

2019 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

On March 28, 2019, members of Council met to develop priorities for 2019 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 5 objectives for the year ending March 31, 2020.

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Airport Downsizing

The Yarmouth International Airport Corporation and its ownership held a facilitated session on February 27th, 2019, where the future of the airport was discussed both at the individual Council tables as well as collectively. While there were no official decisions made, there appeared to be consensus from the smaller group of councilors that for the airport to sustain operations, it needs to be smaller. During the March 28th, 2019 Priority Setting Session, council identified airport downsizing as a high priority. The process of making the airport smaller includes three fundamental areas, which are:

1. Closure of runway 15-33, which is the shorter runway, and the runway not supported by approach lighting.
2. Identify redundant capital assets and find alternate uses, lease, or sale of those assets.
3. With the closure of 15-33, there is surplus land in an area of high value for development. Coordinate the sale of high value land to further reduce costs of maintenance and operation and create an asset replacement fund – focusing investments on airside improvements, lighting, and potentially a repave of 06-24.

In 2019, Council commits to the following objectives:

1. Renegotiation of multi year agreement with the Town of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Yarmouth;
2. Closure of runway 15-33;
3. Identify surplus land and buildings and arrange for lease or sale where applicable;
4. Seek alternative sources of revenue to further reduce municipal investment;
5. Seek additional funding partners at other levels of government.

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Mariners Centre Expansion

With new streams of both federal and provincial funding becoming available, and this project fitting into those recreation and rural infrastructure streams, council unanimously agreed an expansion to the Mariners Centre as a 2019-2020 priority. In order to get the process started, council also agreed to join the Municipality of Yarmouth and the Town of Yarmouth to set up a steering committee for the purpose of moving forward with an expansion of the Mariners Centre. Currently, the Municipality resources that have been assigned to the committee include the CAO, Warden, Deputy Warden and Municipal Clerk.

In 2019, Council commits to the following objectives:

1. Develop a shared vision with the Municipality of Yarmouth and the Town of Yarmouth for the future operation of the Mariners Centre;
2. Invest up to \$40,000 in a consulting firm to lead the funding application for both a Mariners Centre and track expansion;
3. Establish projected operational income and expenses for a planned expansion of the Mariners Center to understand required municipal funding;
4. Establish a long term funding agreement for Mariner Centre operations by fiscal year end.

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Alternative and Affordable 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 2019, Council commits to the following objectives:

1. Develop and award a public road tender to access the Eastern portion of the Tusket Municipal Administration Building;
2. Establish a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the development of Affordable / Alternative housing on the Municipality of Argyle's Administration Building property;
3. Award Project Development to successful RFP bidder;
4. Review Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and update both to ensure land use encourages or enhances the feasibility of Alternative and Affordable housing.

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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 has been overseeing the project and making recommendations to Council. Council, following the committees recommendations, has chosen a location and the architectural firm *Wild Salt Architecture* to lead the design and construction of the building.

In 2019, Council commits to the following objectives:

1. Hire a project manager to oversee both the architectural firm and construction of the building;
2. Initiate phase one land improvements, including grating, a public road, and repurposing the existing dwelling on property where the Municipal Building will be built;
3. Develop and award a public road tender to access the Tuskent Municipal Administration Building;
4. Issue a Public Information session by Fall 2019.

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Eel Brook Fire Department Contribution

The fire chief of the Eel Brook Fire Department, Jonathan LeBlanc, presented to council on March 26, 2019 at the Committee of the Whole Meeting. As part of this presentation, Jonathan advised council that the Eel Brook Fire fighters not only respond to fires in the area, but also respond to motor vehicle collisions, medical calls as medical first responders, perform traffic control duties, and are usually the first line of defence and protection for any hazardous materials incidents. Jonathan also reviewed the current issues the Eel Brook Fire Station are faced with, as well as the proposed concept for the new fire station, which includes a comfort center that will include showers, washing machine hookups and a small kitchen that will be beneficial to the public in cases of severe weather, drought, power outages and other large scale incidents.

Based upon the current state of the Eel Brook Fire Station, and the overwhelming need for a new fire station that is structurally sound, council identified assisting financially to the new Eel Brook Fire Station as a priority.

In 2019, Council commits to the following objectives:

1. Contribute \$100,000 towards the Eel Brook Fire Station Construction (total commitment is \$200,000 with the second installment occurring in 2020);
2. Ensure the construction considers comfort center needs, including generator, public shower, and public access to non-potable water.