

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Minutes of a Meeting of Municipal Council

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, N.S.
Tuesday, March 10, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Mayor Elspeth McLean-Wile
Deputy Mayor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10
Councillor Morgen Reinhardt, District 1
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5
Councillor Alison Smith, District 6
Councillor Edgar Burns, District 7
Councillor Ben Brooks, District 9

Regrets

Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8

Staff

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO
April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk
Tina Robichaud-Bond, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor McLean-Wile called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. Announcements/Acknowledgements/Recognition

Councillor Brooks highlighted the success of the Repair Café held in Riverport, bringing together volunteers with skills in various trades to help residents repair household items.

Councillor Smith recognized the contributions of the women who operate the Parkdale–Maplewood Community Museum in honour of International Women's Day, and praised their long-standing service, community programs, and fundraising efforts.

Councillor Oickle declared a Conflict of Interest on Item 11.1.4 Lunenburg County Wheels Pre-Budget Approval.

Mayor McLean-Wile acknowledged Rita Casey, Manager of the Michelin Bridgewater plant, for being named one of the 25 Most Powerful Women in Atlantic Canada.

3. Public Input - Nil

4. Approval of Agenda

It was requested that the following items be removed from the agenda:

- Items 7.2 Community Hub Commercial Kitchen Equipment Purchase
- 14.1 Contract Negotiations under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA

Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Burns that the Agenda be approved as amended with the removal of Item 7.2 Community Hub Commercial Kitchen Equipment Purchase and Item 14.1 Contract Negotiations under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA. Carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2026

The Minutes of the February 24, 2026 Council meeting were approved as circulated.

6. Business Arising from Minutes - Nil

7. Awarding of Tenders/RFPs

7.1 Award of RFP 2025-05-403 Design-Build Sawpit Wharf Demolition, Construction of New Wharf with Floating Dock System, Kayak Launch and Boat Launch Upgrades

Maria Butts, Project Manager, reviewed the report, “Award of RFP 2025-05-403 Design-Build Sawpit Wharf Demolition, Construction of New Wharf with Floating Dock System, Kayak Launch and Boat Launch Upgrades” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on the submissions received and the recommendation to award the project to Eagle Beach Contractors Ltd.

2026-028 Moved by Deputy Mayor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Bell that Municipal Council award RFP 2025-05-403 Design-Build Sawpit Wharf Demolition, Construction of New Wharf with Floating Dock System, Kayak Launch and Boat Launch Upgrades to Eagle Beach Contractors Ltd. for an amount up to \$1,482,720, including a 20% contingency and excluding HST, as pre-approved in the 2026-2027 capital budget. Carried Unanimously.

It was clarified that the 20% contingency was recommended due to the design/build structure of the project and the potential for unforeseen conditions during demolition and construction of in a marine environment.

The motion on the floor was voted on and carried unanimously.

7.2 Community Hub Commercial Kitchen Equipment Purchase

This item was removed from agenda.

8. Presentations/Scheduled Times - Nil

9. Consideration of Correspondence - Nil

10. Recommendations from Committees & Boards

10.1. Finance Committee

10.1.1 Clean Energy Financing & Water Supply Upgrade Program Administrative Fee Increase

Recommendations from the Finance Committee, including a report titled “Administrative Fee Increase for Clean Energy Financing and Water Supply Upgrade Program”, providing details on the increase to the program and transitioning the program to be administered internally was circulated with the agenda.

2026-029 Moved by Councillor Brooks, seconded by Councillor Moore that Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee and increase the administrative fees to \$1,400 per participant for the Clean Energy Financing Program and Water Supply Upgrade, effective April 1, 2026.

It was clarified that residents with signed agreements in place would not experience any changes in the terms of the agreement.

The Motion on the floor was voted on and carried unanimously.

2026-030 Moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Hubley that Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee and approve transitioning administration of the Water Supply Upgrade Program from Clean Foundation to in-house delivery by the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, effective November 1, 2026. Carried unanimously.

11. Staff Reports

11.1 Planning & Development

11.1.1 Municipal Planning Strategy and Wide Land Use By-law – Draft #2

A report from the Planning Staff titled “Summary of Draft #2 Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law” providing details on the revisions made to the municipal wide planning strategy document, based on council and public feedback, was circulated with the agenda.

