

Economic Growth Strategy Committee

Tuesday, July 8th, 2025

Meeting Minutes

APPROVED

Present:

Meghan Cox, Community Member
Duane MacLellan, Community Member
Andrew Locke, Community Member
Dale Richardson, Council Member
Val Kean, Staff Member

Penny Smith, Council Member
Heidi Wagner, Council Member
Sherry Irvine-Thorburne, Alternate Council Member
Warren MacLeod, Staff Member
Jill Webb, Staff Member

Regrets:

Andrea Davis, Community Member

Public Community Members Present:

4 members of the public were in attendance

1. Call to Order

The Committee Chair, Andrew Locke called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

2. Approval of the Agenda

It was duly moved and seconded that the agenda for July 8th, 2025, be approved as presented.

- MOTION CARRIED

3. Approval of the Minutes

It was duly moved and seconded that the minutes from the June 2nd, 2025, Economic Growth Strategy Committee be approved with the addition of adding Public Community Members under those in attendance.

- MOTION CARRIED

4. Business Arising

- a) Market Gap and Investment Ready Analysis – Highway 103 Properties

Val Kean reported that three staff reports were presented to Council for approval. Council expressed their support, and the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) have since been posted on the Nova Scotia Procurement website, with a submission deadline of August 6, 2025.

b) Service Extensions – Design and Costing

Val Kean informed the Committee that Requests for Proposals (RFPs) have been issued for 103 properties, including those on Lake Road, Clover Street, Mayflower Street, and Aster Street.

c) Sewer Services, Spa Road Housing – Letter to Town of Shelburne

Val Kean informed the Committee that, following the discussion at the last meeting, a staff report was submitted to Council. As a result, Council passed a motion to send a letter to the Town of Shelburne requesting an extension of sewer services. A response is anticipated soon, and the matter will likely be considered at the Town's next Council meeting in July.

Ms. Kean also provided an update that a non-profit organization has expressed interest in developing the property for mixed-use purposes. She assured the Committee that updates will be shared as more information becomes available.

In addition, Ms. Kean noted that the RFP submissions are expected to be reviewed by the Committee at the next meeting.

5. Properties

a) Sale of Surplus Property – Marketing

Ms. Kean informed the committee that while it may be necessary to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a real estate agent, staff are currently consulting with legal counsel to explore the possibility of establishing a standing offer instead, which would streamline the process considerably. She also noted that staff are working on developing a feature on the municipal website to publicly display all surplus land holdings. This initiative aims to enhance transparency and provide real-time updates on the status of each property, with the potential to integrate this information with the Housing Accelerator Fund.

b) Surplus Land Categorization

Ms. Kean explained to the committee that when we were categorizing surplus lands at the last meeting, we missed a few properties because they were so tiny. She asked the committee to look at properties and to determine their categorization. It was determined that these properties were too small but might be worth categorizing as "Adjacent Landowner" and to take to Council to have them declared surplus properties.

It was duly moved and seconded that the Committee recommends that Council declare the above-mentioned properties for surplus lands, categorizing them as adjacent landowner.

-MOTION CARRIED

c) Personal Wood Cutting on Municipal Property

The Committee was informed that a letter had been received from a municipal resident requesting the municipality to consider permitting personal wood cutting on municipal property. Following some

discussion on the matter, the Committee recommended that Council explore whether the province has available Crown land for this purpose. It was further suggested that Council provide a response to the resident outlining potential alternatives, possibly in collaboration with other entities. Ms. Kean will prepare a staff report to Council to present these considerations and recommendations.

6. Housing

a) Affordable Housing Grant Policy

Ms. Kean informed the Committee that, as part of the Housing Accelerator Fund requirements, the development of an Affordable Housing Grant Policy is underway. She mentioned that the policy is being prepared by Jill Webb, who is leading the work on its implementation. Ms. Kean then provided a brief overview of the draft policy and requested that Committee members review it and submit their feedback no later than next Wednesday.

b) Public Information Session

Ms. Kean informed the Committee that she is in the process of organizing a public information session with the Province and the Municipality to cover a range of important topics, including CMHC programs, the new permitting system, grant policies, and the provincial backyard suite initiative. She proposed hosting two sessions—one in the morning and one in the afternoon/evening—to accommodate different schedules, with the goal of engaging the public, developers, and other stakeholders. The Committee recommended early September as an ideal time to hold the sessions.

