

Subject:

FW: Fw: Willies letter

To: Councillor

The silence from all those involved in the Municipality's decision to relocate the Shubenacadie War Memorial, is deafening.

An opportunity for an open two-sided conversation regarding the arbitrary Municipal decision to re-locate the Shubenacadie War Memorial, has at no time, to my knowledge, been organised by our Councillor Carl MacPhee. This is a very controversial subject that goes right to the hearts of the majority of the long time residents and family members of this close Community. We have cherished this Historical Cenotaph for decades. That is why, we are where we are, today. Nobody, has or is, communicating with the community. It is as if our feelings and opinions are not worthy of consideration.

What has changed in the last few years?

We have a history of working well with the Municipal planners.

Recent Example:

The Shubenacadie Lions Club Den had been situated on Community Hall and Grounds property since 1946. The old Court House Hill jailhouse was given to them around 1950 when the Temporary Courthouse in the community hall was moved to a new Courthouse in Windsor.

When the East Hants Municipality acquired the community grounds property to develop Shubenacadie Park, the Lions Club was a stakeholder due to its ownership of the Lions Hut on this property.

The process used by the East Hants Planning Department was completely open and professional. The Lions and other stakeholders on the property were treated with respect and were willing partners in the transition. Everything was an open and honest experience, with a number of onsite meetings on the property. A commendable job was well done by the East Hants Planning Department - all in broad daylight and a spirit of goodwill. This was a credit to the Municipality in fostering this community goodwill.

The Shubie Park improvements have made considerable enhancements to the core of the village - the children's playground, ball fields, and paved trails are widely used by the community and visitors.

In the fall of 2024 I had heard some discussion in the community about a proposed potential movement of the War Memorial to a position closer to the original CNR station lot next to the rail line - this to complete some green area improvements and enhance parking.

This potential move of the monument did not raise any concerns to me, as I thought that any such plan would be carried out with the same kind of professionalism and openness I witnessed and was party to, during the Shubie Park transition.

Fast forward to the spring of 2025. I was attending a SCDA (Shubenacadie Community Development Assoc.) directors meeting. During a break, [REDACTED] mentioned that she had heard that the Cenotaph was being moved from its current location to the property of the Shubenacadie Legion. I turned to [REDACTED] who displayed the same shock that I felt. We are both long time serving members of Branch 111 in executive positions. This was a complete unbelievable surprise. How could this be happening without any notification to the community by our Municipal Councillor nor any notice to the regular Legion Membership from the Legion Executive.

What happened that would cause the Municipality to perform a 180-degree course direction from a business-like open process (Shubie Park) to an apparent secret behind-the-door process, with absolutely no involvement from community groups? There was absolutely NO Visibility to this community altering transaction.

The Facebook reaction was immediate and predictable:

The “story goes” that the Shubie Councillor and the Shubie Legion executive/president had a discussion regarding a potential plan to move the monument to the Legion “IF” the Municipality “HAD” to move the Cenotaph.

For the record there was already an engineered plan on the table that would achieve the desired improvement plans, while leaving the Cenotaph “INTACT” This would lead one to believe, that the monument “DID NOT HAVE TO BE MOVED”, to carry out proposed improvements.

A meeting between the Municipality and the Legion Executive apparently took place at the Legion, and the Legion was to send a letter to the Municipality. A letter from the Legion (undated) was subsequently posted unanimously on Facebook. The undated letter was addressed to Carl MacPhee, not the Municipality. There was a letter from the Legion, “sent to Municipality “mentioned in the Staff Report of November 2024, regarding Shubie parking, (page 4 of 4 of the document under the title “Cenotaph”). Was this the same letter or a different letter sent to Carl MacPhee? Did the Municipality receive one letter to them through Carl and another letter from the Legion to the Municipality? The Legion has stated publicly “that they would want the Cenotaph moved to the Legion “If the Municipality “HAD” to move the Cenotaph “

All this confusion aside, the Legion has no right of ownership of the Shubenacadie War Memorial. It is historically recognized that the Cenotaph was created and purchased by the residents of the Village (circa 1920/21). Any decisions/discussions re the relocation needs to be with the community as a whole. The Municipality has acquired the previous CNR property, but that does not include the monument itself.

When is the discussion regarding any plan of relocation to take place with the community owners of the Cenotaph?

Access to Federal funding should never compromise the historically recognized memorial of our fallen community military heroes without extremely compelling reasons. The purpose of this relocation is only to improve parking capacity.

The important points are:

- The descendants of all those in the community involved with the funding, design and construction of the cenotaph, and the descendants of those Memorialised - and those volunteers in the community who have maintained the monument since

the construction in 1921 are the significant stakeholders who need to be understanding of any changes regarding the Memorial prior to any actions initiated in this regard.

- The care and maintenance required for the first 25 years before the Legion was an entity in the village, and continued until very recently, when community volunteer David McRae who. looked after the grounds was unable to continue.
- These community members are the owners of the monument. Any discussion regarding any significant alteration to the cenotaph and area need to involve this community.

This total inconsideration and non-involvement of the community is unbelievable, and was totally avoidable. Why was adherence to normal past practices and community change standard procedures not followed? It begs questions!

At some point those responsible for this injustice need to explain why the residents were kept in the dark. We need to have appropriate community discussion.

Discussions to this point seem to have been done in small groups away from the public eye. How can you determine public opinion if you do not seek it?

There was already a proposed Municipal engineers plan to improve the village core, a plan that would leave the War Memorial “intact”.

For the sake of a very proud community, put that plan back on the “table”, There would need to be a very compelling unknown circumstance presented that could justify the relocation of a Nationally recognised community achievement.

The Village of Shubenacadie is very proud and indebted to our ancestors. We cherish this Memorialisation of the Community War Heroes who gave their lives to secure our Country’s Freedoms. LEST WE FORGET

In Memory of:

Lance Corporal William Courtney (Billie)

m (Willie) Courtney

Respectfully, Willia