Reid Shepherd, Deputy Director of Planning & Development Services, Ella Gindi, Planner II, Rosemary Young, Planner I, and Anna Giblin, Planner I, gave a presentation on Draft #2 of the Municipal-Wide Land Use Planning documents (attached to Minutes), highlighting the following:

- Regulations based on new lots, new use, and new builds
- Reduction of zones from 17 to 9
- Removal of Lakeshore Residential and Hamlet zones

- Updated rural, agricultural, and village zoning
- Simplified home-based business rules
- RV living permitted up to 90 days before a permit is required
- Home based business regulated in rural residential zones only
- Tiny homes treated as permitted dwelling units
- Environmental setbacks reductions
- Public engagement schedule announced (four community sessions + open houses)

11.1.2 Expanded Public Input

There were no members of the public in attendance to provide public input.

11.1.3 Council Deliberation

The following clarifications were provided:

- Farmland Subdivision (RU2 Zone)
 - Farmland in the RU2 zone can be subdivided 2 times per year, up to 6 lots total, regardless of property size.
 - This rule is required to meet provincial farmland protection policies.
 - Additional subdivision is allowed only if the new lots remain for agricultural use (min. 4 hectares).
- Home Based Businesses
 - Allowed in rural residential zones.
 - Private road covenants (rules set by developers or homeowner associations) are not enforced by the Municipality.
- Existing Uses & Campgrounds
 - Pre existing uses (“grandfathered”) stay with the property, even if sold or inherited.
 - To claim an old campground use, owners must prove it existed before new rules.
- Seasonal RV Living
 - 90 day limit to be reconsidered to match typical campground season (May to October).
- Village Zone Boundaries
 - Boundaries may need refinement; public feedback during open houses is important.

11.1.4 Lunenburg County Wheels Pre-Budget Approval

Councillor Oickle declared a conflict of interest and left the table.

Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning & Development Services, reviewed the report, “Lunenburg County Wheels – 2026-2027 Funding Request” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on Lunenburg County Wheels’ request for increased funding.

2026-031 Moved by Councillor Brooks, seconded by Councillor Hubley that Municipal Council grant pre-budget approval for an increase of \$15,000 to Lunenburg County Wheels' annual municipal funding, for a total contribution of \$90,000 for the 2026-2027 fiscal year; and further, that the approved funds be released immediately to ensure that there is no interruption to the essential community transportation service provided by Lunenburg County Wheels. Carried unanimously.

Councillor Oickle returned to the table.

11.2 Administration

11.2.1 Cost Share Agreement for J-Class Streets – 3-year Renewal

A letter from the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal along with a copy of a draft Cost Share Agreement “circulated with the agenda”, explaining that the current Cost Share Agreement was up for renewal.

Tom MacEwan, CAO, explained that the agreement was to continue the partnership with the Province for paving J Class roads and its signing would maintain the Municipality's eligibility for future projects.

2026-032 Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Veinotte that Municipal Council authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to sign the Cost Sharing Agreement No. 2026-015 with the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works for the paving of Subdivision (J Class) Streets for a 3-year term. Carried unanimously.

11.2.2 Letter of Support for Central Nova ATV Club & LaHave River Trail Association Partnership

A letter from the Central Nova ATV Club requesting a letter of support for its application for a shared-use rail trail designation under the provincial Road Trails Act was circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that improving designated trail infrastructure could help ensure safer shared use and better separation from roadways where possible.

2026-033 Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Burns that Municipal Council write a letter of support for Central Nova ATV Club and the LaHave River Trail Association's application for a shared-use Road Trail designation for a defined section of Highway 10 between Wentzell Lake and Pinehurst, under Nova Scotia's Road Trails Act. Carried unanimously.

11.2.3 Conservation Easement & Forestry Property Taxation Report

Tom MacEwan, CAO, reviewed the report titled, “Conservation Easement & Forestry Property Taxation” (circulated with the agenda), explaining the implications of the Financial Measures (2026) Act for conservation easements and forest property taxation.

Mr. MacEwan noted that conservation easements were intended to remain in place in perpetuity, ensuring long-term protection of lands held by eligible conservation organizations. The proposed amendments would introduce the ability for a property owner to seek termination of an easement based on “severe hardship”.

Mr. MacEwan explained that the proposed amendments to the Forests Act relating to commercial carbon sequestration transactions would require reporting of commercial carbon sequestration arrangements and could result in forest lands used for such purposes being reassessed as commercial property for taxation purposes.