7. Land Use By-law

a) Adoption Process

Ms. Kean provided the committee with an overview of the planning document adoption process. She explained that on June 25, 2025, Council held the second and final reading of the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Planning Strategy. Following this step, the documents must be submitted to the province for approval. Once provincial approval is received, the documents will come into effect. Ms. Kean emphasized that no development permits can be issued that conflict with the newly adopted documents. This represents a significant shift for the Municipality, which previously had no planning documents in place and did not require development permits.

b) Enforcement Policy

Ms. Kean informed the committee that an enforcement policy for the new planning documents has not yet been developed. This will be a focus over the summer, with Mrs. Webb and the Municipal Planner taking the lead on this initiative. The Municipality's approach will prioritize compliance through education rather than formal enforcement measures. Enforcement will be based on a complaint-driven model, where complaints must include the complainant's name and will not be accepted anonymously. The intent is to encourage cooperation and awareness, rather than proactively searching for violations. Ms. Kean highlighted the importance of education during this transitional period and welcomed input from committee members. The Municipality is also considering an 'enforcement honeymoon' phase—where for the first six months, the focus will be exclusively on education and helping residents understand the new requirements, without issuing penalties.

c) Special Planning Overlay – Economic Strategy

Ms. Kean explained to committee what these areas were and how Council can consider various types of development, but the development must align with our Economic Strategy.

8. New Business

a) Construction and Demolition Waste Site Closure

Mr. MacLeod provided the committee with an overview of the current situation regarding the C&D Waste Site. He addressed a common misconception, clarifying that the facility is not a dump but a transfer station, used to transport materials to Queens. He emphasized that the site must undergo specific upgrades in accordance with provincial regulations to remain operational. These upgrades are substantial and come with significant costs. Mr. MacLeod noted that several key factors contributed to Council's decision on the matter.

b) Power Grid Infrastructure Advocacy

Mr. MacLeod updated the committee on the status of Southwest Nova Scotia Power Grid.

c) Meeting with MP Jessica Fancy Landry

Mr. MacLeod explained to the committee that they met with MP Jessica Fancy Landry and had a great meeting and discussed several topics, she was pleased to hear we have set this committee in place.

d) Communication for Economic Development

Ms. Kean shared that she and Mr. Locke had engaged in discussions about how to improve community engagement, with the goal of helping residents better understand the committee's vision. Several ideas were proposed, including hosting a Q&A session with the community, organizing regular information sessions every few months, and providing updates on the municipal website and Facebook page about ongoing initiatives. Additionally, the possibility of including committee information in the Fall newsletter was discussed. Ms. Cox further suggested hosting an open house to introduce the committee and its work to the public.

9. In Camera

a) MGA section 22 (2) (a) – acquisition, sale, lease, and security of municipal property

b) MGA section 22 (2) (a) – acquisition, sale, lease, and security of municipal property

It was duly moved and seconded that the committee go in-camera at 6:20pm for discussions around MGA section 22 (2) (a) – acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property.

- MOTION CARRIED.

The committee came out of in-camera at 6:37pm.

No motions coming out of in-camera.

Before we moved for adjournment Mr. Locke asked the committee if he could add something to the agenda, he spoke about the Visitor Information in the Town of Shelburne and asked why it was not opening and if there was anything we could do to open it. Ms. Kean commented that the Chamber of Commerce was looking into it, however, it was offered to a group earlier this year who did decline it.

12. Adjournment

It was duly moved and seconded that the meeting of the Economic Growth Strategy Committee be adjourned at 6:40pm.

-MOTION CARRIED