

Cumberland Forestry Advisory Committee

February 26, 2020

7:00-9:30, CCUBIC Boardroom, Amherst, NS

Attendees: Amherst Mayor David Kogan, Jonathon McClelland, Ian Ripley, Norman Paupin, Velda Fromm, Keith Thompson, Ron Furlong, Wade Adshade, Davin Thompson, Mac Davis, Ernie Gilbert, Jeff Black, Kevin Merriam, - Meeting Chairman

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by meeting chair – Kevin Merriam

Item 1 – Approval of Agenda: Additional items added – Pathways & Strategies report, Forestry Innovation Rebate Program.

Agenda approved.

Item 2 – Approval of the minutes of the February 13, 2020 meeting.

Minutes approved.

Item 3 - Business arising from the minutes.

Action Item: *To send a follow-up email asking for confirmation of receipt of the correspondence and a definitive timeline for a response.*

Was reported on an action item from the last meeting regarding a follow up email to the Transition Team regarding the February 7, 2020 letter. Email was not sent to Kelly Anne Dean, but that they have spoken to two members of the Transitions Team regarding the request for a paid person to assist the committee. It was reported that the item had been on the Transition Team agenda, but that they had not gotten that far during the last meeting. Was also reported that just before today's meeting, an email was received in response to the CFAC's January 24th letter and members of the committee were invited to the next meeting of the Transition Team on March 3, 2020.

Action Item: *Correspondence be sent to the Minister of TIR asking that road closures be based on temperature and timing and not on a specific date.*

Reported that the letter had been prepared and it had been sent to the Minister and had been copied to those suggested. Asked Forest NS to write a similar letter. The same request had been made to WestFor and TANS.

Item #4 –

Immediate Action Team Report – Action Team has not met since February 13th. Main recommendation from the Action Team was the letter regarding the road closures. The Action Team is looking for feedback from the Transition Team to determine a path forward.

Policy Action Team Report - Action Team has been working on the Pathways and they had identified those that had policy components. They had listed 40 and they started working on prioritizing them.

Market Access Action Team – This Action Team had not met since the last meeting, nothing new to report.

Long Term Action Team – The Action Team had met on February 23rd and everyone was brought up to speed. They had gone through the pathways document. Action Team is a work in progress.

Item # 5 - New Business

Update on Progress of Forestry File from MLB: There was progression in the House. Question had been asked of the Premier regarding the plan forward for the forest industry. The response was that the Transition Team was working on it. The Premier and the Minister were responding to all forestry questions in the house with the same answer – the Transition Team is working hard and moving forward on the file. The Bio-Diversity Act will be on the agenda in the Spring Session of the Legislature. The Bio-Diversity Act will be the first of its kind in Canada. Committee members were urged to reacquaint themselves with the Act and to send any concerns that they might have with the document.

Transition Team Update: During the Forest NS AGM, a large landowner group had met, and Kelliann Dean had sat in on the meeting; this group had made a presentation to the Transition Team. Kelliann Dean is a smart person and has the ear of the Premier. The Industry people on the Transition Team are working hard to get things done, always a full agenda at the meetings. The vibe from these members is that are moving in a positive direction.

Action Item: Send out an email to all committee members, asking them to provide their comments prior to the March 3rd meeting with the Transition Team.

Public Relations (Sasha Irving)- There was a discussion regarding this group and the aggressive message was being pushed. Consensus from the committee that this was not the direction that should be taken.

Chamber of Commerce Presentation on March 4: The committee had been invited to attend the meeting of the Nova Scotia Chamber of Commerce being held in Bridgewater on March 4, 2020. Meeting will be attending by representative from over 20 Chambers. Committee will be attending meeting and providing an update on the CFAC activities and will hopefully encourage other chambers to get engaged. A draft of the presentation was handed out and committee members were asked to provide input prior to the March 4th meeting.

Slide Deck for Presentations: A slide deck for presentations had been put together. The idea was that once the deck was completed, it could be used by all committee members for presentations. The slide deck was only talking points and the last slide had the “ask” regarding getting other regions to become engaged. Committee members were asked to provide input on the deck.

Action Item: Send out the presentation deck to all the committee members asking for input prior to March 4, 2020

Current and Future Status of Debert Tree Nursery: There needs to be a commitment regarding the future of the nursery. Planning for 2021, need guidance regarding the number of trees required by June 2020. Was asked if Northern Pulp was going to continue operating the nursery. The nursery had 25 employees that were in limbo regarding the future. Was suggested that the Federal Government should be contacted regarding the nursery and infrastructure that was already in place and should potentially be used to provide the trees for the promise of Canada planting over 2 billion trees. Wade Adshade asked how many nurseries were in the province. Mac Davis answered that only one other and that in the past there had been a shortage of trees available for planting. The Transition Team and the Federal Government should be award or the infrastructure available in Nova Scotia and if the promise of planting 2 billion trees was going forward, the trees should be grown in NS and not shipped in from another province.

Forestry Innovation Rebate Program: This is a Nova Scotia Business Inc initiative and is not tied to the 50 million fund. Funding supposed to be 5 million in 2020-2021 and another 5 million in 2021-2022. This rebate program had been provided to other industries and could potentially be beneficial to the forest industry. The committee had a good discussion on the program. It was suggested that the program be monitored and maybe suggest that the threshold for eligibility be dropped. Was asked if the rebate could be used by forest industry to upgrade equipment in order to fulfill the requirement of ecological forestry. Was recommended that the blueberry industry be used as a model for forestry.

Action Item: Take a closer look at the program to determine if contractors and harvesters could be eligible and report back to the committee.

Pathways and Strategies: The Facebook page is live, and the Forestry page was up and running on the Cumberland Business Connector website. Have been working on the pathways and had combined the 11 to 12 into 6. The group had determined that there were 60 action items and that this was too many to handle, need priorities to focus energy. Was suggested that the committee look at the pathways and determine if they reflect what the committee wanted to accomplish. The committee discussed the work that had been completed. Was suggested each action team look at the pathways to determine which important to each group and that it would be helpful to have the committee rate the pathways in order of importance. Next steps should be to have a list of priorities, determine which action team is working on each pathway and who if any experts need to be brought in to assist.

Action Item: Send the pathways document out to the committee members asking that each item be ranked in order of importance. Tabulate the results and bring back to the committee.

New Item: Mayor Kogan asked a question regarding an upcoming meeting that he would be attending concerning the Isthmus of Chignecto. The committee agreed that Mayor Kogan should provide information regarding the advantages of using wood in this project. It would be a great opportunity to influence the tender for the project.

Next Meeting will be March 11, 2020

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm