

Public Safety Committee Meeting  
Monday April 3, 2023 6:00pm

Present:

Denny Cogswell, Mayor  
Linda Sullivan Brown, CAO  
Mike Gerrits  
Andrew Sanojca  
Audrey Sanojca  
Marion St. Pierre

Denny welcomed the members and thanked them for offering to serve on the committee. He stated that additional members are welcome to join.

Andrew agreed to be recording secretary.

Denny made sure members were aware of the Terms of Reference for Committee members.

He listed through some of the items identified at the town hall meetings that were of concern to residents and ensured all members have access to this list which is available on the [fundyshores.ca](http://fundyshores.ca) website. Members of Council met with Grade 4 & 5 students at Fundy Shores School. Among their concerns was the lack of police patrols and speeding along our roadways. Some students are afraid to ride their bicycles due to speeding vehicles.

He noted that policing concerns are an issue throughout the Region and that it was going to be discussed at the Regional Public Safety Committee meeting that will take place at the Oak Bay Community Hall within a couple of weeks.

He stated that as the council receives Public Safety info, it will be passed on to committee members via email so everyone is kept informed. Our local committee will discuss concerns and ideas which may be brought forward to the Regional committee by our council representative (Mayor Denny) as we deem appropriate.

Denny met with DTI regarding numerous missing street signs within the area, such as street name signs, dead end signs and speed limit signs. Council will be pushing DTI to replace signs in a timely fashion. Mike stated that he expects DTI to give priority to missing street name signs as this could be an issue for emergency responders. Denny noted that we do not have direct control over what DTI does in the area, and also noted that at this time, the operation of the Musquash Fire Dept is not under council's control. He noted that the council anticipates they will have a good working relationship with the Fire Chief.

The issue of unsightly premises was mentioned. Linda noted that at this time, it is also under provincial control. She noted that if council chooses to take on extra duties such

as enforcing regulations or standards regarding unsightly premises that it would require a bylaw be written and passed by council.

Denny noted that the goal of the council is to maintain at least the current level of service from different providers that currently exist.

Andrew asked Denny to ask for information regarding traffic complaints being passed on to the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS). Currently when a member of the public calls 911 regarding a potential impaired driver, that call is answered initially by the Saint John Public Safety Answering Point. The caller is then transferred to the RCMP. Andrew wants Denny to ask if the RCMP pass on traffic complaints to JPS who might be in the area of the complaint and may be able to watch for the vehicle.

Denny said the area is currently covered by both the Grand Bay-Westfield and St. George detachments of the RCMP. Council has received the recent quarterly report from St. George, and has asked for a quarterly report from Grand Bay-Westfield. He noted that many of the concerns residents have noted regarding police coverage are due to staffing issues as opposed to individual members. It was noted that at times, there have been only two RCMP members covering the entire St. George district which covers St. Stephen to Lepreau. Denny has learned that council can request the RCMP send their Traffic Enforcement Unit to the area to try to combat specific issues. This specialized unit would make their presence known within the area and focus primarily on a specific issue, such as school zone speeding or cell phone usage.

Discussion took place that we as a committee will pass on issues for Denny to take to the Regional Public Safety committee. We realize that we may not get all that we ask for, but agree that nothing will be accomplished if we don't make an attempt to bring issues forward.

Regarding animal control, Audrey mentioned that there are currently only two staff members for the NBSPCA who share one vehicle. Their area of responsibility includes all of Charlotte County as well as much of St. John and Kings counties. Again, issues regarding a delay of timely service are due to a lack of staff. Audrey asked the committee to see about establishing a physical animal shelter within the area as the nearest shelters are in Saint John, St. George and St. Stephen. It was suggested that an area shelter would likely be in partnership with an existing shelter as opposed to starting from the ground up.

Denny mentioned that we as a committee will have to work to learn about the services different agencies provide to our area and then pass that information on to the community. The committee will invite speakers from various agencies to help us better understand what is offered. Mike asked about Neighbourhood Watch and how it would work in our area. It was agreed that our area already has a form of Neighbourhood Watch where many often keep an eye on their neighbours. It was suggested that members of the community knowing our neighbours is the best way to prevent issues.

Regarding knowing our neighbours, the issue of a "Welcome Wagon" type package was discussed that could be given out to new residents. It would be more of an information package as opposed to a gift package, including resources in the area and information about the [fundyshores.ca](http://fundyshores.ca) webpage and different Facebook groups for information.

Mike noted that his landline phone service often stops working shortly after a power outage. He stated that Bell Aliant has to reset something in the local area to restore his service. Marion also noted that her landline also stops working. The main concern is that 911 service is not available if the phones are not working. It was suggested that we ask Bell Aliant to look at their infrastructure in the area, and possibly upgrade back-up batteries.

Regarding power outages - Denny has met with NB Power and obtained information regarding numerous outages our area has experienced. One prolonged outage during the recent cold snap was due to a remote high voltage transmission line failure and it took time for NB Power to get the specialized equipment into the area to deal with it. NB Power will be checking to see if more tree trimming in the area is required. He noted that NB Power has a limited right of way on which they can cut trees. Issues are often caused by trees beyond the right of way falling onto lines. We wondered if the public wants us to push to have the right of way increased, and noted that there would likely then be complaints of too many trees being cut. NB Power will be invited to a future meeting.

Denny noted that members of the public are invited to sit in at any Public Safety Committee meetings, especially when guest speakers will be present.

The Council is working on Emergency Measures Operations (EMO) procedures for the area. This update will include when warming shelters will be activated with the hope that a standard guideline will be put in place. We recognize that everyone may not have access to Facebook to see if a shelter is being opened. Although a warming shelter was provided at the Musquash fire station, no one from the community used the service.

Discussion took place regarding a list of vulnerable people within the community that should be checked on during a power outage. Again, it was noted that neighbours watching out for their neighbours is probably the best solution to prolonged power outages during extreme weather events. Given our rural nature, it was noted that we need to be somewhat self-sufficient during these events including following the guidelines suggested by Emergency Preparedness Canada regarding a 72 Hour Kit.

Discussion took place about the dynamics of members who have offered to sit on this committee. While some have past experience as firefighters, ambulance personnel and having sat on previous Community Police Committees, some have not, But, it was noted that everyone has something to bring forward, and fresh eyes on issues were welcomed.

Future meetings of the committee will follow an agenda. Tonight's meeting was to help lay the groundwork going forward. The committee is required to meet a minimum of four times per year, but it is expected we will meet more often. The date for the next meeting will be determined as council and staff are available. Meetings will probably be within a one hour timeframe, unless a speaker is presenting information.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.