

## **Mayor's Corner January 2025**

### Municipal Collaboration and Cooperation

By Elspeth McLean-Wile

One of the key points of my election campaign was the need for more cooperation and collaboration between municipal units in Lunenburg County.

The Council had several orientation sessions over the last six weeks and has begun strategic planning. It has become clear that as a group we agree that we can do much more by working together with our neighbouring municipalities than by working separately and competing for resources.

We have started the work by having informal discussions and working at getting to know each other. We had a great opportunity at the meeting of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities to take advantage of time together to have some chats about our priorities and projects that we wanted to advance over our term.

In the new year we will seek out more formal discussions and share our strategic priorities and begin looking for the common ground.

With the growth we are seeing in the District of Lunenburg and within the towns it makes good sense that we would share discussions on development challenges and seek shared solutions. This might be in the areas of advocating for infrastructure, addressing some of our housing challenges, managing the immediate and long-term water needs of our communities, zoning and planning for development, and establishing a public transit network that begins to connect the towns with rural communities.

We have a great example of the municipalities working together to deliver shared services. The Municipal Joint Services Board provides valuable specialized expertise in the areas of waste management, IT services, and human resource management. We have other agreements that see us sharing emergency management; accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and building inspection services. We, as a single municipality could not afford these resources on our own. These examples show how we are better by working together.

We do have the experience of developing shared services, now we need to find more initiatives that will benefit us all. One priority, as I see it, is developing a comprehensive water agreement with the Town of Bridgewater. The water for the town lies in lakes in the District; it flows into the town, is managed by the Public Service Commission, provides water to the town residents and businesses and some flows out to the Osprey Village commercial centre. With the growth and development that is happening at Osprey Village it

is critical that we have an agreement that reflects the increasing demand both in Bridgewater and the surrounding communities.

The second important area is beginning to work on building out a public transit system that connects the town of Bridgewater with Osprey Village. A comprehensive study was completed by the previous Council. This outlined several options on how a system could be built that would connect the surrounding communities in the District with the town. The report gave high priority to connecting Osprey Village with Bridgewater; now we need to get started on advancing this work.

These are challenging undertakings however I am very committed to working with our neighbours to advance these projects. I look forward to reporting on their progress.