



**TOWN OF KENTVILLE  
COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes: December 8, 2025

**Town Hall, 354 Main Street, Kentville, Nova Scotia**

This meeting was held at Town Hall and livestreamed to YouTube with closed captions.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Andrew Zebian  
Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell  
Councillor John Andrew  
Councillor Cate Savage  
Councillor Rob Baker  
Councillor Cathy Maxwell  
Councillor Samantha Hamilton

**STAFF:** Chris McNeill, Chief Administrative Officer  
Victoria Martin, Deputy Clerk  
Craig Langille, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Dave Bell, Director of Engineering and Public Works  
Wanda Matthews, Director of Finance  
Darren Shupe, Director of Planning  
Marty Smith, Chief of Police

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Andrew Zebian called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He respectfully acknowledged that Kentville is on the traditional and unceded land of the Mi'kmaq People. The Town honours their deep connection to this land, past, present, and future; and also recognizes and honours the contributions and heritage of African Nova Scotians whose ancestors have shaped and enriched this community for generations.

**DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Item 4A, the presentation was postponed due to the weather and will be rescheduled in the new year.

**It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that the agenda for the Council Advisory Committee meeting of December 8, 2025, be approved as updated.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - November 10, 2025**

Mayor Andrew Zebian asked if there were any changes to the minutes of November 10, 2025. With none forthcoming, he declared the minutes approved.

## **4. DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **a. Planning and Development**

Director of Planning Darren Shupe provided highlights from his monthly report.

Significant workload in November caused delays in plan review work. The plan remains to review before the end of the month though it won't likely be ready before New Year.

Recruitment for Climate Action Coordinator underway with ads expected to be posted this week and additional support anticipated from Clean Foundation.

Eight development permits were issued for an Estimated Construction Value of \$900,000 and one Subdivision Applications was received (Belcher & Campbell).

Three Planning Applications & Reports:

- Heritage Advisory Committee recommendations.
- Review of Support Program-Based Housing.
- Rezoning/redesignation application for 153 Belcher (Dr. McGregor).

Three Ongoing Processes:

- Bryson Developments, early permits report under legal review.
- Development agreement with Feed Living still in process.
- Belma Bell Tower, no updates; follow-up required.

From a Community & Economic Development, preparations for Apple Blossom Festival have begun and marketing and draft budgets for upcoming year in progress.

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Councillor Cathy Maxwell asked about the subdivision map (Campbell & Mountain View/Belcher) and Director Darren Shupe clarified the green piece is being subdivided, the triangle on east side consolidated with another piece, and development intent are unclear since waterway present in the area.

Councillor Samantha Hamilton asked about change in use/tenant renovation permits and Director Darren Shupe clarified that they are processed by development officer. The report reflects officer's summary.

**b. Parks and Recreation**

Director of Parks and Recreation Craig Langille provided highlights that were not from his monthly report.

Planning for 2026–2027 has began and application for Canada Summer Jobs grant was submitted. They identified twelve additional grant opportunities for summer students and programming funding.

The Holly Days Festival was a major success with over 500 attendees at the tree lighting, 30 attendees for the movie night in the square (The Grinch), and 40 attendees to the Carol singing at Oakdene Park with Community Garden Group.

from a staffing lens, two permanent positions were filled and one arena staff accepted into refrigeration ticket course (starting in spring).

Regarding the pool, all pipe connections have been completed and capped. The only remaining tasks are pressure testing, backfilling and replacing pavers.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell asked about timing for backfilling and pavers, and Director Craig Langille responded his preference was to complete it now, but it would likely be spring for stability. Councillor Maxwell asked if there was a risk to the tank or piping if it was delayed; and Director Langille responded the pipes were capped and dry.

Councillor Rob Baker inquired about winter program availability and Director Craig Langille responded programs launched that day; with many openings remaining.

**c. Kentville Police Service**

Call volume wise, 381 calls for service were received in October 2025 (14% increase compared to October 2024) and under 300 in November 2025.

**Community Involvement & Initiatives:** KPS participated in Trunk or Treat event, the Fallen Memorial Ceremony (Halifax), the Valley Harvest Marathon (raised \$2,400 for cancer) and the First annual Battle of the Badges hockey game.

