

Mayor's Corner February 2025

Municipal Collaboration and Cooperation

By Elspeth McLean-Wile

One of the issues I heard repeatedly from residents as I campaigned throughout the District was an appetite for more information on plans and projects of Council. Many felt they did not have knowledge of the decisions of Council and what factors contributed to those decision.

Without full information many residents become suspicious about what is going on and misinformation becomes rampant. Something that can be very detrimental to development of new ideas, projects and initiatives.

Although Council proceedings are available as audio recordings and now on YouTube live streamed or as video recordings; this does not seem to be enough.

In our strategic planning session prior to Christmas, we identified 'communication and public engagement' as a priority for our term as a Council. We are already having more of our discussions between staff and Council in settings that allow the public to hear and participate.

Recently we held a public engagement session considering the enhancements that can be made at Osprey Village to beautify and improve this location for walkers, shoppers and residents. Fifty-six people attended the session and offered many ideas of what improvements they would like to see. All the suggestions will be compiled and will help shape the decisions of Council on where the investments should be made to create a more inviting location.

We have plans for input on our strategic priorities and the 2025-26 budget. Our budget discussions will be public and there will be opportunities for public response and feedback. This will allow residents to be involved in the budget process as there will be public discussion of projects and initiatives Council is considering.

This is a new process of budgeting for Council. We may not have it quite right at this point; we are going to try new and different ways to address the concern around communication and transparency when it comes to decision-making of Council.

Budget planning is a significant staff project with input from Council and now the public. The dates for public input will be posted on our website at modl.ca, at engage.modl.ca, on our Facebook page, and in the District of Lunenburg Digest, which you can sign up for at modl.ca/communication.

We have a number of ideas that will address the concerns about communication. We will be outlining them in the weeks to come as we finalize our communication and public engagement priorities.

I look forward to your feedback on this Council's approach to improving our communication and public engagement