

Monthly Departmental Report

Planning & Economic Development

March 2025

The attached development activity report shows permits issued in February and a 2024/2025 comparison. As indicated, several permits were issued for detached dwellings within the Hillsdale development.

At the February Council meeting, second reading was approved for a development agreement for 96 Church Street to permit a total of seven units. At the March 3rd PAC meeting, the committee recommended approval of a development agreement to permit an 18-unit apartment building at 91 Rupert Street and an 8-unit apartment building at 3 Robie Street. The PAC were also provided with options for multi-unit residential developments as part of the new MPS and LUB drafts. A special PAC meeting has been scheduled for March 25th to continue the discussion on the options provided, with a view to making a recommendation to Council on the draft planning documents in April.

A public participation opportunity will be held after the PAC meeting on March 25th to seek input on a development agreement application for a proposal at 100 Russell Street involving six, 42-unit apartment buildings, 38 Stacked Townhouses, and 14 Stacked Bungalows.

The April 7th PAC meeting agenda will include consideration for a multi-building proposal at 112 West Victoria Street. This proposal was deferred by the PAC in September 2024 with a request for changes to the building configuration and more information. The developer has provided additional information and changes in response to this request.

Advertising of the Industrial Park will continue over the coming months. ViewPoint website advertising will be complete at the end of April and allNovaScotia website ads will stop in August. Tourism promotions in SaltScape magazines will begin in April and will continue throughout the year. The February article on the Town of Amherst in Business View Magazine was delayed and will run in the March issue. Our ad in Canada Travel Magazine is running in both their print and digital publications. Canada Travel Magazine provided the added opportunity to place a digital billboard advertisement on a billboard along the Gardiner Expressway in Toronto. Our ad was shown over 50,000 times from February 24th to March 2nd.

The tender has closed for the construction of three business promotional signs for designated locations between Laplanche Street and Fort Lawrence Road. Town and County staff will be contacting existing sign owners to notify them of the changes and the removal of illegal signs. A program has been developed to allow businesses to be included on the new signs. This work is scheduled to be completed by May 1st.

The new Industrial Park Welcome Sign has been ordered and the supply and installation are expected in April. New lighting and landscaping around the sign will be completed this spring-summer by town staff. The improved area will showcase the Industrial Park to travelers along Hwy 104.

With the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia (RANS) coming to Amherst on Tuesday, March 25th, Town staff and the Cumberland Business Connector are contacting local restaurants to ensure they are aware of the opportunity to meet the association. RANS will be discussing a collection of topics to help run a restaurant including staffing, CRA, education and training, and marketing.

Staff are working with Provincial partners to introduce and promote the NS Loyal program to businesses and organizations in our area. The program is designed to make it easier to identify local products at retail. InvestNS is offering funding up to \$3000 to producers for labeling and packaging costs for their products.

The Cumberland Chamber of Commerce will be hosting its 2025 AGM on April 24th at the CCUBIC conference room. Retiring General Manager, Beth Peterkin will be leaving the organization at the end of May. Ms. Peterkin's replacement has yet to be announced.

On April 29th and 30th, the Cumberland Business Connector is hosting the annual Partners for Progress conference at the Fox Harbour Resort. Known as the Province's largest annual Economic Development Conference, the event gathers all economic development partners and stakeholders to discuss major topics affecting the economy and share solutions.

The 2025 SaltScapes East Coast Expo will be held from May 9th to 11th. Town and County staff will be at a tradeshow booth debuting the ExploreCumberland brand and promoting tourism in Amherst and the Cumberland region. This immensely popular consumer show is custom-designed as a one-stop opportunity to learn what Atlantic Canada has to offer.

There continues to be an abundance of business learning opportunities - the following list provides a sampling of what is being offered between now and the end of April. Those interested are encouraged to follow the Cumberland Business Connector Facebook page for announcements of upcoming learning opportunities.

Date	Organizer/Presenter	Topic
March 19	InvestNS	Programs for business expansion in international markets
March 25	Restaurant Association	Meet & Greet in Amherst & Pugwash
March 26	Mind Your Business	Art of Merchandising facilitated by Masstown Market
April 8	Cliffs of Fundy	Building Sustainable Tourism Networking event
April 16	Chamber of Commerce and Sunset Homes	Empowering Cumberland Conference
April 29 & 30	Cumberland Business Connector	Partners for Progress Conference

Task Updates:

Task: 15 & 31 East Victoria Street Development Agreement

Update: The agreement is ready to be signed but the developer is not likely to proceed as approved due to unforeseen circumstances.

Status: This will be marked complete

Task: Industrial Park Land Acquisition

Update: Legal/survey work should be completed in March. An Industrial Land Sale Policy will be on the March COW agenda.

Status: Ongoing

Task: 105 South Albion (Blaine Street) and Ottawa Avenue Acquisitions

Update: Staff are working with the developer to execute the development agreement with a tentative closing date in March for the land transaction.

Status: Blaine Street is ongoing. Development of the Ottawa Avenue property is paused.

Task: Hotel Levy

Update: The final report was completed in December. Staff are working on a summary of the report recommendations that will be presented to Council in March.

Task: LED Roadway Lighting Proposal

Update: A pilot project that would include replacement of almost all of the town's streetlights to more efficient lights, while testing LEDs radar and camera technologies. With funding for the project having been denied on multiple occasions, the project is not viable as originally conceived. Staff will be reviewing the town's streetlighting needs to determine what, if any, further actions are required.

Status: Ended This will be marked complete

Task: 8 Lower Laplanche Purchase

Update: This purchase has been waiting for settlement of the estate, which is being contested. The possibility remains that the sale will go through once the estate has been settled.

Status: Pause, pending settlement and registration of the vendor's estate.