

# **HIGHWAY 104 AT ANTIGONISH COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Meeting Notes (DRAFT) – Meeting #6  
October 15, 2008

Attendees: John Bain  
Alan Bond  
Rose Julian  
Anne Marie MacKenzie  
Heather Mayhew  
Kyle McKenzie  
Brian Segal  
Brian Storrie  
Elizabeth Pugh  
Deborah MacInnis  
Mike Croft  
Dwayne Cross  
Roger Garby  
Ken Donnelly  
Wes Surrett

Regrets: Hugh MacDougall, Len Robertson, Mary McCarron, Wes Surrett

## **Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting started at 11:00 a.m., with 15 participants. Ken Donnelly welcomed everyone and introductions were made. Ken introduced Heather Mayhew as a new member representing the environmental community. Heather is co-Vice President of the Antigonish Harbour Watershed Association.

## **Review Minutes of Meeting 5**

The review of the minutes of meeting 5 was deferred until the next meeting.

## **Update on Construction Schedule**

Roger Garby started the discussion by saying that he is anticipating tender calls for construction next Spring.

Brian Segal asked if Peter MacKay's recent announcement of more money for highways means that there will be more highway construction soon. Roger Garby replied such highways would need to go through environmental assessment before anything more would be announced. Provincial environmental assessment approval for this highway has been given, but not federal yet.

Heather Mayhew asked if an environmental protection plan is included in the highway's environmental assessment. Elizabeth Pugh replied they are not part of the EA but are done separately and in-house by Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Jacques Whitford conducted the environmental assessment under contract.

## Signage

Brian Storrie passed out signage plans for the committee to review.

Brian Segal asked about a sign for the town of Antigonish. Brian Storrie replied that TIR's sign shop has to do the sign and has limitations in what it can produce. Brian Segal said that the town wants to provide an image for the sign and Brian Storrie replied that he thinks they can accommodate that. Brian Storrie added that TIR may allow a sign done by the private sector if it meets province's technical standards.

Brian Segal elaborated that he wants a sign that identifies the town, county, university, etc., as opposed to just the town.

Rose Julian pointed out that there's currently no sign identifying her community. Brian Storrie replied that once the interchange to the community is open the community will have signage.

Brian Storrie presented the signage plan to the committee. He explained that everything currently on the road is on the plan. Businesses will have to pay to have their logos on the highway signs. They will likely only have one each and it must be at the appropriate exit. Brian Segal wanted to know how five signs at Exit 33 will be presented so as not to confuse people. Brian Storrie suggested that there should be at least 500 metres between signs.

Business advertising signs have six spots each. They are assigned to businesses on a first come, first served basis.

John Bain expressed concern about signage rules and enforcement. The response was that if a town allowed a business sign on a highway, the province would request the owner remove it. John Bain expressed concern that towns can't get signs removed by either owner or province when that's what they want. In Port Hawkesbury, the Town will remove them themselves if necessary.

Roger Garby mentioned that some old signs are grandfathered with their existing messages even if they don't meet new standards.

Alan Bond asked about signage coming into the county. Brian Storrie replied that the county can have a sign at the county line. The town can have the existing sign at Addington Forks moved if they think it would work better at another exit.

Alan Bond asked about the process of acquiring signs welcoming people to the County. Brian Storrie replied he needs a request from the county and then TIR will work with the county, designers, etc. County signs can be done now because the highway isn't changing where it crosses county lines.

Anne Marie MacKenzie asked about signage rules for the Sunrise Trail. Brian Storrie said that the route needs to cross the highway in order to be signed on the highway.

Heather Mayhew asked if there are standard ways of identifying communities on signs. It was explained that green and white signs usually identify communities, although sometimes geographical names are used when they encompass too many small communities to identify individually. Green and white signs don't identify counties. The words "Town of" doesn't go on signs before town names. Brian Segal expressed concern over confusion between towns and counties with the same names.

Brian Segal reminded everyone of the need to keep traffic flowing into business districts through appropriate signage. Anne Marie MacKenzie pointed out that there is a need to address this through marketing of the town, and not to rely solely on signage.

Anne Marie MacKenzie expressed concern that there won't be enough signs to cover all of the businesses at Exit 33. Brian Storrie replied that if there are too many businesses brown signs identifying the kinds of businesses can be used.

In response to expressed concerns that these rules do not meet the needs of business, Brian Storrie replied that the current rules were designed with input from the business community.

Brian Segal reiterated the concern that the new highway will not provide a view of existing businesses, unlike in some other communities.

Alan Bond supported the idea that highway-planning efforts should be more integrative and be more accommodating of the needs of businesses. There was some contention on this issue. Wes Surrett said that what the town loses in visibility is supposed to be made up for in signage, but felt that the proposed signage plan doesn't do that. Heather Mayhew pointed out that there are many communities that function fine economically without visibility from a highway.

Signage is generally intended for people who are from more than 80 km away, as they are likely not familiar with the area.

Ken Donnelly asked for creative ideas to address signage/visibility issue.

Wes Surrett asked to have the plan on the web site for public comment. Brian Storrie agreed to provide it for that reason.

Brian Segal asked Ken Donnelly to send him a PDF of the plan for distribution to his stakeholders. He also asked for a fact sheet with the signage rules.

The two municipalities need to have a joint meeting to address this issue.

Wes Surrett asked for more opportunities for Antigonish to be identified on the highway much farther way. Brian Storrie replied that there may be a few suitable locations between Truro and New Glasgow. Anne Marie MacKenzie wanted a sign before Truro on both highways 102 and 104. Brian Storrie felt that too many communities would want a sign at these points. Geographical names (e.g. Cape Breton) are more likely to be used on signs at this distance.

Ken Donnelly offered to coordinate a signage task force, comprising members of the committee, to develop a plan for signage. The plan could include consulting with affected people and organizations on the issue.

## **TCH Access**

Several meetings have taken place since Mike Croft last addressed the committee. Some feedback has been received on the access issue, so Mike has returned to provide an update.

Mike cited Chain Lake Drive in Halifax and Akerley Boulevard in Dartmouth as areas where not all businesses have access to the road, yet do well. In fact, some studies suggest businesses do better after access management is implemented.

Access management will still ensure the existing flow of traffic into the town.

Reporting on the meeting held with property owners, Mike stated that most property owners were happy with the plan, although some wanted more access.

When asked what he thought the Highway would look like, Mike Croft said it cannot be predicted because we don't know what land owners want to do with their properties.

Ken Donnelly said that we needed example photos to show people what the existing highway could look like, in order to better engage the community. It was pointed out that

the existing Antigonish WalMart, Superstore, and other businesses at that spot have only one access point.

Addressing concern that some businesses may not be able to get access within the rules because of the proximity of existing access points, Mike stated that variances can be given if it's the only way to give some people access. However, that would only be in extraordinary circumstances; driveway approvals are examined with respect to how they will impact other properties.

Brian Segal asked for a more detailed map with newer properties on it. Dwayne Cross said that's not possible because the map used is the best available.

## **Gateway to the Community**

This item is linked to signage so it will be discussed in the future with the signage issue.

## **Bridge Aesthetics**

Because of the election it's unlikely that bridges will be started this year, so this is not a critical item to discuss today.

## **Other Items**

Brian Storrie reminded everyone to send comments to him at any time.

Dwayne Cross mentioned that roundabouts have been approved, so that could have an impact on the design of the highway.

Elizabeth Pugh reminded members that CBCL will do the design of Phase 2 and will be on the ground this week, as they are on the fast track to get it done. They will attend some future meetings as required.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:00.