It was noted that the change could unintentionally discourage sustainable forestry initiatives and programs that allow landowners to generate income through carbon sequestration while maintaining ecological forest management practices.

It was also noted that residents and organizations had expressed concern that the changes could undermine new models of sustainable woodland management that rely on conservation easements and carbon credit revenue to maintain forests over the long term.

Staff was directed to write to the Premier and appropriate ministers expressing concerns regarding the proposed legislative changes and requesting further consultation.

12. Mayor’s/Deputy Mayor’s/Councillors’ Matters

12.1 MJSB Update

Councillor Oickle’s update on the matters of the Municipal Joint Services Board is attached to the Minutes.

12.2 Deputy Mayor’s Update

Deputy Mayor Veinotte advised that she attended agenda briefings, cheque signing, and committee meetings.

12.3 Mayor’s Update

Mayor McLean-Wile’s update is attached to the Minutes.

13. Added Items – Nil

14. In Camera

At 8:04 p.m., it was moved by Councillor Oickle, seconded by Councillor Burns that Municipal Council go In Camera to discuss the following items:

14.2 Contract Negotiations under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA

14.3 Personnel Matter under Section 22(2)(c) of the MGA

Carried.

Municipal Council In Camera in session.

At 9:23 p.m., Municipal Council came out of In Camera and returned to open session.

Municipal Council in session.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Municipal-Wide Land Use Planning Draft # 2 Planning Documents

March 10, 2026
Planning & Development Services



Today's Agenda

Project Background

Legislative Authority

What is Zoning

Statements of Provincial Interest

What's Changed Since Draft 1

Zoning

Agriculture & Rural Lands

Economic Development

Protecting Inland Water & Natural Areas

Housing & Flexible Living Options

Open Space & Park Dedication

What's Next



Background

How did we get here?

- The Province required all municipalities (2018) to adopt comprehensive planning documents; MODL is creating a unified MPS and LUB covering all lands and guiding future growth.
- The new documents must meet the Statements of Provincial Interest and Minimum Planning Requirements, with additional opportunities to address topics such as environmental protection, heritage, and transportation.
- MODL is the last Municipality in the Province to implement this requirement.



Municipal Government Act: Zoning

MGA Section 212 (3): “All land within a municipality must be the subject of a municipal planning strategy.”

- MGA Section 214(1)(b): A municipal planning strategy must include statements of policy respecting the future use, management and development of lands within the municipality.

MGA Section 219(1) and 220(1) state:

Where Council adopts a Municipal planning strategy...

...Council must also adopt a Land Use By-law

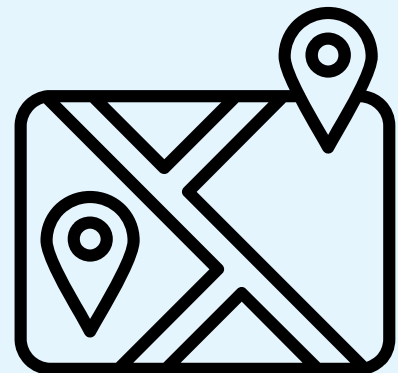
... And a Land Use By-law shall divide the planning area into zones.

What is Zoning?

- Zoning regulates land use by dividing areas into zones focused on different types of uses (i.e., residential, commercial, conservation, etc.)
- Each zone has unique permitted uses and regulations

Why is Zoning Important?

- Zoning can help communities grow in a safe, planned, and predictable way
- Zoning can help protect property values, protect the environment, support businesses, and help maintain the character of existing places
- Directs new development to align with the goals of the community and residents



Statements of Provincial Interest

A Statement of Provincial Interest consists of a Goal, a Basis, an Application, and a set of Provisions.

STATEMENT	GOAL
Drinking Water	To protect the quality of drinking water within municipal water supply watersheds.
Flood Risk Areas	To protect public safety and property and to reduce the requirement for flood control works and flood damage restoration in floodplains.
Agricultural Land	To protect agricultural land for the development of a viable and sustainable agriculture and food industry.
Infrastructure	To make efficient use of municipal water supply and municipal wastewater disposal systems.
Housing	To provide housing opportunities to meet the needs of all Nova Scotians.

How will this affect properties and residences?

- Existing uses and buildings can continue to exist without any need to change.
- Referred to as “Lawfully Existing Uses” in the draft documents.
- A “Legal Nonconforming” use or building, often called “grandfathered”, existed before the new rules were put in place but doesn’t meet the new rules. These buildings and/uses are still allowed and can be fixed, expanded, or rebuilt.
- Future uses and buildings will need to follow the new rules.



