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### ATTENDING

- Mayor Jeff Cantwell
- Deputy Mayor Jodi MacKay (Chair)
- Councillor Wendy Elliott
- Councillor Mercedes Brian
- Councillor Carl Oldham
- Councillor Wendy Donovan
- Councillor Oonagh Proudfoot
- Chief Administrative Officer Erin Beaudin,
- Recording Secretary, Vanessa Pearson, and

### ALSO ATTENDING

- Director of Parks and Recreation, Kelton Thomason
- Director of Planning and Development, Devin Lake
- Roger Boychuk, Fathom Studio

### MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- Peter Herbin, WBDC
- Lynda MacDonald
- John MacKay
- John Gordon
- Duncan Ebata
- Caroline Beddoe
- Emily LeGrand
- Ian Porter
- Lis Porter
- George Townsend

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cantwell, called the Special Town Council meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

#### Agenda Item

#### Discussion and Decisions

#### 1. Approval of Agenda

**09-07-20 IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.**

**CARRIED**

#### Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Cantwell offered his sincere apology for how he chaired the Council meeting on July 21<sup>st</sup> and for not encouraging a seconder to Councillor Oldham's motion at that meeting regarding the Healthy Main Street initiative and enabling the discussion. He added that he would

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not say anything further on the subject as it would sound like he is defending his actions and he is not. He also noted the importance of acknowledging the Mi'kmaw 7 Sacred Teachings at Council meetings and in the work of the Council. He asked to absent the Chair role for this meeting and asked Deputy Mayor MacKay to chair. Mayor Cantwell does not want to appear to be favouring a decision either way.

Council went to Public Input session while Peter Herbin from the WBDC logged into the meeting.

**2. Public  
Input/Question  
Period**

**Lynda Macdonald** – Advised that the WBDC Board and membership are divided in regard to the Healthy Main Street initiative. There is no collective message for her to deliver and she has been personally accused of being biased and has therefore declined to present at this meeting on behalf of the WBDC. Peter Herbin will present this evening.

**Caroline Beddoe** – As a young person who values change and creativity and growth she is inspired by Main Street. The public comments have been very disheartening and toxic regarding what is an exciting project that allows us to dream and have vision for the Town. She recognizes that the project is not perfect, but we are creating change. She offered her thanks to Town and Council for this initiative. Hoped that all can be open minded and allow space for conversation.

**Lis Porter** – Part of the business community not in favour of the one-way. Traffic flow and parking are reduced, and it is negatively affecting businesses. Those who need accessible parking are being shamed. Traffic jams on Front Street and some unsafe driving situations at crosswalks are not acceptable. All who visit downtown are important to our vibrancy and sustainability. All businesses are important and we must pay attention to their needs. She is in favour of a survey being undertaken.

**Ian Porter** – Business-person and resident, an informal survey was done that had 1000+ signatures expressing they were not in favour of the changes. Heard that the survey had been dismissed because participants were not from the Town. Feedback from outside of the Town is important. So much negativity and division in the Town; people are going straight to New Minas. Talked to people that are losing money and are not happy with the project.

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**Jillian Oderkirk** – Thank you for considering opening up opportunities for pedestrians and a larger space for walking. It is contentious but important to give people more space in light of the pandemic. The project is innovative, she has seen it emerging in European capitals and it is inspiring to see it in Wolfville. A suggestion: every idea can be worked on and improved – improve the flow of traffic, put better signalling in place. Parking is already good.

**John MacKay** – Thank you to Council for holding another meeting and discussion following the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Pedestrian traffic downtown is a good thing, however merchants are not happy as the project is affecting their bottom-line. Greenwich Fire service was told to avoid Wolfville because they wouldn't get through at a recent fire in Grand Pre Road. Can a compromise be reached, tweaking of the plan? Need to look at traffic lights to help with any traffic bottle-neck. Main Street is not as friendly as it usually is.

**Emily LeGrand** – See the boldness of this project and creativity of this new idea; loves that. Pandemic has shown us we have to be nimble and flexible. This project moves away from cars as a predominant mode of transportation, part of a broader picture. This is a fantastic idea and she hopes that we can stay open to each other and keep working on it rather than throwing it out.

**Lynda MacDonald** – Speaking on behalf of a business of 11 employees in the area who are planning on hiring more, and who had reached out to her. They are happy that they are based in a small Town with a Council that is prepared to be progressive and bold and forward thinking. The pandemic is not over, masks will now be mandatory, the business see this project from a health and safety perspective and this project helps them to attract and hire more people. Timing of this project is good and bad, things to be learned.

**3. Presentation – Peter Herbin, WBDC**

Here on behalf of WBDC, asked to speak to express what the Board has heard from the membership and the public. Friday morning's Board meeting and last Tuesday's Public meeting discussed hiring an independent firm to carry out a survey and carry out an accurate assessment. We know:

- Pandemic
- Atlantic bubble
- Stay Health initiative

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All are affecting our businesses. The first two are out of our control, the third has been created by the Town. 40 members at Tuesday's meeting all indicated financial loss after the project was implemented. The numbers were not year over year. This initiative is creating financial difficulty for businesses. After 3 months of closure due to the pandemic all are trying to get back up and running and make the best of the season in case of a second wave. Traffic camera data is irrelevant – traffic is not the same as a usual summer. Loss of 30 parking spaces is detrimental to businesses. Accessibility is a major concern to our downtown businesses. Bikes travelling on the sidewalk is not safe. The retail sector was not considered when the Town developed this plan.

The Town does not have the infrastructure to support one-way traffic. The project was forced on the businesses with no consultation. Recommend intense communication with all parties if Council wish to pursue this in future. WBDC wants to hear all views of their members so that communication can take place.

