MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Municipal Council Meeting- Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 2026
7:30pm
Council Chambers
Municipal Administration Building
285 Beech Hill Road
Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

Councillors Present:
Warden Nicholas MacInnis
Deputy Warden John Dunbar
Councillor Mary MacLellan
Councillor Richelle MacLaughlin
Councillor Shawn Brophy
Councillor Wayne Melanson
Councillor Gary Mattie (by Zoom)
Councillor Harris McNamara
Councillor Sterling Garvie

Regrets:
Councillor Adam Baden-Clay

Staff Present:
Shirlyn Donovan, CAO
Beth Schumacher, Municipal Clerk
John Bain, Director, EDPC

Also Present:
Corey LeBlanc (by Zoom)
Gallery (in person and online)

Call to Order- Warden MacInnis

Warden MacInnis called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden MacInnis called for approval of the Council meeting agenda. Mrs. Donovan asked for the deletion of the in-camera business titled Solicitor Client Privilege be removed from the agenda, and to have the order of the agenda amended to bring the In-Camera - Personnel Matter to the beginning of the agenda.

Min # 2026-42
Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

In-Camera Items

Min # 2026-43
Moved and Seconded

That Council move into an in-camera session to discuss the Personnel Matters at 7:04pm.

Motion Carried

Min # 2026-44
Moved and Seconded

That Council adjourns the in-camera session at 7:20 pm.

Motion Carried

The meeting recessed at 7:21pm.

The meeting was called to order by Warden MacInnis at 7:29pm

Statutory Public Hearing

Amendments to the Plan Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law for the Municipality of the County of Antigonish in Response to New Provincial Setback Requirements for Utility Scale Wind Turbines and in response to an appeal before the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board.

Mrs. Donovan read out the Public Hearing Protocol for the benefit of the individuals in attendance.

Mr. Bain provided members of Council with a presentation regarding the proposed amendments and the background of the application, starting with a previous application that was considered and approved in late 2025 that was subsequently appealed. He noted that the appeal was adjourned in order to allow the municipality the change to reconsider/review the proposed amendments.

Mr. Bain reviewed the current by-law regulations regarding wind turbines in the Land Use By-law. He also reviewed the changes to provincial regulations made in early 2025. Mr. Bain then reviewed the proposed amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy that are under consideration concurrently with the amendment to the Land Use By-law. The timelines for the statutory requirements were noted, and Mr. Bain noted that no written submissions were received by EDPC but one submission was forwarded to EDPC by the Municipal Clerk.

Planning Staff is recommending that the Antigonish County Land Use By-law be updated to align with the new provincial regulations concerning wind turbine setbacks, as well as being revised to amend the required separation distances from public highways and watercourses in keeping with recent provincial approvals, and further be amended to include wind turbine related definitions.

Staff is also recommending that the Antigonish County Municipal Planning Strategy be amended to give policy support for these proposed amendments.

Warden MacInnis then called for any individuals who wanted to speak against or in favour of the applications. One party, Mr. Jonathan MacKenzie, asked to speak against the proposed amendments. Three parties, being Tyler de Gier, Keith Martin, and Mark Stewart, asked to speak in favour of the proposed amendments.

Parties Against the Proposed Amendments

Mr. MacKenzie raised his concerns with the potential for ice to shed from the turbine blades, being his reason for having a concern with turbines and their setbacks. He shared a number of photographs with members of Council regarding incidents that were of concern. He asked for evidence, and not statistical probabilities, demonstrating the safety of turbines.

Questions from the Council followed, being with respect to the university references that were noted in the presentation. Mr. MacKenzie was thanked for his presentation.

Parties in Favour of the Proposed Amendments

Mr. de Gier was then called forward. He noted that he works for EverWind and is working on the Upper Afton wind farm. Mr. de Gier spoke about ice shed and ice throw and what the difference is between those definitions, and noted other terms for clarity, being blade failure and turbine collapse. He provided some clarity regarding the reason for the 1.1times height setback, being that most ice shed, blade failure, and catastrophic turbine failure typically fall in the one-times turbine height. He noted that their position that the proposed setback of 1.1 times turbine height is a reasonable setback for safety reasons.

A question was asked by a member of Council for clarification on what a 10% safety factor is. A question was asked about whether turbines are fenced in, and it was noted that they typically are not. A question was asked about how often they are inspected, with the response noting maintenance scheduling and safety features to address ice concern. Further discussion about de-icing, blade heating, and providing clarification of statistically how often ice throw could exceed the 1.1 times turbine height setback. Further details about the report prepared for EverWind by Dr. Olson were requested and shared. Discussion regarding public education and signage to inform the public followed.

Mr. Stewart was then called forward. He noted that he is a resident of Antigonish County, provided his education background, and gave further clarification regarding the definition between ice shed and ice throw. He also spoke to the report prepared by Dr. Olson, noting the probability of risk identified in that report and how that compares to the inherent risk of other activities that people could participate in.