What's changed since Draft 1?

Zoning

Key Zoning Changes













17 zones → 9 zones

- All Future Use Zones have been removed
- Lakeshore Residential Zone removed
- Multiple Hamlet zones merged into one Rural Village Zone and applied to only three communities
- Permitted Uses Tables simplified for clarity

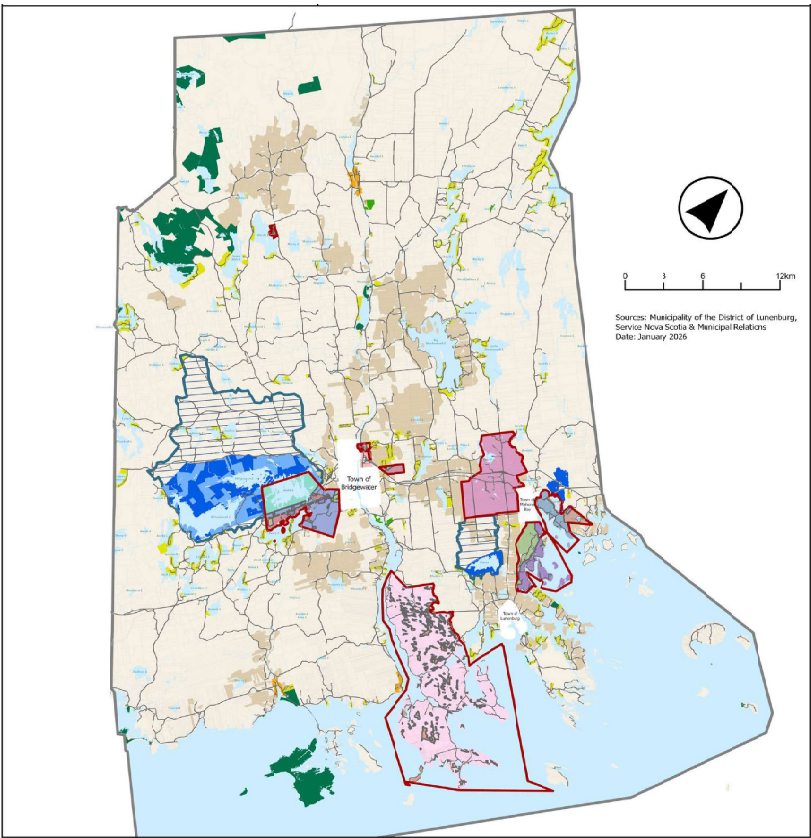
Draft #2 Zoning Framework

Zone	Symbol
Rural General Zone	RU
Rural Agricultural Potential Zone	RU-2
Rural Residential Zone	RR
Rural Village Zone	RUV
Mixed Use Serviced Zone	MUS
Protected Watershed One Zone	PW-1
Protected Watershed Two Zone	PW-2
Recreation and Parks Zone	P
Conservation Zone	C

Municipal-wide Zoning Map

-  Town Boundaries
-  Roads
-  Conservation Zone (C)
-  Mixed Use Serviced Zone (MUS)
-  Protected Watershed Overlay (PW-3)
-  Protected Watershed 1 Zone (PW-1)
-  Protected Watershed 2 Zone (PW-2)
-  Recreation and Parks Zone (P)
-  Rural Agriculture Potential Zone (RU-2)
-  Rural General Zone (RU)
-  Rural Residential Zone (RR)
-  Rural Village Zone (RUV)

Draft for Public Review



Zones for Rural Areas

Zone	Purpose
Rural General (RU)	To preserve rural character of MODL by permitting a wide range of rural based land use activities with limited land use controls.
Rural Agricultural Potential (RU-2)	To preserve large parcels of agricultural land throughout the rural areas of MODL by placing a limit on the subdivision of these parcels.
Rural Residential (RR)	To accommodate low-density residential development and maintain the rural character of established residential areas throughout the rural areas of MODL.
Rural Village (RUV)	To support the continuation and growth of villages, providing surrounding residents with a diverse range of services and amenities.

Zones for Growth Areas

Zone	Purpose
Mixed Use Serviced (MUS)	To support the continuation of a denser, mixed development pattern in areas near Cockville and Osprey Village.

