

To: The Amalgamation Committee

Date: March 30, 2026

The table below is a list of questions submitted by the public since March 24, 2026. The data are accurate as of March 30, 2026, at 2:00 pm.

Num	Question	Likes
1	Is there a similar municipality to ours where amalgamation has been shown to work?	7
2	What is broken within our towns and municipality, that amalgamation will fix?	3
3	Under what conditions would amalgamation NOT proceed?	3
4	Depending if you live in the towns or municipality will the property taxes go up?	2
5	Under amalgamation would there be an open competition for the CAO position and not just a selection of the CAO from the existing 3 CAOs?	1
6	If amalgamation were to move forward, what are the mandates/targets to ensure duplication and redundancies are removed and/or eliminated?	1
7	If amalgamation were to happen, how would representation look? How many elected officials? Mayor or Warden?	1

You can view the data for yourself at [here](#). In an attempt to be as transparent as possible the timestamp of every “like” is shown as well as when the question was submitted.

It is my hope that the committee will publish these questions and answer them.

I would also like to remind the Committee that the question “*What is the top problem that amalgamation solves?*” was originally posted on December 8, 2025, and received support from **27 residents**. This question was brought to the attention of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, who declined to answer and instead referred it to the Amalgamation Committee.

At the March 4, 2026 Committee meeting, verbal responses were offered regarding the problem amalgamation is intended to solve. While the comments were aspirational, they did not identify a specific, concrete problem. Terms such as “challenges” and “improve services” were used, but no clear issue was articulated. Residents are looking for specific, unambiguous problems that the Committee has identified and believes

amalgamation may address. It would be helpful—and appropriate—for this to be provided in writing.

To date, the Committee has not published an unedited, anonymized list of public questions. I note that a FAQ has been posted; however, it appears the questions included there were generated internally rather than submitted by residents. Without clear disclosure, this risks giving the impression that these were “planted” questions rather than genuine public inquiries.

Given that MODS budget includes an IT allocation, it should be feasible to create a professional and transparent online tool that allows residents to submit questions and track responses from the Committee. A useful starting point for such a system can be found here: [*Amalgamation Questions – Shelburne Voice*](#).

I see that the agenda for April 1 includes the item “**Discussion – Antigonish Consolidation Public Engagement Presentation.**” This raises a few questions about how agenda items are added. Specifically:

- Who introduced this item for consideration?
- Can members of the public submit items for the agenda?
- If so, what is the process?
- If not, could the Committee clarify the rationale?

Given that the Committee will be discussing Antigonish, I am sharing an article that provides an evaluation of the Antigonish consolidation experience. The full article, “A Twenty-Five Year Retrospective on Amalgamation”, is available [here](#), and I have included a screenshot of a relevant section below for convenience. All sources are listed in the footnotes of the original document.

Assessing the Antigonish "Failure": A Study in Democratic Deficit

The attempted consolidation of the Town and County of Antigonish in 2024 provides the most significant modern example of a failed structural reform effort. Despite both councils passing motions in favor of the merger, the provincial government ultimately paused the legislation due to overwhelming public pushback.²¹

The Conflict of Process vs. Consent

The core failure in Antigonish was not technical or financial but democratic. A community group, "Let Antigonish Decide," argued that the process was "undemocratic" and demanded a plebiscite.²³ Polling suggested that 75% of residents wanted a vote, and only 22% felt the municipal leadership had provided sufficient information.²³

The "Brighter Community Planning" report, intended to support the consolidation, was criticized for being published only hours before the council vote, leaving no time for public absorption or informed debate.⁸ This lack of transparency created a "lack of confidence" in the municipal leaders that ultimately made the merger politically toxic.⁸

Key Factors in the Antigonish Stalling

The following data points highlight the mismatch between council intent and public sentiment that led to the provincial withdrawal.

Metric	Detail/Result	Source
Council Vote (Town)	4-3 (Mayor's tie-break)	25
Council Vote (County)	5-3 (Passed by one vote)	25
Public Demand for Plebiscite	>75% of respondents	23
Polling Response Rate (LAD Poll)	6.9% to 8.8% (IVR Method)	26
Final Outcome	Bill 407 (Consolidation Act) Scrapped	22

Figure 1 Excerpt from "A 25 year retrospective on amalgamation"

To conclude, I do hope you find these to be constructive ideas and suggestions.

Regards,

