



2017

Council
Priorities

Municipality of Argyle
March 13, 2017

2017

Council Priorities

On February 22 and March 13, 2017, members of Council met to develop priorities for 2017 in an effort to provide clear direction to the community and staff for the next 12-18 months. Council is guided by its strategic plan objectives and integrated community sustainability plan in setting its annual priorities. The following document highlights the top 4 objectives for the year ending March 31, 2018.

1

Municipal Administration Building

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Alternative and Affordable Housing

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Improved Internet Service

4

Wedgeport Wastewater Project

1

Municipal Administration Building

In October 2013, Council discussed the inaccessibility of the municipal building and decided in November 2015 to consult the public to help them make a final decision on its future; whether to renovate, build new or do nothing. In January 2016, a survey was released to the public via our Facebook page, our website and in paper and public meetings were held in various communities. As the overall consensus (90.13% of the survey respondents) of the survey results and public opinion at meetings was to build new, Council decided to move forward with the construction of a new building.

Since that time, a *Building Committee* including 3 Council members, 3 staff members and 3 community members was formed and have been overseeing the project and making recommendations to Council. The committee is currently evaluating potential properties for the location of the new building and will then move forward with the design and tendering process.

In 2017, Council commits to:

1. Choose a location for the new administration building.
2. Engage professionals to assist in our design for the new administration building.
3. Engage the Public for input on the chosen design.
4. Complete the tendering process to select a suitable contractor.
5. Begin construction of the new administration building.

2

Affordable and Alternative Housing

Housing is one of the most fundamental needs for our residents and their families and its impact goes well beyond our basic requirement for shelter. As our population ages and it becomes increasingly difficult for our senior population to manage their homes, more and more of our residents are struggling.

For that reason, affordable senior housing has become a serious issue; not only in our municipality but also throughout the Province and our country. Council recognizes the need for affordable senior housing and understands that some seniors are moving out of the municipality to access it.

In addition to the increasing need for affordable housing, alternative housing has been growing in popularity with many residents opting to move out of their homes to live closer to services and in a maintenance free environment. Though many of these residents would prefer to remain in their communities, the lack of alternative housing is forcing them to move out.

In 2017, Council commits to:

1. Secure a business plan using data gathered from the housing survey that supports affordable/alternative housing development in our Municipality.
2. Consider land use planning changes to accommodate new development.
3. Secure at least one developer that commits to the construction of alternative/affordable housing.
4. Assist in securing federal and/or provincial funding to support the housing development.
5. Commit to financial supports that incite developers and contractors to invest in affordable/alternative housing in Argyle.

3

Improved Internet Service

One way to support local businesses and provide better services to our residents is to increase the internet service quality in the municipality. The provincial Broadband for Rural Nova Scotia (BRNS) project has helped connect thousands of Nova Scotians to basic high speed Internet service since being launched in 2007 however many residents in our municipality still do not have adequate internet service.

As a quality internet connection is vital in today's business world and many government services are now accessed online, it is imperative that all residents and businesses have the opportunity to connect to a reliable, high speed internet connection.

In 2017, Council **commits** to:

1. Concentrating its efforts in lobbying internet service providers and the provincial government to provide better internet connection for our residents.
2. Support the Western Regional Enterprise Network's application for Federal funding for rural internet improvement for our region, including financial support.
3. Inform our residents on the benefits of participating in online internet speed testing, and financially support the tools required to obtain the information.

4

Wedgeport Wastewater Project

Wastewater management is one of the primary responsibilities of municipal government. Clean water and waste management are important to the health and safety of our residents, the vitality of our communities and the value of our homes.

The lack of an adequate wastewater system and appropriate residential systems in the Wedgeport area has been an ongoing concern of Council for quite some time. In 2013, the community of Wedgeport and engineers reviewed a report on potential projects to resolve this issue. All centralized projects presented were too costly therefore a decentralized solution, based on a pilot project in Richmond County, was ultimately chosen as the most suitable solution.

A RFP for the detailed design of the project was subsequently released and awarded. Following the completion of the detailed design, the municipality confirmed the adequate amount of funding, began assessing properties in the designated area and drafting the appropriate documents and by-laws.

At this time, a number of property owners have expressed interest and construction will begin on new systems.

In 2017, Council **commits** to:

1. Maximizing the use of secured federal and provincial funds to improve sewer systems in Wedgeport.
2. Complete up to 44 septic tank replacements in the community.
3. Complete the work within budget.