Zones for Natural & Recreational Areas

Zone	Purpose
Protected Watershed One (PW-1)	To protect the smaller water bodies of Dares Lake and Oakland Lake as well as nearby conservation lands by only permitting municipally owned water treatment or distribution facilities in these areas.
Protected Watershed Two (PW-2)	To protect privately-owned parcels of the larger watershed encompassing Hebb, Milipsigate, and Minamkeak Lakes where more permissive but still low-impact private development will protect water quality.
Recreation and Parks (P)	To protect existing provincial and municipal parks and open spaces.
Conservation (C)	To safeguard the ecological integrity of land entrusted, donated, or designated for conservation.

Agriculture & Rural Lands

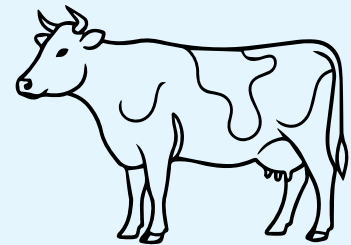
Livestock

Draft 1 Approach

- Draft 1 included categories for livestock to apply setbacks for barns and manure storage.
- The approach involved limiting the number of farm animals based on property size and placing limits on chickens and roosters for smaller residential properties.

Direction

Council directed staff to remove the categories of livestock and remove any limitations on livestock operations including backyard agriculture such as chickens.



Livestock

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 does not include limitations on livestock operations or setback requirements for livestock related structures.



New Development Near Existing Farms

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 included a setback for new residential and institutional uses from existing intensive livestock operations with an option to be considered by site plan if the distance could not be met.

Direction

Council directed staff to maintain a setback for new residential and institutional land uses from existing barns and manure storage.

New Development Near Existing Farms

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 includes a setback of 100 m between new off-property dwellings or institutional uses and existing large-scale livestock operations.

New residential uses that are associated with the farm would not need to meet the setback requirement.



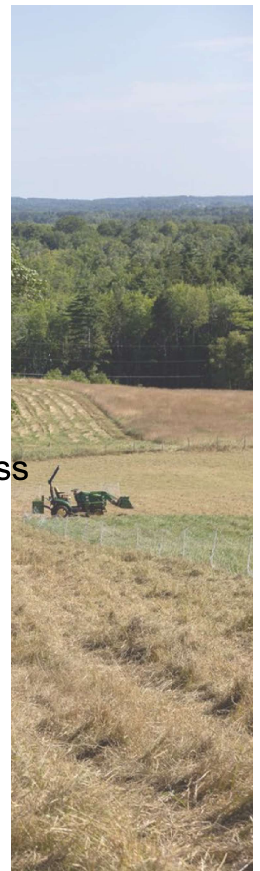
Agricultural Land Protection

Draft 1 Approach

- Draft 1 included an Agricultural Potential Zone to help protect agricultural land, a provincial Statement of Interest.
- Zone was applied to lands larger than four hectares, located outside of hamlets or watershed protected areas, and consisted of at least 60% Class 3 soils.

Direction

Council directed staff to adjust the formula used to identify parcels of land within the zone so that more land would be included.



Agricultural Land Protection

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 includes the same approach used to identify land within the Rural Agricultural Potential Zone as in Draft 1.

However, Draft 2 adds additional parcels larger than four hectares of continuous Class 3 soil that were not captured by the original formula.



Economic Development

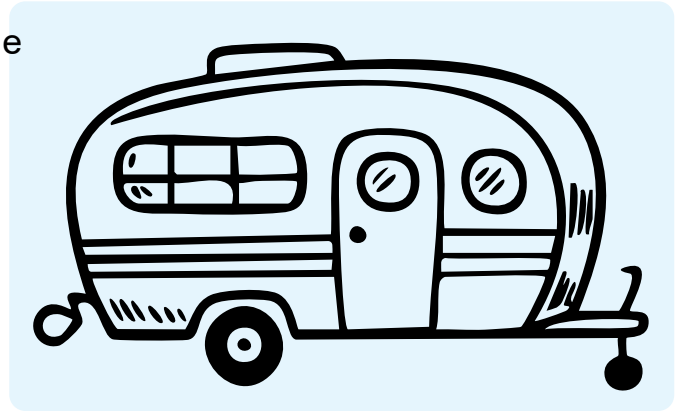
Campgrounds and RV Parks

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 included a Commercial Recreation Zone to be applied to future recreational land uses such as campgrounds and RV parks.

Direction

Council directed staff to change the approval mechanism for campgrounds and RV parks and to permit them by development agreement in most zones.