A question was asked about whether there were any warning systems that were on site of a turbine to give those in the area an indication of the potential risk. Mr. Stewart spoke to the various sensors built into turbines, and their willingness to work with different projects and local groups to develop warning systems that could be explored. A question was asked about how technology has changed for turbines since earlier generation turbines were constructed in the community. Further questions were asked about turbine speeds. Questions about how regulations in Nova Scotia differs from those in other provinces in Canada.

Mr. Martin was called forward. Mr. Martin noted that he had nothing further to add but was supporting the comments made by Mr. Stewart and Mr. de Gier.

Mr. MacKenzie was asked what he felt would be an acceptable setback, and he noted that he looked to the standards set in Germany for turbines, which is approximately 1.5 times hub height plus total blade diameter. Mr. de Gier spoke to the Canadian Standard that is provided for the possible maximum distance that ice could be thrown, noting that it is not a road setback. He noted that the question before Council is to determine what the reasonable setback for public safety is.

Mrs. Donovan read out the motion as proposed for Council's benefit for their discussion and debate.

Min # 2026-45
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council approve a proposal to amend the County of Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law as follows:

County of Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategy

1. Subsection 4.6.2 of the Energy Section of the Municipal Planning Strategy is amended by adding the following text to the preamble immediately before Policy 4-39:

   In March 2025, the Province of Nova Scotia amended the Provincial Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations to establish maximum allowable setbacks for wind turbines within municipalities. Under the amended regulations, municipal planning documents are restricted with respect to certain wind turbine regulations to allow for a uniform approach to turbine development across the Province. The Municipality reviewed and amended their policies in alignment with these minimum planning regulations in 2026.

   Policy 4-39: Council shall adopt wind turbine regulations consistent with the Minimum Planning Regulations of the Province of Nova Scotia to help encourage a uniform approach to wind turbine development across the Province.

2. Renumber Policies 4-39 to 4-49 accordingly.

The Land Use By-law for the Municipality of the County of Antigonish

1. Section 7.4.2(a) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   a. *"Minimum setback from all residences, except residences located on the same lot as the wind turbine, shall be ~~600 metres (1969 feet)~~* **four (4) times turbine height. There is no setback requirement from residences located on the same lot."**

2. Section 7.4.2(b) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   b. *"Minimum setback for larger turbines or wind farms requiring environmental assessment from all residences, except residences located on the same lot as the wind turbine, shall be ~~1000 metres (3280 feet)~~* **four (4) times turbine height. There is no setback requirement from residences located on the same lot."**

3. Section 7.4.2(f) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   f. *"The minimum setbacks from public* ***roads*** *~~highways~~ shall be ~~60 metres or two~~* ***1.1*** *times the height of the turbine~~, whichever amount is greater~~."*

4. Section 7.4.2(g) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   g. *"Minimum setbacks from watercourses shall be ~~30 metres plus the blade length~~.* **60 metres."**

5. Section 7.4.2(i) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   i. *"The mean value of sound pressure level from a wind turbine shall not exceed 40dBA or above the existing background noise, whichever is greater, at the ~~nearest residence~~* **from the exterior of a residential dwelling."**

6. Section 30 of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold in the alphabetical order they should appear within the definitions section:

   Height of Wind Turbine refers to the distance from the bottom of the turbine to the height of a rotor blade in vertical position.

   Height of Rotor refers to the diameter of the swept area of the rotor blades.

   Public Road means ~~a public street or road as defined in the Subdivision By-law of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish~~. ***any street accepted and maintained by the Province of Nova Scotia or the Municipality as a public thoroughfare.***

   Residence refers to a structure used for human habitation, whether for seasonal or permanent occupancy, and is assessed for taxation purposes.

Setback Wind turbine is measured from the base of the wind turbine tower.

Supporting structure of a wind turbine includes all structures accessory to the turbine itself, including guy wires.

Wind Farm refers to a grouping of more than one interconnected wind turbines on one lot or abutting lots used for the purpose of converting wind power to produce electricity. These typically require a central computerized monitoring system that monitors the operation of the turbines.

Motion Defeated.

Min # 2026-46
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council reconsider the vote on a proposal to amend the County of Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law with respect to updates to align with the new provincial regulations concerning wind turbine setbacks, changes to the required separation distances from public highways and watercourses in keeping with recent provincial approvals, and the inclusion of wind turbine related definitions as well as amendments to the Antigonish County Municipal Planning Strategy to give policy support for these proposed Land Use By-law amendments

Motion Carried.

The motion will come forward at a future date for the consideration of Council.

