

Good day,

By way of introduction, I am not a lifelong resident of Shubenacadie, but it has been my home since 2018 when I immigrated to Canada from the UK. I am a veteran of 31 years' service in the Royal Air Force (RAF). During that service I was deployed alongside Canadian Forces in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan in 2006 and 2010. I also travelled to and through Canada on numerous other occasions with the RAF. My maternal Grandfather learned to fly at Moose Jaw in the second world war and according to his flight logbook landed at Debert.

I have been a participant in the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London on two occasions and attended the Remembrance ceremony in Whitehall for my final remembrance service in the UK in 2017. I have also participated in Remembrance services while deployed in operational theatres, such as Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq and Italy. I also participated in repatriation parades for the fallen, which included Canadian Forces as well as my own friends and colleagues.

I am fortunate that I have been able to travel to numerous areas of France, Belgium, Germany either on vacation or while stationed in those countries. My father's family is French and reside in the Somme area of northern France, so from an early age I was aware of and subsequently visited the numerous monuments and Commonwealth War Grave Commissions sites there, including the Menin Gate which has direct significance with Shubenacadie. There is a daily Last Post ceremony every day at the Menin Gate which is a testament to high regard that the people of Belgium hold the memory of those who died there.

I have taken an interest in the relocation of the Shubenacadie Cenotaph primarily as it is a local issue concerning the memorial to the fallen from both world wars. As a result of which I have undertaken my own research into some aspects of this matter. The relocation of the Cenotaph is without doubt abhorrent and manifestly wrong on many levels

I have tried to take a subjective view and take into consideration the views of all of those more emotionally attached to this matter as well as a wider view from other community members and what has been presented or established from various council documents and meetings.

Having been present for the presentation to the Council by members of the community and now having watched the recording of the latest Council meeting in relation to the Cenotaph.

I am grateful to the Council Members who sincerely apologized for the situation that has been created and now needs to be resolved. I am deeply concerned that some Council members have already determined what their vote will be on the 5 'options', before the

meeting when members of the community and others have an opportunity to submit their thoughts. In my opinion, as public servants, and representatives of the communities in East Hants, having made their decision already is perpetuating what has been identified as one of the fundamental flaws in the process to date, namely the complete lack of public engagement.

It's my expectation that some Council members will not read this letter at all given their apparent blinkered view.

It was my understanding that the staff were directed to provide a costing to return the Cenotaph to its original position and not somehow morph that into 5 options. There are only 2 real options and not just 2 with bells and whistles added to them.

In respect of the 5 'options' presented there are some matters that were discussed which concerned me:

1. In relation to the cost of the move to the Legion, it was stated in the meeting that this was funded by Federal sources and not the taxpayer. This cost to the taxpayer was expressed as a reason not to burden the taxpayer again. If the move was funded by Federal sources, then there is only one cost to the taxpayer. So, to use the "double" cost as justification is not such a valid argument.
2. The cost of moving the Cenotaph back to the original, or close to the original site is approx. \$40,000. While this is a considerable amount of money, and rightly, nobody wants to spend any more taxpayer's money than necessary, what hasn't been mentioned is the overall cost of the projected 25 free parking spaces that could be created. I find it incredible that the Council will willingly spend \$500,000 to create 25 parking spaces in the hope it attracts business or footfall to Shubie. People regularly park along that stretch of road to access the business there already. Parking on tarmac would be far better, but unless there is a study or some other evidence that providing a paved parking lot makes a significant difference, take a step back and consider if that is a reasonable use of taxpayer's money?
3. There was also much talk about the move to the Legion providing better safety for the participants at the Legion site. Safety has not, apparently, been an issue up until now, as it has been mitigated by the fire dept. I can only speak to Shubie and Stewiacke but if closing the road is an issue, what is going to be done at Stewiacke in light of this and all the other Cenotaphs located adjacent to roads?
4. It was also stated that there is ample parking at the Legion for people attending the remembrance, however, this is also the same area where the service will be held. I think use of the school would be more accurate.

5. There was also mention of the maintenance of the Cenotaph, in either location. According to The Royal Canadian Legion website the maintenance of war memorials is their responsibility.
6. The contingency fund to provide funding for the move of the Cenotaph should the Legion close. This is flawed. The cost of the move now is in excess of \$40,000 and no doubt costs will rise. Should the Legion close in the future necessitating the Cenotaph to be moved, the original site will be incorporated into the new 25 space parking lot and what would be the cost of rebuilding the developed site to incorporate the Cenotaph? My concern is that there will not be sufficient funding and rebuilding an established parking lot would be problematic and causing further angst.
7. With respect to the information boards informing members of the public of the history of the Cenotaph and its co-location to the former train station, why are these not present already if these are such an issue?
8. It was stated that other Cenotaphs have been moved, and this is not an unusual occurrence. These were probably moved using the established protocols for such an eventuality. Which as we now know, this did not happen here.
9. I was interested to hear councillor Hebbs view that the important thing is that there is a Cenotaph and that the location is not so important as no matter where it is, it doesn't lose its meaning. In some respects, this is true, however, I would suggest that in this instance location is very important. The reason why there are so many small cemeteries in northern France and Belgium is that they wanted to bury the dead as close as possible to where they fell. They felt this was important. It is also worthy of note that since the end of the two world wars when the remains of a service member are found not only do they bury them with full military honours, but they also try to locate a next of kin as I know from experience.

There was a plan published for the parking lot to be developed with the Cenotaph as a centerpiece of that development. The building of the new parking lot and the rebuilding of the Cenotaph will take a significant period of time, so in the interim, the Cenotaph should be returned to the original site pending the redevelopment.

Respectfully

Dom Sarrazin

