

SEPTEMBER 2020 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

OXFORD, NS, WILD BLUEBERRY CAPITAL OF CANADA



VOTE

Safe and Easy Ways to Vote Municipal Election, October 17

This year, many municipalities are choosing to provide alternative voting methods for the municipal elections in October. This has been a successful option since 2000 and the Town of Oxford is choosing to participate in this for several reasons. The main reason is because of the unpredictability of COVID-19 this fall. Town Council felt it was important to provide as many people the opportunity to vote in the safest ways possible. The Town of Oxford is participating in a bulk purchase tender to hire *Intelivote Systems* to provide the alternative, cost-effective, voting services. They provide a seamless integration of traditional polling station voting with an electronic voting solution. **Voters have the choice of using any Internet connection or their telephone (landline or mobile) to place their votes.** They can use their own devices or **use the public polling station that the Town will provide.**

All voters will receive a **Voters Instruction Letter (VIL)** in the mail, prior to the election, that details all the methods that you have to place your vote. If you haven't received your VIL by October 5, or if you have any questions, please contact Linda Cloney, Returning Officer, at

elections2020@oxfordns.ca or by phone at 902-447-2624. More information about the candidates and the election in general can be found on our website at <https://town.oxford.ns.ca/election-2020.html>.

COVID-19 Reopening Plans

Many groups are wanting to get back to some normal routines with gatherings and events. Any group wishing to use the Town's indoor facilities (Capitol Theatre, Oxford Pioneer Heritage Hall, Oxford Volunteer Fire Hall) must provide a written plan that addresses how the event or activity will meet all Public Health Orders re: physical distancing, gathering limits, sanitizing, etc. This site will help: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>.

For the health and safety of our community, it is important to continue to comply with the Public Health directives now and into the fall when we expect COVID-19 numbers to rise again. Stay safe, keep to your respective bubbles, wear masks as required, stay six feet/two meters apart, and please keep washing your hands!



Capital Improvements

This fall, **residents on Duke Street** will see construction to replace the aging watermain with new pipe and connections to their homes. The successful bidder on the tender to complete the job is Dexter Construction. The cost, estimated to be just over \$660,000 plus HST, will be funded through: Water Utility Depreciation Fund, Gas Tax Funds, and long-term borrowing. The work should be completed by the middle of November at the latest.

Costin Paving will be completing the annual paving that is included in the Capital Budget. Each year, Town Council approves \$80,000 of our annual Gas Tax Funds that we receive from the Federal Government to go towards renewing our streets. This year portions of **Thompson Road (650 feet), Sandy Lane (160 feet), Horton Street (665 feet), and a small piece on Lower Main Street (125 feet)** will be completed.

Trail Upgrades

There has been much work done on our local trails for the benefit of everyone who would like to get outside and enjoy them. The access from the Irving parking lot is much improved for all users. Permission has also been received to regrade and surface the last 100 m to wheelchair standards.

Oxford and Area Trails Association has widened and improved the shoulder of

The Great Trail from the Red Bridge to the Tunnel and is currently working on improving the trail from the tunnel to Black River Road. The Town of Oxford provides funding support through its Gas Tax Funds that helps leverage additional funding to complete this work. New signage is mostly in place, asking folks with motorized vehicles to stay on the west side. Whenever we can, we offer in-kind support to assist work being completed.

The Adventure Therapy Project, Cumberland Trails, Route Six Snowmobile, Sunrise ATV Club and other volunteers have also contributed to trail improvements in our immediate area. Thanks to everyone!

Cumberland Public Library – Oxford

Work is ongoing to secure a portion of the old Oxford Journal location for the new site of the Oxford Branch of the Cumberland Public Library. The Town will establish a long-term lease and we hope everyone will enjoy the new space when it is able to open later this fall.

Fun Free Library

With Town approval, the Walking Club has mounted a little Free Library in the parking lot on Lower Main Street...another great community initiative and a wonderful example of volunteers making positive

Fun Free Library, Contd.
contributions to our town. “Give a book,
Take a book.”