Out of the 381 calls received in October, 137 calls ( $\approx 36\%$ ) were related to downtown core issues. One robbery file was solved.

**Training update:** annual pistol qualifications completed and sexual assault and hate crime training underway. Hate crime training aligns with the strategic plan, and an upcoming community engagement session is planned with a trainer.

The Community Engagement Sergeant was busy in October; assisted with wildfire response and REMO, managed GIS, 10 active investigations, executed CDSA warrant and search, and handled armed robbery case (solved).

SCEU and Community Crisis Navigator positions were largely vacant in October.

#### **d. Engineering and Public Works**

**Water Commission:** Meter Replacement Program, 380 meters scheduled for replacement by end of month; on track for completion before Christmas. A total of approximately 780 meters replaced over two years, allowing, improved accuracy, enhanced system monitoring, and more efficient water service and billing. The new meters are radio-read, non-mechanical; and offer a future capability for remote reading.

Under sanitary sewer service, there were no operational issues with the town's sanitary sewer service. Capital upgrades at the regional sewer plant continue and are nearly complete (sludge removal and additional aeration lines installed).

Three major capital projects:

- Main Street grid project includes storm, sidewalk, curbing, and provincial paving. The grid portion has been substantially completed and provincial paving finished last week; final details pending before winter.
- Prospect avenue sidewalk, new sidewalk connecting Church Ave to Academy St completed to improve pedestrian safety and drainage.
- Hilts road project, ICIP-funded phase wrapping up in December. Pipe work and storm infrastructure nearly completed. Road 85% built to base gravel level and will close to vehicles for winter; AT trail access remains. Next year: replace business park water tank; curbing and paving pending funding.

**Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance:** Seasonal wrap-up underway including catch basin repairs (Park Street), ditching along major drainageways (Harvest Moon Trail), culvert

replacements in subdivisions (e.g., Acadia Drive), improvements from capital projects reducing runoff intensity. Upcoming project: design work for East End (Millbrook/Crescent Ave) under tidal influence. Funding secured for design phase; construction funding TBD.

Mayor Andrew Zebian thanked Director Dave Bell, his team and the contractors for the great job downtown.

Councillor Cate Savage asked about water meter charges and Hilts Road paving timeline. Director Dave Bell clarified that charges will be more accurate, not higher and that funding for curbing/paving was still uncertain; estimated \$4–5M.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell raised concerns about paving cutouts on Belcher Street and potholes on Bridge Street and Director Dave Bell confirmed plans to address before asphalt plants close.

Councillor Samantha Hamilton asked about reopening Hilts Road for AT use and Director Dave Bell said it was expected by mid-December after water line pressure testing.

Councillor Rob Baker asked about ditching frequency on Harvest Moon Trail and Director Dave Bell explained that now it was every two years due to erosion; depending on storm events.

#### e. Finance

Kentville Water Commission Rate Study: the draft has been received and a meeting scheduled for mid-December.

Draft 2023–24 Municipal Report: the report has been received in draft and will be circulated soon. Comments provided on residential tax effort indicator:

- Ratio based on 2021 census median income (outdated).
- Updated income would make ratio more favorable.
- Will review with Audit & Finance Committee.

Sanitary Sewer Rate Changes: communication ongoing, including a letter to accompany December billing to explain changes.

Tax Billing & Collections: 35% drop in outstanding accounts month-over-month. Role numbers consistent with last year, and strong collection efforts noted.

Statement of Operations: forecast updated for revenue and expenses. Adjustments include, deed transfer tax revenue (\$75,000), expense transfer offset by savings in administration,

Public Works & Engineering adjustments pending next month and appeals reduced tax revenue by \$27,000.

Capital & Reserves: capital plan updated; completed and deferred projects noted. The reserve fund projection for March 2026 is \$1,756,507. Town reserves approximately \$700K better than budget due to deferred projects. Most projects on target; overruns offset by savings elsewhere.

Councillor Cate Savage asked about operating line/borrowing and Director of Finance Wanda Matthews explained that the town has ministerial approval for temporary borrowing for capital projects, that cash flow challenges was due to delayed provincial reimbursements, and that there wasn't any overdraft yet so borrowing will be avoided to minimize interest costs.

