



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MINUTES**

Monday, November 27, 2023, 6:00 pm

Members Present: Mayor Robert Campbell
Councillor Joe D'Ettore
Councillor John-Wiebe Dykstra
Councillor Jason Gallant
Councillor Nathan O'Blenis
Councillor Stephanie Thorne

Members Absent: Councillor Phyllis Bannister
Councillor Sarah Colwell

Staff Present: Austin Henderson, CAO
Dianne Ayles, Clerk/Treasurer
Scott Landry, Assistant Clerk

Staff Absent: Lorie Paterson, Administrative Assistant
Trevor Douthright, Manager of Infrastructure and Public Works
Massimo Caracristi, Director of Recreation and Wellness
Bradley MacLeod, Fire Chief

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

MOTION: The Agenda be adopted.

Moved by: Councillor Gallant

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

3. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

Mayor Campbell noted that Conflict of Interest Declaration forms are on the Council Table should any councillor need to fill one out for submission to the Clerk.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Regional Trail Plan Presentation - Marc Leger, Southeast Regional Service Commission**

Councillor John-Wiebe Dykstra joined the meeting at 6:11 pm.

As noted in the Strategic Plan, a strategic priority of the Town is to update the former Regional Trail Plan.

A presentation and drafted plan in alignment with regional trail priorities has been prepared by Southeast Regional Service Commission Trails Coordinator Marc Leger. SERSC has a number of in-house resources for trail development, but in order to work closely with municipalities, must have council endorsement.

The Town has also been keeping Marc Leger updated on the progress being made on the Town's 2024 trail extension project.

Having a regionalized trail plan with a future trail connectivity vision that is also endorsed by Council is important for the Town to secure and pursue funding. It also sets a vision for a connected network within the larger region's trail network.

The presentation by Marc Leger touched on what Salisbury presently has for trails, both officially and unofficially (for example, the current lagoon birders' trail), and trails that the Town hopes to develop.

His recommendations -

Short Term:

- Prioritize development of connections in urban core (between Highland Park/Wetland Trail and Parkin Street along the riverside. These offer the most to the community, including economic impact.)
- Consider the need for a Trail Committee. This is recommended for trail management. The level of direct involvement of a trail committee can vary.

Medium Term:

- Public Consultation and Planning.
- Natural asset inventory.
- Identify spaces and corridors for trails (for example, 23.5 acres of municipally-owned property on Powers Pit Road (decommissioned municipal dump property) offering access to both the Petitcodiac River and Pollett River. The site would pose some challenges due to terrain, so a single-lane trail would be recommended. Cost of construction would depend on if a professional trail builder was used.)
- Consider volunteer resources and support.

- Sanction trails on private land. He explained this is the easiest way to develop trails.

Long Term:

- Connections to Moncton and Petitcodiac.

With regards to connectivity between communities, it is recommended that work begin as soon as possible due to the hurdles that may exist due to private property access.

Councillor Thorne asked about trail management and the involvement of a volunteer committee. Hillsborough and Riverview are good examples of where these volunteer committees are effective.

Mayor Campbell asked about communication and promotion. User groups are the best advocates and promotion, explained Marc Leger.

As far as ease-of-development is concerned, Winter-use trails do not require all of the ground work that a non-Winter trail would require. Also, so-called water trails are easiest to develop, because access to launch sites is the only concern.

Councillor D'Ettore asked about the effectiveness of signage to inform of and direct people to trails. Marc Leger said signage is important in the case of trails that people already know exist, but just need to find out how to access them. Community events are the best promotion.

Mayor Campbell and Council thanked Marc Leger for his presentation.

MOTION: Council refer the updated Regional Trail Plan for ratification at an upcoming meeting of Council.

