

VILLAGE OF NEW MINAS
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 14, 2006
7:00 p.m.
Conference Room, Village Office

The regular meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee was held in the Conference Room at the Village office on February 14, 2006 at 7:00 p.m..

In Attendance: Les Barrett, Chair
Pat Saulnier, Vice-Chair
Linda Lockhart, Commission Vice-Chair
Gordon Silver, Member
Douglas Seamone, Village's Engineer
Peter Pothier, Superintendent of Public Works
Terry Silver, Clerk Treasurer

Regrets: Dave Chaulk, Commission Chair

Also in Attendance: Mrs. Sharon Boyd, Resident
Mr. Dave Etter, Resident

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Les Barrett

Chair Barrett called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – February 14, 2006

It was moved by L. Lockhart, seconded by G. Silver, that the Agenda of February 14, 2006 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(a) Regular Monthly Meeting, January 12, 2006

It was moved by L. Lockhart, seconded by P. Saulnier, that the minutes of the regular TAC meeting held January 12, 2006 be approved as circulated. MOTION CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Plowing Crosswalks at Connector Road Intersection – Update, P. Pothier

P. Pothier stated he has advised the sidewalk-plowing contractor to plow the intersection at Prospect/Connector Road for safety reasons, and the Village's bill will be adjusted accordingly.

(b) Aalders Avenue Safety Concerns – Transportation Study Recommendation – Update Doug Seamone

Chair Barrett recognized Mr. Dave Etter and Mrs. Sharon Boyd and welcomed them to the meeting.

Engineer Doug Seamone gave a brief history of the traffic concerns in New Minas, including Aalders Avenue. He stated that at the last meeting he was directed by the TAC to investigate the possibility of a traffic study. He stated that he met with the Clerk, Superintendent of Public Works and Mr. Al Golding, a consultant. They reviewed a DOT Traffic Study carried out in 1998.

D. Seamone presented a written report based on this information (copy attached to original minutes). Discussion took place regarding the 1998 study, as well as how the Committee would like to pursue this at the present time.

Chair Barrett gave Mr. Dave Etter the opportunity to speak. Mr. Etter complained that the traffic situation in New Minas has been studied “to death”, and it’s time something actually came out of the studies. He pleaded with the Committee to help him and the other residents of Aalders Avenue to make their area safe by discouraging certain vehicular traffic from using this street.

Chair Barrett explained that the Committee has met with DOT and discussed the problems extensively with them, and the message is clear from DOT: they will not consider any drastic measure to prohibit vehicles from traveling on this street. Chair Barrett explained that, as stated by the Village’s engineer, a traffic study is being considered, and Aalders Avenue is included in this study; all the Village is included, and everyone’s concerns will be addressed. He reiterated that the streets belong to DOT and they have the final say, but they have expressed an interest in working with the Village to come up with a solution to the traffic problems facing the Village.

Chair Barrett asked the members to view the documentation provided by D. Seamone, which will be discussed at a later time.

It was moved by L.Lockhart, seconded by G. Silver, that the Traffic Study process be tabled to the next meeting. MOTION CARRIED

(c) Cloverleaf Drive Drainage problems – Update from Doug Seamone

D. Seamone stated that he had contacted Mr. Roger Larkin and Mr. Brian Ward, pursuant to instructions from the last TAC meeting. Mr. Larkin agreed to contact D. Seamone, however, Mr. Larkin has not returned his calls to date.

(d) Sidewalk Repairs at Bank of Nova Scotia – Update

P. Pothier advised that the Clerk has forwarded a letter to DOT putting them on notice that the Village will be repairing the sidewalk on Commercial Street beside the Bank of Nova Scotia and billing their department. Chair Barrett asked if this repair had been completed, and P. Pother stated that once asphalt is available from suppliers, the repairs will be carried out.

(e) ATV Activity – Update from Citizen re Petition

Chair Barrett recognized Mrs. Sharon Boyd and asked if she had the Petition available as recommended at the previous meeting. Mrs. Boyd stated that she had asked for information at the last meeting and asked if this information was available for her. She also stated that there are many more serious problems associated with her issues with ATV activity.

