

Mayor's Corner March 2025

What's Ahead for Council

By Elspeth McLean-Wile

Council has been working hard on establishing our strategic priorities for the next four years. We started with a retreat in early December which allowed us a good opportunity to get to know each other better, share what we heard from residents while we were campaigning and establish the priorities for our four-year term.

We also went out to our residents and provided an opportunity to get feedback on our ideas. We held a public engagement session on February 6, where we were able to have great conversations with the forty residents who came out on a stormy evening.

We also got residents visiting our engage.modl.ca site with 108 downloading the documents, visiting multiple pages and contributing a comment. I find the level of interest in our plans encouraging and supports the comments I heard while campaigning. Many of our residents want more information about what we are working on during our mandate and want to contribute their ideas and concerns.

We finalized our strategic priorities and based on the feedback we received we added Climate Change as an additional strategic priority.

Regional Economic Development

Support initiatives that focus on regional economic development.

- Commercial development (zoning, advocate for small business)
- Advocate for improved cell service
- Regional industrial park (investment for future tax benefit)
- Establish region economic development platforms

Infrastructure Upgrades, Expansion and Management

Planning and investing for growth

- Collaborate regionally to expand infrastructure that supports growth
- Create a plan that identifies needed infrastructure to support all types of housing
- Strengthen recreational assets to support our growing diverse communities with a focus on access to waterways

Quality of Life

Programs and services to maintain and improve affordability and social inclusion for our residents

- Addresses loneliness, reconnect community and improve social inclusion
- Recreation, parks and programs
- Celebrating and preserving communities

Communication and Engagement

Building a strong community fabric

- Improve and increase public communication
- Improve and increase public engagement
- Focus on rebuilding community fabric

Climate Change Action

Work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate

- Reduce the District's corporate emissions
- Invest in climate resilient infrastructure
- Create opportunities for more food security in the region

These key areas will be the basis for our budget planning process. As part of our commitment to public engagement there will be opportunities for the public to provide feedback on our 2025-26 budget. We are holding seven Budget meetings in total. At the first six meetings, Council will receive budget-specific presentations. After the presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to address Council, with a maximum five minutes per person, in a Public Input Session.

At the final meeting on Tuesday, April 8, Council will follow the standard 15-minute Public Input Session, with the time divided by those wishing to speak. These comments will be considered as Council moves forward to finalize the budget on April 8, 2025. For those who cannot attend in person, the presentations will be recorded and available on YouTube at youtube.com/@modlnovascotia.

The priority areas do appear broad in nature; however, they include a commitment to developing a housing strategy which will consider the housing needs of our area, in all parts of the District of Lunenburg. Beyond providing the assessment of need, the strategy will identify ways the Municipality can effectively stimulate housing development. This strategy will also be critical in supporting any applications we will make for provincial and federal funding support.

Another area of work that will develop from these strategic priorities is working with the Town of Bridgewater to collaborate on the expansion of the existing transit system from the town into the District. Many people have commented on the need to connect Osprey Village with the town. There are other densely populated communities in Wileville and Hebbville that could benefit from access to public transit. This will be our first step in developing a longer-term plan to provide public transit to other communities in the District. We are fortunate to have Lunenburg County Wheels providing service to communities and we will continue to support them and include them in any plans that are made to extend the service.

I welcome any conversations you might want to have about our priorities and the work we are doing as your Council.