Campgrounds and RV Parks

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 includes policies and regulations that would permit campgrounds and RV parks by development agreement in most zones.



Home-based Businesses

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 included regulations for home-based businesses in the Hamlet Residential Zone, the Rural Residential Zone, and the Lakeshore Residential Zone, such as a requirement for public road frontage.

Direction

Council directed staff to regulate home-based businesses to a minimal extent in zone(s) that would otherwise only permit residential uses.

Home-based Businesses

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 would only regulate home-based businesses in the Rural Residential Zone and would permit them throughout the rest of the Municipality as a commercial use.

The regulations would be reduced to two types:

1. a list of nonpermitted homebased businesses and
2. a maximum gross floor area.



Signage

Draft 1 Approach

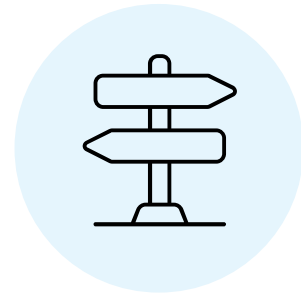
Draft 1 included general signage provisions for all signage in the municipality, as well as specific signage requirements (sizes, types, permit requirements) for the Mixed Use Serviced Zone, the Hamlet Centre Zone, and the Hamlet Residential Zone.

Direction

Council directed staff to remove all signage provisions in the Land Use By-law.

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 contains no signage requirements.



Housing and Flexible Living Options

Recreational Vehicles

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 included policies and regulations stating that a recreational vehicle (RV) could be lived in for 30 days before a development permit would be needed.

Direction

Council directed staff to regulate recreational vehicles to a minimal extent by removing the requirement for the approved septic system and requiring a development permit after at least 60 days to confirm compliance with zone setbacks.

Recreational Vehicles

Draft 2 Approach

- Draft 2 includes policy language that more clearly states Council's intention to allow people to live in RVs and other forms of housing.
- Draft 2 also includes regulations that would allow recreational vehicles to be lived in for up to 90 days before requiring a development permit.



Tiny houses

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 permitted tiny houses but did not include specific policies or regulations on them.

Direction

Council directed staff to treat tiny houses as dwelling units, allowing them as-of-right wherever residential uses are permitted.

Tiny houses

Draft 2 Approach

- Draft 2 includes policy language stating, “Council will treat tiny houses as dwellings and permit them as of right in zones that permit residential uses”.
- The Land Use Bylaw includes a definition of tiny houses and regulations that would treat tiny houses the same as other dwellings.



Protecting Inland Water & Natural Areas

Inland Lakes and Rivers

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 included a 30-metre development setback and a 15-metre vegetative buffer for lakes, rivers and other watercourses designed to provide environmental benefits to the watercourses.

Direction

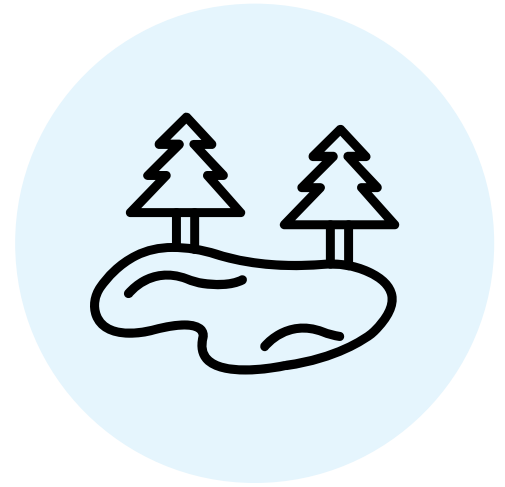
Council directed staff to establish a 20 m development setback and 15 m vegetative buffer for inland watercourses.

Inland Lakes and Rivers

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 includes a development setback of 20 metres and a 15-metre vegetative buffer for inland watercourses such as lakes and rivers.

Draft 2 also includes flexibility that would allow existing undersized lots to still be developed if they cannot meet the required setback requirements.



Inland Wetlands

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 included a 30 m development setback and vegetative buffer for inland wetlands.

Direction

Council directed staff to establish a ~~20~~ 20-metre development setback and vegetative buffer from inland wetlands.

Inland Wetlands

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 includes a regulation that would establish a 20 m development setback and vegetative buffer from inland wetlands with flexibility for existing undersized lots.