Moved by: Councillor O'Blenis

Seconded by: Councillor Gallant

Motion Carried

2. Property Assessment Overviews - Walid Ismail, Eric Roy, and Phillipe Breau, Service New Brunswick

Following the Ward 4 Block Party, employees of Service New Brunswick, who also reside in Ward 4, offered presenting additional information to Council from the Property Assessment Branch of Service New Brunswick.

SNB sent three employees to present a slide show to Council. The intent of their presentation was to walk Council through the assessment process and gain a better understanding of their criteria and context for residential assessments.

SNB Property Assessment Services Director of Operations Eric Roy led off the presentation. He explained the mandate of the PAS Branch, which is to determine market value.

The presentation also touched on:

- The staffing available to Property Assessment Services.

PAS has 135 employees, 110 of whom are under Operations. Assessors (residential, commercial, senior, etc) and Administration work out of 11 offices across New Brunswick.

- The schedule for deliverables (Sept. 15-Mar. 1).

Following assessment research in the first half of the year (ending Sep. 15) and the presentation of tax base information to municipalities in the Fall (by Oct. 15), assessment notices are then issued to property owners by the third week of January, providing 30 days for a review. Property tax bills are then issued March 1.

At the present time, assessed values are based on information gathered from January to the end of May, with the resulting assessments to be effective for the following year. This is the case now. However, as of 2025, the assessment information will start being based on the information gathered over the entire previous year, which will allow assessments to be based on an entire year's activity.

- Core activities of PAS.

These include reviewing building permits, sales analysis, re-inspection, and requests for reviews and appeals.

Taking over at this point of the presentation was Phillippe Breau, Regional manager Beausejour Region.

- 2024 statistics, including tax base growth in New Brunswick/Salisbury.

The total tax base for all of New Brunswick is now \$89.4-billion dollars, an increase of \$8.4-billion from the previous assessment. Specific to Salisbury, there 4,608 properties in the municipality. 136 sales affected the overall assessment benchmark for the municipality. For the previous year, the number of review requests was 128, resulting in reductions in 14 per cent of these cases. The properties that saw reductions were initially collectively assessed at \$4.7-million and eventually reduced to \$3.99-million, a reduction of about \$700,000. 33 building permits were closed (i.e. the time from the permit being issued to the end of construction and final inspection) in the municipality in the year in question (2023) out of the 70 building permits issued up until the time of tax base determination. Effective for 2024, Salisbury's assessment increase amounts to an average of 12.42 per cent, which includes the factor of the 10 per cent Spike Protection mechanism applied in many cases (to approximately 2,600 properties in the municipality). Phillippe Breau also explained the Mass Appraisal Cycle, which is the most common method used in assessing properties. The Mass Appraisal Cycle circular pattern involves data collection through a variety of means, analysis of data, and the determination of assessment value.

Taking over at this point of the presentation was PAS Director of Service Support Walid Ismail. He described the tools used to assess properties,

their ongoing goal to improve their operations, and how they can be reached.

- Long overdue modernization of Property Assessment Services.
- Property owner resources (myNBpropertyassessment.ca, PAOL.ca, 1-888-762-8600).

Mayor Campbell and Council thanked Eric Roy, Phillipe Breau, and Walid Ismail for their presentation.

Councillor Joe D'Ettore left the meeting at 7:42 pm.

Councillor Joe D'Ettore rejoined the meeting at 7:46 pm.

MOTION: Enter into a recess.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor Gallant

Motion Carried

RECESS

MOTION: Return to the Regular Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor O'Brien

Motion Carried

5. CLOSED SESSION - Contractual (68(1)(c) Local Governance Act)

MOTION: Enter into a Closed Session.

Moved by: Councillor O'Brien

Seconded by: Councillor Dykstra

Motion Carried

CLOSED SESSION

Councillor Nathan O'Brien left the meeting at 9:00 pm.

MOTION: Return to the Regular Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Gallant

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

6. MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS' STATEMENTS/INQUIRIES

No statements or inquiries at this time.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting. (9:04 pm)

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor Dykstra

Motion Carried

Chair

Clerk