**4. Follow Up from Council Meeting, July 21, 2020:**

**a. Stay Healthy**

**Main Street**

**Discussion**

**Councillor Elliott** – how many members in total belong to the WBDC? Peter Herbin advised there were 40 members at the Tuesday meeting and advised that a survey will provide us with an accurate account of feedback.

**Councillor Donovan** – Do you have a sense that the majority of the WBDC want to have this project pulled immediately or a dialogue?

**Peter Herbin** confirmed that dialogue would be welcomed however a lot of members are really hurting and feel it should be scrapped for now and then consultation.

**Councillor Oldham** – Confirming that there are 140 members of the WBDC in answer to Councillor Elliott's question.

**Deputy Mayor Mackay** asked Councillor Oldham to put forward the motion and it was agreed it would be seconded.

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**10-07-20 IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT COUNCIL REVERSE THEIR DECISION ON THE HEALTHY MAIN STREET PROJECT PUTTING THE STREET BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS AS SOON AS STAFF CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN.**

**Councillor Elliott** – Feels extremely divided over recent weeks – as many people love it as hate it; painful to see that in Wolfville. Survey would be nice, however after counting the letters received 32 were for, and 38 against the project. We went into this for the right reasons however it has a lot of opposition.

**Councillor Proudfoot** – The Agenda item on the Healthy Main St Project was added late during the day and there was no time to prep for the item at the July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. After reviewing the numbers, generally speaking, it appears that those in favour of the project are residents and those not in favour are business owners. If we go back to the two-way system that will not be to the detriment of residents however if we continue with one-way that is to the detriment of businesses. There are many variables at play.

**Councillor Donovan** – This has been the most divisive experience. The project was not rolled out well and our communication was not done well. Her sense is that it was not discussed in advance fully enough with the WBDC. A week of real communication between WBDC/Staff/Community to identify things we can preserve would be good. We could have done this better and can learn from this and do better next year.

Her question to Peter Herbin was whether there is an appetite to discuss this further and his answer was no. This is hurting our Town.

**Councillor Oldham** – Hating all of the negative energy from businesses and the community including from those outside of Wolfville. We need all of those people, they spend their money here. Those businesses worst affected are from Tan Coffee to the Library Pub on both sides of the Street. Council agreed at the beginning of this project that we would revisit the initiative if businesses are not happy. We need to listen to people in the downtown core. I will be supporting the motion.

**Counsellor Brian** – My understanding is that the WBDC membership and Board are divided and are commissioning an independent survey. I believe we should wait for the results of that survey. Research over many years shows that this kind of project supports businesses. The project is called Healthy Main street for a reason; it allows people space

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to socially distance. A second wave of the pandemic is coming and the more we can do to reduce the risks the better. Believes we should stay the course.

**Mayor Jeff Cantwell** – Primary reason for this project was to keep people safe and allow for physical distancing. Normal tourism activities in Wolfville are not taking place (wine bus, conferences, events, sports, Friday night football etc). Mayor Cantwell advised that he is glad the subject is back for discussion and consideration. He believes there is not enough info at this stage to make a decision regarding whether something works or not. We should hold true to the values of Council and make evidence-based decisions. He hopes that we can look at the longer-term picture for this initiative and not tear it up at this stage.

Mayor Cantwell took over the Chair to enable Deputy Mayor Jodi MacKay to state her opinion.

**Deputy Mayor Jodi MacKay** – Has always been 50/50 in favour of this project. There were 3800 visitors to Wolfville last July compared to 400 visitors so far this year. University Conferences that bring in 5-6,000 people each year will not take place. It is difficult to assess the situation when 40 voices out of 140 members participate in WBDC meetings – it is hard to quantify what that means but that does not reduce the impact on some businesses. The project is not what she had envisioned with the concrete curbs, and the second wave of the pandemic is coming.

**Councillor Donovan** – Can we hear from Roger Boychuk or Devin Lake regarding the tweaks that are planned following the accessibility walk about?

**Director Lake** – He advised that items including painting curbs, more signage, entry into the corridor, decals in the shared space, accessible space in front of Shoppers, drop-zone on the Eastern side, further discussion with ENS and Fire Services will be implemented. We are working with Roger Boychuk, Traffic Engineer.

**Roger Boychuk, Fathom Studio** – There is typically challenges and lots of discussion when implementing changes such as this initiative. Having good data to study and to provide info for changes is important. We are just starting to get a rich source of data that we can use.

**Councillor Oldham** – This project has not been a failure we need to go back to the drawing board, work with businesses, residents and the

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community and work towards next year with improvements. The timing is wrong for 2020.

**Councillor Proudfoot** asked for clarification regarding the WBDC survey and whether it is taking place and it is not clear whether the survey has actually started. **Councillor Oldham** confirmed we are unsure on this. She also asked whether it is safe to say that investment made in items used for Main Street can be used again? Director Lake advised that is correct.

**Councillor Donovan** asked for a 2-minute break and **Deputy Mayor MacKay** agreed at 8.09 pm.

The meeting reconvened at 8.12 pm.

**A Recorded vote took place with the following results:**

Councillor Elliott – for the motion  
Councillor Proudfoot – for the motion  
Councillor Oldham – for the motion  
Councillor Donovan – for the motion  
Councillor Brian – against the motion  
Mayor Cantwell – against the motion  
Deputy Mayor MacKay – for the motion.

**The motion was CARRIED.**

**5. Adjournment of  
Regular Meeting**

**11-07-20 IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL BE ADJOURNED AT 8:25 PM.**

**CARRIED**

**Approved by Council Motion 03-09-20, September 1, 2020  
As recorded by Vanessa Pearson, Coordinator, Office of the CAO.**