Open Space & Parkland Dedication

Open Space & Parkland Dedication

Draft 1 Approach

Draft 1 included a policy that would increase the amount of open space for developers to provide when creating a subdivision.

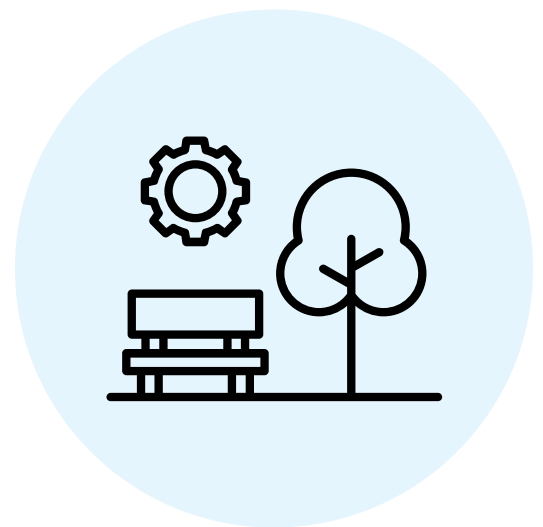
Direction

Council directed staff to reduce the open space dedication back to the existing amounts contained in the Subdivision By-law.

Open Space & Parkland Dedication

Draft 2 Approach

Draft 2 includes policy that would require a minimum of 2% cash-in-lieu or 5% land dedication to subdivided land, keeping it the same as it is now in the Subdivision By-law.



WHAT'S NEXT

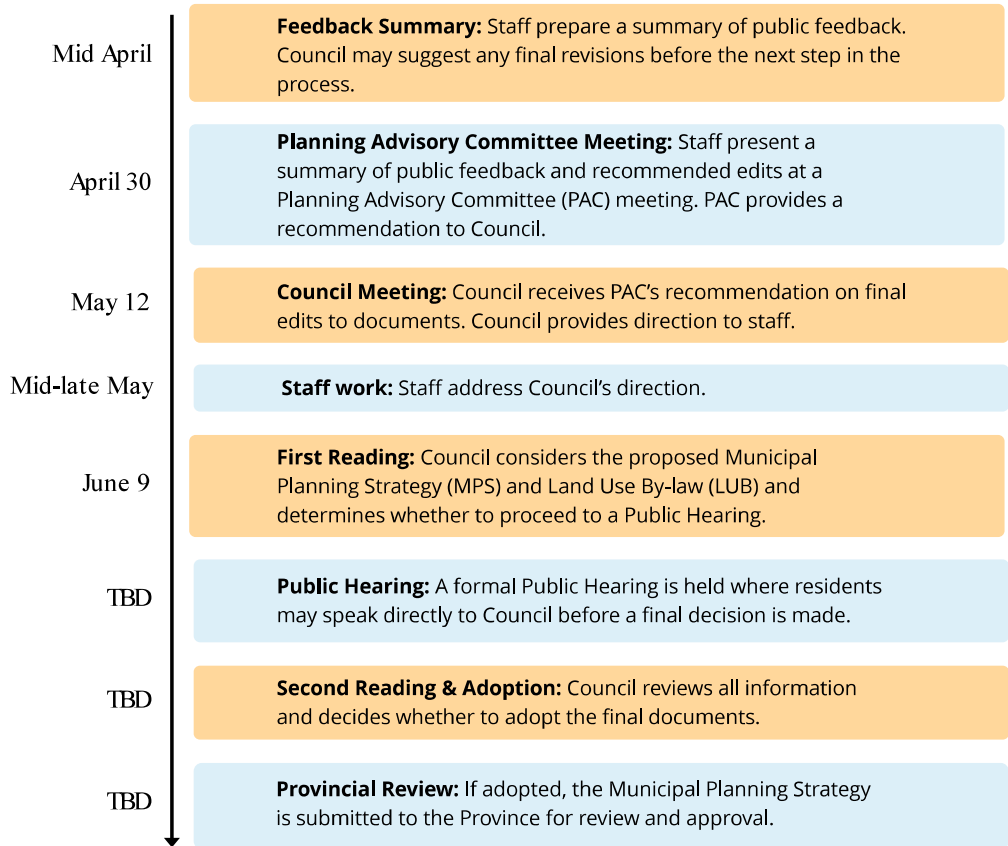
We Are Here



Public Engagement on Draft #2

- March 12 – LaHave Fire Hall | 6–8 p.m. (presentation 6:30)
- March 18 – Municipal Services Building (Drop-in) | 3–7 p.m.
- March 19 – New Germany Legion | 6–8 p.m. (presentation 6:30)
- March 23 – Municipal Services Building (Drop-in) | 3–7 p.m.
- March 25 – Virtual Open House | 1–2 p.m.
- March 30 – Municipal Services Building (Drop-in) | 3–7 p.m.
- April 1 – Northfield Fire Hall | 6–8 p.m. (presentation 6:30)
- April 8 – Big Tancook Island Recreation Centre (Drop-in) | 11:30–1 p.m.

