

LSD of Douglas
Information Session
April 4, 2016
Douglas Baptist Church

Rev. Moore opened the meeting with prayer.

Dave Duplessis, Chair of the Local Service District of Douglas Advisory Committee opened the meeting and welcomed all.

Dave gave an overview of the roles of the LSD Advisory Committee as well as an overview of the budget and cost associated with services.

Overview:

- We are divided into three areas with different tax rates for each area;
 - Douglas Inside – from Route 104/105 intersection northeast along the Keswick River and up Route 104, including Route 616 and a portion of Route 620 towards Stanley.
 - Douglas Lower – along Route 105 to the City Limits and all side streets excluding the Carlisle Road.
 - Carlisle Road and all side streets therein.
- Fire service mainly comes from the Keswick Valley Fire Department with the exception of a portion of Douglas Lower and Carlisle. These areas are serviced by Fredericton Fire Service and this amount has been increasing over the years with an increase of 52000.00 in the 2016 budget.
- All members are elected for a four year term, we are an advisory council only and have no authority for financial collecting and spending – this is done from the central office through the current Minister of Local Government Brian Kenny.
- Policing has been turned over from Provincial taxing to Municipal taxing over the years, when the Municipal taxes goes up the Provincial goes down.
- Garbage collection, animal control, recycling, recreation and administration services costs are all items listed in the budget as well.
- The LSD of Douglas has been presented with maps that have carved off sections of the LSD into proposed Rural Communities, it is our intentions to inform the residents of your area of these maps and information we have received concerning Rural Communities.

Overview of the initial Pros and Cons of a Rural Community vs an LSD

Pros

- Community governs itself by providing residents the opportunity to choose representatives who will make decisions that reflect their views and concerns for their area.
- Each designated area (ward) will have its own representative which is similar/same as a City, Town or Village.
- Better identify the needs and concerns of local services and better align services, needs and wants of the area that they are willing to fund.
- Ability to make local decisions and budgets.
- By law making powers and enforcement with Rural Planning, dangerous and unsightly premises, zoning.
- Financial powers, budgets, set tax rates, user charges, access to financial assistance programs.

- More authority on the RSC11 Commission – presently all Mayors on RSC 11 has a seat and voting authority, of the remaining 25-30 LSD Chairs, only 6 of those have a vote.

Cons

- Another level of Government
- Need Mayor and councillors .
- Need administration clerk and office accommodations (current admin costs increased by 34% for Douglas lower and Carlisle in the 2016 budget).
- Taking on too many services to rapidly (only Rural Planning, Emergency Planning, Recreation, and administration must be taken on).

*Please note that as time progresses and more information is gathered, pros and cons will change.

- Meetings has taken place over the last three months with the LSD's of Keswick Ridge and Estey's bridge to view the maps they were presented with.
- Subsequently, surrounding LSD's of Keswick Ridge has come together to form a working group called York Community. The last meeting was held on march 29th , at such time the name York was chosen as a generic name that cover the area in which we are looking at incorporating.
- We are here tonight to share this information. At some point, a decision will need to be made on these issues and it is better to be proactive. The choice needs to be yours. At present, it looks like there are three options – connect with the proposed York Community, or with the Estey's Bridge Community or stay as is. What the stay as is will look like in a few years' time is anybody's guess. The movement does stem from the Finn report which suggest that our areas be included with Fredericton.

Robin Anderson, Chair LSD of Estey's Bridge:

- 3 Months or more a map was given to me by Local Government, the outer border is the Nashwaaksis watershed boundary, it takes in Estey's Bridge, Carlisle and Douglas. It's the high point of the ground most of which has the water flow into the Nashwaaksis stream, all of which flows in the St. John River. That is what is purposed, this would make our area double in size, we currently have over 1200 home in Estey's Bridge and a total budget of 189 Million and Carlisle and Lower Douglas has a tax base of 150 Million. We have three different taxing authorities as well, one pays into Willie O'Ree, one pays for street lighting.
- Am I in favor of the RC right now - I think not but I don't feel we are going to have much choice. If there is a modification to our existing Rural Plan now, Government just goes ahead with the change will little or no consultation and they just do it so it could mean a quarry is put in place and a haul road erected where they want. Those are the kinds of things we may have more control over.
- For us, the fire service would not need to change, we couldn't do it cheaper, why pay more when you can have the same thing for less.