Chair Barrett stated he had contacted the persons whom Mr. Etter had stated owned the gravel pit along the ATV-traveled trail. He stated that those people confirmed that they do not own the gravel pit, and stated the person who is currently being assessed for it owns the pit. Mr. Etter challenged this information by stating that the County mapping does not depict this to be true. Chair Barrett stated further that he asked the contact if there was any issue with ATV activity on their property in this same area, and was told that the landowner would only take issue if any problems arose, and none have arisen. T. Silver confirmed that all the property owners contacted last June were not concerned about ATV activity at or near their properties.

Chair Barrett asked Mrs. Boyd if she had the petition. She said that she has several people working on the petition, and it would likely be completed in the spring. She said she wanted to give the committee a “heads up” on what to expect when people are made aware of the noise problem and ATV activity in their subdivision, because people will be coming to the Commission for answers. She cited the following as issues, which will be outlined in the petition:

- Excessive noise, but there is more than the noise issue
- Her initial goal was to reduce the noise, but there are other issues
- The noise is her #1 concern
- The World Health Organization recognizes that noise is a serious problem in communities, and there are statistics available in this regard
- Within the next two years, people in her community will move because of the noise caused by the ATV activity. This will diminish the reputation of the community as being peaceful, and real estate sales will be affected
- Department of Environment is very concerned about this off-road vehicle activity. This is a sensitive area with the Village’s wells being located in the vicinity, and the Act “condones” operation of these vehicles in sensitive areas.
- The natural filtration system will be adversely affected if a spill should occur. There is a high risk of this happening.

Mrs. Boyd stated that these items will be on the petition, and she asked the Committee to recommend to the Village Commission that they support the petition. Chair Barrett stated that the Committee and Commission have investigated her complaints thoroughly, and have made every effort over the past year or so to find avenues for her to plead her case, but it is obvious that the Committee or the Commission have no authority to do anything further. He reiterated D. Chaulk’s comments at the last meeting that she is the only person who has come forward with these concerns, which is why it was recommended that she have the people in her community sign a petition; he stated that it would not be appropriate to “pick and choose” who is presented with the petition. He urged her to have all concerned people come to the Commission meeting to voice their opinions. Mrs. Boyd stated the petition would have more teeth if the Commission would support it. Again, Chair Barrett stated that the Commission’s position has been that it has no authority to do this, and urged Mrs. Boyd to continue with the petition.

Mr. Dave Etter spoke on the Protection of Property Act, and stated this is not just a local issue. He said that the Town of Annapolis Royal has just recently adopted a Bylaw to prohibit all off-road vehicle activity on the rail bed. He said it is not fair that a tax payer has to go to all the trouble to get a petition, when this is a provincial issue. He stated again that the gravel pit does NOT belong to the person who has given ATV owners permission to use the land. T. Silver stated that all the landowners along the rail bed, the pit and Jones Road area were contacted, and no one responded negatively to ATV use on their property.

The Chair permitted T. Silver to speak. She stated that it was her understanding that the rail bed in Annapolis Royal was turned over to them by Department of Natural Resources, and is owned by the Town. She stated also that P. Pothier has met with Department of Environment personnel regarding the concerns expressed at previous meetings. Chair Barrett asked P. Pother to give a verbal report on that meeting.

P. Pother stated that he and a representative from DOE toured all the well sites in New Minas to determine if ATV activity near the wells would pose any problem. He stated that the wells are protected, and DOE advised him that even in an extreme situation, the accidental gasoline/oil spill from ATVs would not adversely affect the wells. The wells are deep and there is sandstone aquifer.

Chair Barrett stated that the Village has addressed the issues to the best of their ability, and it is now up to Mrs. Boyd to provide a petition of all citizens in the affected area, so that the numbers can be shown. Mrs. Boyd stated the petition will be carried out in the spring. She advised that she will provide the Clerk Treasurer with a copy prior to distribution.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of L. Lockhart, the meeting adjourned.

L. Barrett, Chair

T. Silver, Clerk Treasurer