Fall Newsletter, 2018

Town of Oxford:
Wild Blueberry Capital of Canada

From the Desk of Rachel Jones, CAO:

For a small community, there is huge heart in all that happens here in Oxford. Being a "come from away", it didn't take long to see that residents and business owners are passionate about their surroundings and how our community will continue to thrive well into the future. Staff and Council for the Town of Oxford recognize the importance of an active and engaged community and realize that there are many issues that affect all of us to varying degrees.

Did you know that the Town has a staff of 13 (full and part-time)? **Town Staff** are responsible for the Town's water and wastewater operations, streets and sidewalks, recreation programming and facilities, economic development programs and events, solid waste management, visitor information services, accounts payable and receivable, and crosswalk safety. They provide support and advice to Town Council and committees and participate in regional initiatives such as the Cumb. Business Connector, regional tourism initiatives, external committees and boards, regional emergency management response. These are only some of our responsibilities.

Every municipal unit *must provide* for certain functions, based on provincial legislation. Towns and municipalities generally provide services to *properties* (i.e. water, sewer, garbage, snow removal, etc.), whereas the Province of NS is responsible for services for *people* (i.e. health care, education, social services, etc.). There are some areas of crossover, but that is the general division of responsibilities.

There are several service areas that Councils *may choose to deliver* to the community. Examples are recreation facilities and programs, crossing guards, and community development initiatives. These are considered each year when Council is trying to balance its operating budget. This year, the **Town's operating budget** is just over $2.4 million. There are many items that the Province of NS requires us to pay (policing: $518,800, education: $223,950, and public housing: $18,000). Adding these amounts to the Town's cost for servicing incurred debt ($488,300) equals approximately $1.25 Million. That leaves just

over $1 million to provide for snow removal, wastewater, fire protection, recreation, and staffing, along with other community priorities.

It takes all of us to make our community great. Town Council and staff strive to provide the best services and facilities that are the responsibility of a municipal government. The community, both business and residential, have their own responsibilities. By working together, we can create an environment where we will grow and prosper.

Communities grow stronger
through hundreds of little and big actions that citizens (you and me) take every day. Check out *75 Actions that Build Community* on the main page of the Town website
(www.town.oxford.ns.ca) and on the Town bulletin board at the Library.

Thanks to Walking Club for Harvest Supper:

Speaking of community involvement, the Walking Club continue to show us how it's done. The Harvest Supper in Heritage Square was not only a delicious Fall meal but also a great way to bring people together. Well done!!

Connecting with Community -
A Friendly Coffee Drop-In:

Want to get to know others in the community? Just need a reason to get out of the house? Want to share ideas?
Drop in, chat, enjoy free coffee/tea. Hosted by Town staff person, Ruthie Patriquin, CED Officer.
Wednesday, October 17: 10-11 am AND 6-7 pm, at the Town Hall.
Supervised children's play area for this event.

New to Oxford?
Welcome and Thanks for Taking Root Here.

Supporting Local:

When we support local businesses and organizations, we contribute to the economic stability of our town and we all benefit. Each dollar we spend in Oxford changes hands 6 more times before it leaves the community. Supporting local helps to ensure the continuation of local businesses, services, organizations and opportunities. *Something to think about*.

Home Business Mini-Marketplace:

Do you have a home business in the Town of Oxford? Do you Want to Buy Local?

Small businesses are annually celebrated in October and the Town of Oxford wants to help promote those you may not be aware of. If sufficient home businesses apply, we will open the Town Hall for shopping on **October 24,** (afternoon and evening). **For more info.** contact Ruthie Patriquin, CED Officer, asap. **Email: rpatriquin@town.oxford.ns.ca** Or phone 902 447-2250. **Space for displays is limited**. Not able to participate? Drop off business cards and we'll display them. *Both youth and adults are welcome to participate.*

More Town Support for Businesses:

Partnering with the *Cumberland Business Connector*, we are also hoping to provide workshops, in Oxford, **to support small businesses and budding entrepreneurs**. They include "Effective Small Business Promotion" (November), "Business Start-up Information", and "Social Media Marketing". Watch for more information or contact me to put your name on an email list to receive notices directly.

Lots of Visitors:

Town staff were busy helping tourists at the *Visitor Information Centre* this summer and note a continued interest in wild blueberries. Now is a good time of year for Oxford businesses and organizations to consider initiatives to attract and engage more tourists. This may include creating promotional materials to display in the VIC if you aren't currently promoting your business or event in this manner.

Kudos to Oxford Businesses and Organizations promoting our Wild Blueberry claim to fame:

An increasing number of Oxford businesses are carrying and advertising blueberry-themed products, blueberry foods, etc. The variety of items is impressive.

Some churches and organizations are also participating when hosting events by serving wild blueberry desserts, decorating with a blueberry/blue theme and promoting wild blueberries in their advertising.

Please share your ideas as we work together to grow this initiative.

Tourism Strategic Planning Committee:

The Town of Oxford is part of a committee formed to improve tourism's contribution to the economy of the Cumberland Region. Also represented are the Municipality of Cumberland Co., Town of Amherst, local tourism businesses, and the Indigenous and Acadian communities. Together they will develop a joint tourism strategy to be in place by early next year. Watch for more information in the Amherst News and on the Town's website.

Watch for the new "Walk About" signs that will soon be posted in Town. These were fully funded by the Heart & Stroke Foundation. See if you can you spot all nine?   Speaking of walking, don't forget the walking track behind the school for a change of pace.

Save November 30 for the Christmas Parade:

"*It's a Blue Christmas*" is the theme for this year's evening parade.

For more information on what's happening in Oxford, check out the Town website and follow us on Facebook (Town of Oxford Recreation and Events; Town of Oxford NS: Official Site) or pick up a monthly printed events calendar. Watch for Oxford news in the Amherst newspaper included in your weekly flyers and check out our bulletin board at the library.

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Community Economic Development Officer