Consideration of the April 14, 2026 Municipal Council Minutes

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the minutes of April 14, 2026. Hearing none, the minutes were considered accepted as presented.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Correspondence

Hon. John A. MacDonald, Minister of Municipal Affairs – Amendments to the MGA

Mrs. Donovan read highlights in the letter to Council for their information. A question was asked about clarification about what the regulations may dictate regarding mandatory training, and Mrs. Donovan noted that there was no further information provided by the Province at this time. Deputy Warden Dunbar was asked whether there was anything coming from the NSFM, and was asked that there be strong municipal input for autonomy in the training provided by their units.

Committee Reports

April 16, 2026 Joint Police Advisory Board Report

The report was read for the benefit of Council. No motions were made.

April 20, 2026, Committee of the Whole e-Poll Report

Min # 2026-47
Moved and Seconded

That that Municipal Council award the tender for the 2026 Bulky Waste collection to GFL. Environmental Inc., for the bid price of $45,900+HST.

Motion Carried

April 28, 2026 Asset Management Committee Report

Min # 2026-48
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council approve the proposed 2026/2027 Capital Plan for consideration with the budget.

Motion Carried

Min #2026-49
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council award the tender for a Truck Purchase to MacDonald Chrysler for a cost of $58,751 + HST.

Motion Carried

April 28, 2026 Committee of the Whole Report

Min # 2026-50
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council approves the proposed amendments to Council Remuneration Policy (Policy #14).

Motion Carried
(8 in favour, 1 opposed)

Min #2026-51
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council amend clause 2.6 in the Tax Exemption Policy for Low-Income Tax Payers (Policy #15), to increase the Maximum Low Income Exemption amount to $325 for Fiscal 2026/27.

Motion Carried

May 5, 2026 Planning Advisory Committee Report

Min # 2026-52
Moved and Seconded

That that Municipal Council give first reading and schedule a Statutory Public Hearing:

1) for a proposal for the Municipality of the County of Antigonish to enter into a Development Agreement for a Medium Density Residential Apartment building at the corner of Church Street Extension and Highway 4, (PID 01248673 and 01286475), West River, Antigonish County; in accordance with Council's Policy L-2.12 to consider approval of multiple unit dwellings within the Residential Designation according to the development agreement provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*

2) and further that Lot 2 be rezoned from the Residential (R-1) Zone to the Local Commercial (C-1) Zone in accordance with Council's Policy L-2.15 to consider rezonings to the Local Commercial (C-1) Zone in areas designated Residential.

Motion Carried

Min # 2026-53
Moved and Seconded

That that Municipal Council give first reading and schedule a Statutory Public Hearing for an application by Eigg Mountain Wind Inc. to amend the boundaries of the Wind Resource Overlay in the Plan Antigonish Land Use By-law by rezoning twenty-four (24) 3.14-hectare portions of eighteen separate properties to allow for the construction of 22 Wind Turbines.

Motion Carried

May 7, 2026, Committee of the Whole Report

Min # 2026-54
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council approves the distribution of Community Partnership Grants for F2026/2027 as presented, and put that recommendation forward for incorporation in the 2026/2027 Operating Budget.

Motion Carried.

May 12, 2026, Committee of the Whole Report

Min #2026-55
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council send a letter to the Minister of Public Works, Minister of the Department of Natural Resources, the Minister of Acadian Affairs, the Minister of Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage, Minister of Education, Minister of Justice, and the local MLAs regarding concerns with the condition of the Pomquet Beach Road.

Motion Carried.

Min #2026-56
Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council approves an increase to the municipal sewer rates effective the approval of the Fiscal 2026/27 Operating Budget to give a new rate structure as follows:

- a residential flat unit rate of $325,
- a commercial square footage rate of $0.12/ square foot
- an industrial square footage rate of $0.15 per square foot.

Motion Carried.

Reports from Individual Council Members on Outside Boards, Conferences, and Community Activities

A moment of silence was observed to recognize the Westray mine disaster, which occurred on May 9, 1992, in Plymouth, Nova Scotia.

- Deputy Warden Dunbar discussed Museum board meeting, board appointments, and funding for summer students. He also discussed the Arena Board, with a meeting proposed on the 20th. He also shared that he attended the NSFM Spring conference in Yarmouth in late April. Staff shared a summary of the presentations earlier in the day with all of Council. He also shared that he brought up the basic income guarantee issue with the NSFM Board, and that they responded with an overview and timeline of their advocacy work done to date.
- Councillor McNamara shared an update from the RK MacDonald Board. Their next board meeting is on Thursday May 28th.
- Councillor Garvie noted that there is an Eastern Region Solid Waste Management meeting on May 28th.
- Councillor MacLaughlin shared that the Easter District Planning Commission Board is next meeting on May 28th.

- Councillor Brophy noted that he also attended an RK MacDonald Board meeting.

Motions

There are no motions.

Miscellaneous Business

There was no miscellaneous business.

Adjournment

Min # 2026-57
Moved and Seconded

That the Municipal Council meeting adjourn at 9:03pm.

Motion Carried

Warden Nicholas MacInnis

Shirlyn Donovan, CAO