Debby Peck, Chair of the LSD of Kingsclear:

- Gave an overview of the LSD of Kingsclear.
- With recommendation that we amalgamate for cost savings of the LSD tax bases, back in 2005 the LSD's of Hanwell approached the LSD's of New Maryland and Kingsclear to discuss forming an RC, they were turned down by New Maryland but received a positive response from Kingsclear.

- These two groups worked together for a period of two years, eight people from each LSD were in this group, they gather much information and submitted a letter to Government for a feasibility study.
- In 2012 the Minister agreed to proceed a feasibility study, subsequently, the LSD of Kingsclear opted out. – this was done through phone surveys, paper surveys, etc.
- Hanwell proceeded with a plebiscite for this area and with only 500 people out to vote, they were successful in becoming an incorporated community.
- Right now – our advisory committee is responding to the Minister of Environment’s directive to us that the current government is moving towards a Rural Communities and the RSC 11 will be assisting the LSD’s in that move to become RC’s. There are various maps like the two proposed tonight and as David mentioned, the decision will be yours to make as it should be rather than one we have to accept. Our LSD will continue to engage with other LSD’s to continue the discussions of an RC.

David Coburn, Chair of LSD of Keswick Ridge:

- Overview of the LSD of Keswick Ridge.
- Fin report came out in 2008/09, the areas of Carlisle, Douglas, Keswick, Burtts Corner, Zealand, Keswick Ridge were all noted as being a part of Fredericton.
- At that time, we the LSD of Keswick Ridge were concerned about that report and started talking about a Rural Community and in the winter of 2011/12 we reached out to our Fire Service area which includes parts of the LSD of Bright and Lower Queensbury to further discuss the viability of a Rural Community and with positive feedback we decided to proceed with the communities of interest.
- We have chosen a generic name of York for our working group.
- At the end of the day, it will be the individual communities that decide on a Rural Community and the boundaries. It seems you have 3 choices – towards Estey’s Bridge, west or towards the city – change, I do believe is coming.

Dave Duplessis, Chair

- We were to have this meeting two weeks ago but due to a weather event it need to be cancelled, we had planned on taking information from that meeting back to the York meeting but we are doing the reverse her tonight and bringing more of other LSD information to you tonight.

Map Viewing by residents-

Questions: We will try and answer your questions and we also have MLA Kirk MacDonald in attendance, we may need to call on him to answer a question or two if we need to.

- Question 1 – overview of what is happening here tonight – sounds to me like a change is happening possibly mandated by Government – amalgamating with Fredericton, enlarging /changing the LSD or RC with Estey’s Bridge or Keswick Ridge.
 - The Government would like to move away from LSD’s so the changes would be an RC with Estey’s Bridge, or with the west section or with Fredericton, I don’t know what staying the same would look like in the future.
- Question 2 – Provincial Government trying to download some of these liabilities on taxing authorities, if we become a RC, how can we know – they may start charging us for snow plowing services and take that off their books and keep their tax rate the same where our tax rate will come up, how much of that will happen

- DD: Can't answer that
- can only answer that in the future
- DD: All roads are bad, it is a concern
- don't trust Government motives
- DC: I agree, our concern as well which is why we wanted to keep it small – someday roads may be in. A lot of those numbers would come out with the feasibility process – we are a long way from answering these questions.
- feasibility is only for that point in time, we cannot predict what will happen down the road.
- Question 3 – I would suggest that Social Media be used like our facebook group Douglas News and Views to better inform the people of the area and to engage more people in the process, to better get the information out to the public.
 - Now that we have your contact information and ours is on the back of the Agenda, we will be better able to communicate. I believe this was posted on the Douglas News and Views.
- Question 4 - LSD goes through an exercise each year for the Budget, would it be possible to see those. Possibly have the Government post them
 - We will have those posted to Douglas News and Views
 - We don't have an AGM each year but that is something that we could certainly look at doing.
- Why do you not have anyone from Government here tonight?
 - It is our intention to give you some information we received without Government influence, we heard nothing of these maps until they were put before us by Government
- What is the Government Policy, not sure if it is Government policy to push through RC's
 - One change that came through this year is we received a letter from the Minister stating that the RSC 11 would be taking the initiative on forming RC's. To be honest, the RSC's still don't know what their role will entail. For us, it is better to be proactive.
- Question 5 – Will we be having a public vote on this, I think we are more in line with Estey's Bridge. I found that this session was very secretive, buried in my mail. With today's technology, it should be advertised more easily.
 - We certainly didn't mean to be secretive, our only means for communication was through Canada Post, I am not on the Douglas News and Views so could not post there, we have since learned that one of our members is part of that group and she will post in the future for us, although it was posted to the site by others that received in the mail.
 - We will certainly look at other venues for communication in the future, the community will have a voice and vote on which direction they would like to go, thus the reason we are bringing you this information tonight.
 - LSD's has no administration funds readily available for communication, that is something that we will be working towards.
- Question 6 – how the maps came about – Douglas seems to be the Girl that everybody wants to take to the Prom.
 - We do not have to take these maps, we should be designing our own
- What is our relationship going to be with Government and what are the benefits of a RC
 - Become our own taxing authority
 - Make our own decisions
- Comments from Tom Beckley
 - Province will need to be abided by first