Following public engagement: Approvals Process



QUESTIONS

For more information, scan the QR code or visit
engage.modl.ca/modl2040



MJSB (Municipal Joint Service Board)

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

The 3rd quarter financial update showed that all services were tracking in line with the approved 2025–26 budget and there were no significant financial concerns at that time.

The Board approve updating the Company's TD Canada Trust bank account signing authorities to include the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer, Jillian Rafuse.

The Board had a discussion on the suitability of MJSB's current office at 210 Aberdeen and the potential need to relocate. More information will be given to the board .

Report by:

Councillor Wendy Oickle

Mayor's Report

March 10, 2026

The last couple of weeks have been filled with difficult news. International conflicts continue to escalate, we've seen announcements about provincial budget cuts, and here at home we are working through challenging conversations around proposed fire service reform. When so much of this fills our news feeds every day, it can sometimes feel overwhelming.

For me, the best response is to stay focused on the work we can actually influence and move forward here in our municipality. That doesn't mean ignoring the bigger issues happening around us, but it does mean putting our energy into the things we can help shape and improve for our own communities.

Over the past two weeks that work has taken a few different forms.

Councillor Burns and I met with residents of Naugler Road, along with municipal staff and representatives from the Department of Public Works, to talk through concerns about road conditions in the area. These kinds of conversations are important in helping us understand local issues directly from residents.

I also had the opportunity to tour the Flourish +55 Centre in Bridgewater and meet with Executive Director Lisa Leblanc and Board Chair Karen Fields. The centre offers more than 30 programs for seniors, and about 25 percent of their members come from the Municipality. Like many community organizations, they are facing funding pressures, although the municipality does support their work through our operating grant program. It was impressive to see the range of programming they provide and the role they play in keeping people connected and active.

In recent weeks I have also been meeting with several individuals in our community to talk about issues of inclusion and belonging. These conversations are helping us build a better understanding of the needs that exist locally and what role the municipality might play in supporting a more inclusive community.

Another highlight for me was attending my first Iftar meal at the Hebbville Fire Hall. Iftar is the evening meal that breaks the daily fast during Ramadan in the Muslim tradition. It was a warm and welcoming gathering and a meaningful opportunity to learn more about the traditions of members of our community.

I also met with representatives from Riverport Electric Utility to learn more about the work they are doing on restructuring proposals aimed at addressing their capital needs and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Councillor Reinhardt and Trudy Payne and I met with residents from Broad Cove and the surrounding area who are advocating for improvements near Arties Pond, particularly around parking and safety for people accessing the surf break there. This builds on earlier advocacy by the group, which successfully secured a commitment from the Department of Public Works to undertake road repairs in the area this summer.

Last week I attended the Atlantic Business Magazine dinner recognizing the 25 Most Powerful Women in Atlantic Canada. Seven other women from our community attended as well, and we to celebrate Rita Caissie, Plant Manager at the Michelin Bridgewater facility, who was named one of this year's recipients. It was a joyful evening celebrating her remarkable journey, which began 36 years ago working on the plant floor at the Granton facility.

I would like to recognize the volunteers who organized the second Repair Café at the Riverport Community Centre. Councillor Brooks and I both had the chance to visit and see the work being done. Volunteers helped repair small appliances, computers, jewelry, furniture, musical instruments, and clothing. The organizers are hoping to hold the next event in Mahone Bay or Lunenburg. It's a wonderful example of community volunteers coming together while also promoting reuse and reducing waste.

On Saturday evening I attended Michelin Bridgewater's International Women's Day celebration. The event is open to the public and more than 200 people attended. It was a great evening of conversation, inspiring remarks, good food, and celebration.

Finally, I'm looking forward to the next couple of weeks as we begin meeting with residents through the upcoming sessions on our Municipal Planning Strategy. These conversations are an important part of making sure our planning work reflects the voices and priorities of the communities we serve.