset Management training course partially funded by FCM to help with the establishment of a local policy and better understanding of assets and operation. The training will continue over the winter/spring 2019 and could have a great outcome to future operation and service providing strategy. We established a new policy and are actively refining our level of service in order to better serve the community and use our resources more effectively. More info's will follow as we progress.

Court House & Archives – Judy Frotten & Kaitlin Wood

The Argus

The spring 2019 issue is nearly ready to go to printer, therefore delivery to members should occur within a couple of weeks. **The Argus is our most important program and allows us to maintain the Argyle connection with our members from Canada and the US.**

MODA Newsletter

This is still a work in progress. An email will be sent out to staff and Council to ask for a few additional items and to advise when it will go out to residents. Apologies for delays on this!

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AMHGS

AMHGS Board meeting was held March 18th, and the next meeting is scheduled for April 16th. They are in the process of organizing AGM for June. The building committee is looking into oil smell issue at the Archives and researching options: incl. replacing the oil tank or going with an alternative heat source. We are looking into programs or rebate opportunities through Efficiency Nova Scotia. M. Doucette Cont. will replace the staff entrance stairs and railing.

Court House

Lights in the gift shop have been replaced/shielded. This was an item in the site inspection for JOHSC.

Events

Our “Easter Egg Decorating” March Break activity was held on March 18th. It was a great success, with over 30 children participating. We had more volunteers and asked for pre-registration, so it went more smoothly than last year.

We hosted a “Memoir Writing Workshop” with Sandra Phinney on March 27th at the Archives, with 10 participants (including Judy). The day was extremely interesting and useful, and I highly encourage anyone with an interest in writing (whether only for yourself/or family, or for publishing) to take a workshop from her, if you ever get the opportunity!

Austin Saulnier will do a presentation “Abram’s River – Then and Now” on Apr. 10th at 6:30pm. Kaitlin has been working with him to create a Power Point Presentation of photos of the houses. Though he will touch on (most) of the properties in the village, his focus will be on the original properties and families.

****Please note that these events are taking place at the Archives rather than the Court House because the building is more accessible and is heated.**

Professional Development

Kaitlin attended a WREN Connector Program luncheon in Yarmouth on March 13th. Judy attended a Directors’ meeting for the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) on March 22nd in Halifax. (Judy is SWNS Regional Rep. and ANSM Secretary.) The Executive will meet on May 22nd in Halifax, and the next Board meeting is scheduled for June 4th. Kaitlin will attend Council of Nova Scotia Archives’ conference on May 9th and 10th. The next South West Nova Scotia Curators’ Group meeting will take place in Liverpool on Apr. 26th, but Judy will be away and unable to attend – she will still prepare a report for the meeting.

Student Funding

We have been informed that we have been successful in receiving two 14-wk positions through Province of Nova Scotia’s SKILL program. We are still waiting to hear from Young Canada

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Works and Canada Summer Jobs. We are hopeful to secure funding for @6 positions. We have posted the two positions on FB. As we don't want to wait too long before posting the others, we will go ahead and post the rest, with a note that availability depends on funding. Deadline for applications is April 26th at 4pm, and we intend on conducting interviews on May 6th. Funded positions could start as early as May 13th.

Job Fair

ATCHA will not participate in this year's Job Fair after all, due to too many other commitments at this time, and unable to find someone to help us with this.

Heritage Fair

Judy will serve as a judge at the Heritage Fair at Drumlin Heights on Apr. 4th. She was asked to serve as a (French) judge at the regionals at Burrridge on May 2nd but is away at that time. Councillor Danny Muise has agreed to be a French judge at the Regionals, which organizers for the Tri-County Heritage Fair greatly appreciate, as there is a definite shortage of judges who can help (with the French projects).

Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee

The meeting took place on March 19th (Judy joined the last part of the meeting). The next one is scheduled for May 14th. We are in the process of identifying tasks that will require a written safety procedure, as well as setting up a violence in the workplace assessment.

Forum Acadien 2019

Judy continues to work with a group of individuals/stakeholders, who are organizing a 3-day Acadian conference on Oct. 4, 5 & 6, 2019, in the Municipality of Argyle. The group last met on March 14th at the Archives, and corresponds regularly by email, to organize this conference which will take place in Tusket in the fall. We will keep you informed as details become available.

Aerial Ridge Video

ATCHA worked with Aerial Ridge to provide access to our site/buildings and assist with content to produce a 40s video for us. They are working with several businesses in the Municipality and have produced a video which will be played on the Cat Ferry.