Councillor Cate Savage asked about PVSC appeals and Director of Finance Wanda Matthews answered that the town receives list of appeals and success rate varies. Large adjustments mainly from commercial rentals and apartment buildings, it was budgeted for \$18K and the actual is \$27K.

Councillor Cate Savage asked about tax rebate thresholds and Director of Finance Wanda Matthews explained that the current methodology is based on CPI and income thresholds. The last major change was two years ago, and Council could request a review and methodology change for 2026–27. Council asked for a comparison to other comparable towns for the next meeting.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell asked about deferred projects Park Street/Mitchell Brook, Apple Tree, and Spring Garden deferred to 2026–27. Director of Finance Wanda Matthews responded that tendering was planned for January prior to next fiscal year.

Before moving to 5. New Business, Mayor Andrew Zebian had a message regarding the Home Town Takeover HGTV show application for Town of Kentville. Having passed the selection, he is required to send a video to the production. Mayor Andrew Zebian set up a town meet-up at Centre Square on Sunday, December 14 at 4pm for everyone to gather for the video. He invited everyone to join.

## 5. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Engineering & Public Works request - Pre-Approval of Equipment Purchase prior to Capital Budget Meetings

The current oldest dump truck (2016 model) has reached end of service life. Severe rust on dump body (20 years old, used on two trucks) and ongoing costly repairs. Current winter will be final season for 2013 plow truck.

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Procurement Timeline:

- Lead time for new truck: 10–12 months.
- Early procurement required to ensure delivery by next winter.
- Tenders to be issued by end of December.

Cost & Funding

- Updated estimate: \$400,000 (includes non-recoverable HST).
- Previous estimate: \$450,000.
- Funding source: Equipment Reserve (no borrowing required).
- Budgeted in 2026–27 Capital Investment Program.

The new truck will include wing for expanded snow-clearing needs (e.g., Hilts Road) and will provide redundancy if other truck is down for repairs.

Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell asked about resale value of 2016 truck. Director Dave Bell responded it will be sold after the new truck arrives; minimal value expected, but current tender for other trucks shows interest.

Councillor Samantha Hamilton asked about rust prevention and longevity. Director Dave Bell responded the rust primarily affects dump body due to salt exposure; bodies are painted steel, not stainless. Current body lasted 20 years across two trucks: truck lifespan ~10 years.

**It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that that Council Advisory Committee recommend to the December 15th Council meeting for approval up to \$400,000 for the purchase of a replacement single axle dump truck complete with dump body and plow and wing gear with delivery payment not expected until late fall 2026-27.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**b. Kentville Police Service request - One-Year Term (2 years) Police Constable Position**

Background: national staffing shortages in policing and competitive hiring environment. KPS vacancies caused by retirements, disabilities, and lateral moves (recent loss to RCMP). Recruitment through Atlantic Police Academy requires planning; seats limited. The Training timeline is 6 to 18 months; next possible intake July 2026.

Current challenges: staffing gaps lead to reduced service (e.g., fewer foot patrols, delayed response), increased overtime costs (estimated \$100K+ over extended periods), and risk of burnout among existing staff.

Proposal: to hire one recruit for a one-year term, renewable for another term. The estimated cost is \$85,000 per year (salary & benefits). The recruit pays their own academy tuition (~\$35,000) and the town provides employment post-graduation for one year with no long-term guarantee. The process is reviewable and has proven successful (recent example filled gap after RCMP departure).

**Timing & Budget:** The request is for authorization to secure a seat at the academy for July 2026 intake. The financial impact will occur in 2027–28 fiscal year (after graduation) and funding currently anticipated in future budgets; not required immediately.

Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell asked if funds needed now or during next budget cycle and Chief Marty Smith clarified that no immediate funds were required; costs incurred post-graduation (2027–28).

Councillor Cate Savage confirmed timing aligns with future budget planning.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell asked about service commitment and Chief Marty Smith responded that there was no contractual guarantee; recruits asked to repay uniform/equipment costs if leaving within 2 years.