Exciting News! Wild Blueberry Capital Beautification Project: Beautification and Streetscaping Grants for Main/Water Street Businesses in Oxford

Are you considering improvements to your storefronts or do you own a building that has a storefront you’d like to freshen up? Would you be considering such improvements if there was financial assistance? **Get your quotes now!**

The Town has secured a grant of \$17,500 through the province’s Beautification and Streetscaping Program that will allow Water and Main Street-facing businesses and/or commercial property owners to apply for limited matching funds to improve business facades and other curb appeal areas of their property. You may want to improve accessibility, replace awnings and signage, paint facades, etc.

Approved projects will be eligible to receive up to 50% of their improvement costs to a maximum of \$4000.00 per grant. All projects will be considered on a first come, first served basis. Funded projects must be completed by March 31, 2021.

The Beautification and Streetscaping Program falls under the NS Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH). The purpose is to improve business area

streetscapes to attract tourists and support our economy. The DMAH requires municipalities receiving these grants to partner with a body corporate to administer funds to businesses. The Amherst Chamber of Commerce has agreed to partner with the Town of Oxford to administer and manage the project.

The Grant Application Package is almost ready to go and will be available on these websites soon:

<https://www.town.oxford.ns.ca/> and
<https://amherstchambers.ca/>

Mayor’s Corner

To my recollection, I have written 89 “Mayor’s Corners”. That would be one a month for eight years, give or take a few months. In my personal calculations, that is a lot. Today is my last one. I have also written over 100 speeches, and quite frankly, I have always been jealous of those politicians who have speech writers. Sheesh!

This has really got me thinking about how many great people I have had the opportunity to work with over the years in my time as a Councillor and as your Mayor. I have been blessed to have worked with some pretty amazing people, groups and organizations.

When I started out in 2004 Lloyd Jenkins was Mayor. That year the Councillors were Leonard Allen, Peter Swan, Paul Jones, Dawn Thompson, Wade Adshade. Four years later there was only a

few changes as Leonard Allen stepped down and Arnie McNally joined our group.

After those eight years I felt the need to advance, so “run” I did, and was grateful to be chosen as your Mayor. My first council consisted of Tom Kay, Dawn Thompson, Paul Jones, Wade Adshade, Darlene Ellis and Barry Patriquin. In the following four years I got to see new faces: Rick Draper, Brenton Colborne, Dave Clark and Wendy Sweet.

As I look at all those names, I see selfless people who gave up much of their free time to help run a community. People who care. What a complete honor it was to work with you all. Thank you for everything you have done for Oxford and Cumberland County.

The people who work in the Town office have always felt like family to me. We have weathered a few storms together, and we have also got to witness successes. Rachel, Linda, Vivian, Donna, Cathy, Wes, Corey, Ruthann, Danny, Dave, Willie, Ruthie, Brenton, Mary Lou, Carla, Ronnie, Tyler, Carson, Brian, June, Cheryl, Michelle, Nina, Taze, Izaak and all of the summer students over the years. It was such a pleasure to work with you all. I am going to miss you more than you know.

To Eleanor Crowley, (whom I always teased that she was the true Mayor of Oxford!) you are an unbelievable woman. You have given so much back to your community that I honestly think we should have a street named after you. Your “can do” attitude is infectious, and you

have an amazing ability to spread it to those around you. Thank you El for being a wonderful friend, a good neighbor, and always leading by example. If we had more Eleanors, I am sure Oxford would be a city by now.

To the residents, organizations, groups and committees of Oxford and surrounding areas: thank you all for your support, and for putting your faith in a small-town girl who wasn’t born here. Being your Mayor has been a highlight of my life. I will take what I have learned and pass it on to others for the next stage of my journey. That is a promise.

Here is something that I have always wanted to say ... if ever you want to see something done in your community, take a look in the mirror because it starts with you. If you stand on the sidelines, this is where you will always be. Get active, participate and have a voice. *Get er’ done.*

So now, this is it, and I will sign off. Thank you all for being such a huge chapter in my book of life. I am truly blessed. Until we meet again,

Mayor Trish