Research Requests

We have had several research requests for Municipal records (assessments) as well as numerous genealogical requests. Many of the genealogical requests need to wait a bit longer than usual as our volunteer who normally assists with these requests has been unavailable since last summer. Once all the summer staff are trained, they will be able to assist us with this research. Our volunteer researcher hopes to resume her duties in the fall. We have had a few students visit us to do research for school projects and would like to encourage more of this.

Other

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Judy and Kaitlin will meet with Stéphanie St-Pierre of University Ste. Anne's Centre acadien, on April 9th at the archives, to discuss a proposed partnership on a project entitled titled "Mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel et historique des Acadiens et Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Ecosse" - or, roughly translated, Project to enhance knowledge and appreciation of Acadian heritage and history in Nova-Scotia. This will be made available online on the Historic Nova Scotia platform. She's already made a presentation to Council in March regarding their funding request for this project.

A local couple who are getting married today at St. Stephen's Church in Tusket have arranged to have wedding photos done in the Court House this evening. Kaitlin will open the building for them.

We have been contacted by a member of a Cape Breton group, who is trying to find someone to help them organize "Doors Open for Churches" in this area, through Heritage Trust. I've made some inquiries on their behalf to see if we can connect some interested parties with them.

A Saint Mary's graduate student is conducting a research project and contacted me to help her distribute her Heritage Survey, for the Municipalities/Towns of Argyle, Barrington, Clark's Harbour, Lockeport and Shelburne. To assist her with this, I forwarded it to our SWN Curators' Group Listserv, as well as to MODA Staff/Council, AMHGS Board, some of our members, and shared it on our FB page.

Recreation Programming and Active Living – Ginette d'Entremont

Summer programming

We have begun the initial planning of the summer programs and events, setting dates, booking facilities, etc.

Tumblebugs

I will be running the Tumblebugs program for 8 weeks at École Belleville for students in the Grandir en Français program.

Meetings

I attended a meeting on April 2nd to wrap up and evaluate the Girls Leadership Forum that took place in February.

I attended South Shore Valley meetings on April 3 & 4 in Yarmouth.

I will be attending the Senior Expo meeting on April 10th to begin the planning of the annual Senior Expo event.

Summer Employment

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The deadline to apply for summer employment with the Recreation Department is April 12th. We will be interviewing for the office positions around mid-April for a start date of the last week of April or the first week of May.

Argyle Minor Soccer Club

The registration for the summer soccer program will begin on April 8th and run through to May 2nd. Late registrations will be accepted from May 3-14 with a charge of \$25 extra. After this date, late registrations will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Director of Recreation Services – Natalie d’Entremont

Argyle Recreation Commission Strategic Plan

The draft ARC Strategic Plan was presented to Argyle Recreation Commission. ARC will review the changes to the draft before presenting it to Council and to Communities, Culture and Heritage Regional manager.

Meetings attended

- Workplace Wellness – March 12/19
- Facility Access Task Team – March 6/19
- School Advisory Committee Drumlin – March 26/19
- Southwest Nova Athletics AGM – March 27/19
- Argyle Minor Baseball AGM and start up meeting – March 12/19
- Argyle Minor Soccer AGM and start – up meeting – March 28/19

March Break Activities

The March Break activities were very well attended. All activities were free of charge and sponsored by Facility Access –Thrive.

- Sledge hockey: 48 participants
- Ecole Belleville open gym: average of 30 people per day.
- Family Free Skates: approximately 200 participants.
- Family Bowling: 250 participants.
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High Five Sport Workshop

I facilitated a High Five Sport workshop for baseball and athletics coaches on March 11 in Tuskent.

Gender Equity Committee

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A committee has been struck to examine gender equity in our sport facilities. This committee will look at creating a “toolbox” for sports facilities to help them look at their facility and programs with a gender equity lens. A handful of facilities from Yarmouth to Halifax have been identified as the pilot project.

Run into Spring Race

We held our first “Run Into Spring Race” on the Tusket Rails to Trails track on March 31. 20 people ran the 5K, while 11 ran the 10K. This was a timed event.

Walkability Grant

We have received \$2800.00 from Recreation Nova Scotia Walkability Grant to connect Ecole Belleville to the rails to trails. I have been working with the landowner, Ecole Belleville and Department of Natural Resources on this project. This initiative is identified in our Active Transportation Plan.

Principles of Healthy Aging Workshop

I will be co-facilitating High Five Principles of Healthy Aging workshop to our colleagues on the South Shore on April 9 in Liverpool and to our colleagues in the Valley on April 16. This workshop will help recreation leaders provide quality programs to our seniors.