Councillor Rob Baker asked if one position is sufficient given upcoming retirements and Chief Marty Smith answered that one position was a start and that future cohorts (Jan/July 2027) may present additional opportunities.

Councillor Samantha Hamilton confirmed next academy cohorts after July 2026 are January and July 2027.

**c. Policy G34 - Repeal Temporary Development Officer**

**It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor Samantha Hamilton that Council Advisory Committee recommend to the December 15th Council meeting to repeal policy G34 – Temporary Development Officer.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**d. Policy G60 - Repeal Styrofoam (Expanded Polystyrene) Products Restriction**

**It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council Advisory Committee recommend to December 15th Council meeting to repeal policy G60 – Styrofoam Products Restriction.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**e. Policy 104 - Public Consultation**

Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell moved, seconded by Councillor Andrew, to amend the motion by adding “...and that official communications related to this policy shall come from the Mayor.”

Amendment discussed and carried unanimously by hand vote.

Councillor Samantha Hamilton asked about mayoral letterhead; confirmed that official letterhead exists and states “Office of the Mayor.”

Councillor Cate Savage praised section 5A – Public Engagement, noting its importance and value.

Councillor Rob Baker raised concern about section 8A regarding presentations only by incorporated or long-established groups and CAO Chris McNeill clarified the requirement ensures formal group representation, not ad-hoc individuals, that incorporation is simple and inexpensive, and necessary for liability and funding considerations.

**It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell, Council Advisory Committee recommend to the December 15th Council meeting to approve Policy 104 – Public Consultation, and that official communications related to this policy shall come from the Mayor.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**f. Policy 105 - Expenses and Hospitality**

**It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council Advisory Committee recommend to the December 15th meeting of Council to approve policy 105 – Expenses and Hospitality.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**g. Policy 106 – Proclamations**

**It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Samantha Hamilton that Council Advisory Committee recommends to the December 15th meeting of Council to approve policy 106 – Proclamations.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**h. Heritage Advisory Committee - Proposed Heritage Designation of Four Properties**

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The Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed candidate properties over the past 4 to 6 months and recommended four properties for heritage designation consideration:

- Heritage Centre – Former rail station; significant historical value; high structural integrity.
- Main Street Station – 1920s landmark hotel; strong downtown presence.
- Stagecoach Inn Properties – Early commercial buildings; high streetscape value.
- Oak Grove Cemetery – 19th-century burial ground; cultural landscape with notable interments.

Process: the Heritage Advisory Committee identifies and evaluates properties before CAC reviews and forwards recommendations to Council. Once approved, Council issues notices to property owners including reasons for designation, consequences, hearing rights, and 120-day protection period. Council decision occurs within 30–120 days; registry updated upon approval.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell suggested adding two historic railway bridges (behind curling club and near Shanax) to the list and Director Darren Shupe confirmed bridges may be town-owned and mentioned in report; further review needed.

Councillor Cate Savage asked if property owners could decline designation and Director Darren Shupe clarified owners receive notice and can object. Heritage Property Act allows Council to make designation mandatory initially, but owners may apply for removal after two years. Insurance costs for heritage properties noted as a consideration.

**It was moved by Councillor John Andrew, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that Council Advisory Committee recommend to the Council meeting on December 15th that consideration be given to adding the following four properties to his registry of municipal heritage properties and prior to doing provide the required notice to each property owner.**

- Heritage Centre (Former CN Rail Station) – 66 Station Lane
- Main Street Station (Former Cornwallis Inn) – 325 Main Street
- Stagecoach Inn Properties (Multiple Addresses)
- Oak Grove Cemetery – 95 Main Street

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**i. Re-designation & Rezoning Application – 153 Belcher Street (PID 55265250)**

Application overview: request to re-designate and rezone property at 153 Belcher Street from Residential (R1) to Highway Commercial (C2). The purpose is to relocate existing dental clinic to adjacent lot and construct a purpose-built, accessible clinic. The current clinic is C2 under a development agreement; will revert to residential once vacated.

Location: Belcher Street, primarily residential with some commercial designations. Proposed change maintains overall status quo (relocation, not expansion).

Policy Considerations: MPS Policy C2, new highway commercial development restricted to existing C2 zones; relocation permitted. Policy C8, requires site plan approval for compatibility with adjacent residential zones. Site plan will address building placement, parking and access, landscaping and buffering, lighting and signage, vegetation retention, stormwater grading, and solid waste storage.

Councillor Rob Baker is concerned about reduced parking in conceptual plan compared to current site and Director Darren Shupe clarified that green area shown is landscaped space and that parking requirements will be enforced during development officer review. Buffering and tree retention will be considered in final design.

**It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council Advisory Committee recommend to the December 15th council meeting that Council give First Reading to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to redesignate and rezone 153 Belcher Street (PID 55265250) from Residential / One and Two Unit Dwelling (R2) to Commercial / Highway Commercial (C2) to permit the relocation of an existing dental clinic.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**j. Housing Diversity and Community Balance in the General Commercial (C1) Zone – Supplemental Update**

Purpose: follow-up after public participation meeting on program-based housing and define currently undefined land uses (supportive housing, transitional housing, emergency shelters) and recommend where they fit within town through policy and land use bylaw amendments.

Key updates: revised definitions for program-based housing and related uses after legal and operational review. Clarified existing definitions for institutional and emergency services and proposed policy and regulatory changes to enable program-based housing in Medium Density Residential (R3) zone.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell asked about adjacency and abutting rules for R1 and R2 properties and Director Darren Shupe clarified that R1 cannot be rezoned to R3 and R2 may be considered for R3 rezoning.

Councillor Cate Savage asked about amendment process after public hearing and Director Darren Shupe explained that changes can be made if council directs staff post-hearing. Public hearing typically held same night as second reading but can be separated.

Councillor Samantha Hamilton asked if definitions align with provincial standards and Director Darren Shupe clarified that there was limited standardization across province; effort is relatively new.

Councillor Rob Baker asked about opportunities beyond R3 and Director Darren Shupe responded it would require defeating current motion and redirecting staff for new approach.

**It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council Advisory Committee recommend to the next Council meeting that first reading be given to the following amendments to Kentville's Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw:**

**AMEND:**

**D.1 Draft Municipal Planning Strategy Policies**

**5.14 Program-Based Housing**

**Policy RS-28:** It shall be the intention of Council to recognize Program-Based Housing—including Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, and Emergency Shelters—as residential uses providing lodging with structured supports.

**Policy RS-29** It shall be the intention of Council to enable Program-Based Housing as-of-right within the Medium Density Residential (R3) Zone, subject to the Land Use By-law standards that ensure the form, scale, and intensity of development are compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods.

**Policy RS-30:** It shall be the intention of Council to include standards within the LUB regulating occupancy, establishing minimum separation distances, and requiring buffering, residential form, and appropriate site design. Larger or specialized projects may be considered by Development Agreement where warranted by scale or service complexity.

**D.2 Draft Land Use By-law Framework**

**R3 Zone – Add to Permitted Uses:**

- Program-Based Housing (Supportive, Transitional, Emergency Shelter)

**Part 5 Residential Zones**

**5.1 General Provisions for All Zones**

**5.1.14 Site Plan Criteria for Program-Based Housing Developments**

- a) Maximum 12 units or sleeping rooms per lot (see definition in Appendix A);
- b) Minimum 60 m separation between Program-Based Housing uses;
- c) Residential form and scale consistent with surrounding dwellings;
- d) No exterior signage identifying client type or program;
- e) General criteria in accordance with Section 5.1.12 of this By-law.

**MOTION CARRIED** with Mayor Andrew Zebian, Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, Councillor Rob Baker, Councillor John Andrew, and Councillor Cate Savage voting in favour, and Councillor Cathy Maxwell voting against.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, that Council move into closed session at 6:55 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**7. CLOSED SESSION**

- a. Closed Session Minutes – November 10, 2025
- b. Section 22(2)(a) - *Municipal Government Act - Acquisition, Sale, Lease and Security of Municipal Property*
- c. Section 22(2)(e) - *Municipal Government Act - Contract Negotiations*

**RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew, that the meeting return from closed session at 7:31 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Jan 12/26

Approval Date



Mayor Andrew Zebian