- An RC can apply for grants under the Gas Tax Program, etc. Whereas a LSD cannot.
- These maps are only what Government is purposing, we need to determine what we want.
- We should have a feasibility study with about 4 options, this was done before with the Hanwell and Kingsclear study so it can be done.
- Within the LSD of Douglas, the community needs to decide what they need within the LSD.
- The Government needs you to have the assessment and Population, they don't necessarily care what the boundary is.
- Question 7 – If we go from LSD to RC, with the admin, are we going to pay double – to Government and to the RC?
 - No, we would pay admin costs dependant on what services that we take on, as we take on more the admin to Government would become lees and to the RC more.
- Question 8 – Is there any money for Social Media to help communicate the message you are trying to get out, is there a way to view the information that needs to be seen in regards to an RC.
 - Much of this information will be sent out via email addresses concerning an RC, an RC working group once established will have more revenue to engage the residents.
 - We will also work towards a webpage for the LSD of Douglas for information purposes.
 - Canada Post was our avenue to ensure residents of the area were aware of the meeting, due to a weather event and it's cancellation, we didn't have enough turnaround time to do a second mail out.
- Question 9 – Is there a place to get more information on a RC?
 - There is a spot on the Government website with some minimal information.
 - You can google the Hanwell/Kingsclear Rural Community and that has some good information on that.
 - Speakers can be brought in from established RC to discuss the process that they went through.
- Question 10 - What is the minimum criteria for a Rural Community?
 - Population of 4000 and a tax base of 250 Million
- What is the numbers for this area?
 - Lower Douglas and Carlisle each has 75 M, we are not sure of the population
- Would the entire LSD of Douglas have the numbers?
 - No but we could possible take in a portion of Bright on the Route 104 to increase numbers, this portion would be in our fire boundary.
 - Kingsclear would have the numbers to go on our own but Government would rather see larger portions incorporating, the goal is to bring down the numbers of LSD's into a manageable number of RC's.
 - We in the LSD of Douglas is fortunate enough to have an active LSD, some are not as active and some has not been active for years. We at least can go in and look at our budget and be sure that all is looking well.
 - It is important to note that if a Rural Community is formed, each little community would keep it's own identity and address, that would not change.
 - Lower Queensbury has never had an active LSD since 1967.
- We decide on an area, whats to say the Government won't say this is it anyway.
 - This is why we are trying to be proactive.

- When speaking of taxing Authorities, I think there is an act on that, just look at Irvine and Saint John, the Government decided that.
- Question 11 – I know that we were asked not to discuss the second access but that would impact my decision, I would like to know what each area would do on that.
 - A RC would have a larger voice in pushing for that access with Government.
 - It is a definite identified need for the area.
- Comments from Kirk MacDonald, MLA –
 - A RC would not take on Transportation at first, it is a very difficult entity to have, you may at a later point.
 - Route 104 & 105 are Provincial Highways so they would be cost shared at 50% each and all other roads would be at 100% if administered by a RC so it is best to leave them out in the beginning.
 - I can talk to you in greater detail at anytime concerning the 2nd access, please contact my office.
 - The building of that road would not be a product of the RC or the LSD.
- Question 12- Sports Fees, we currently pay into Fredericton for Hockey, how would this be impacted?
 - Thought it would stay the same – not necessarily
 - Would be up to council and Mayor
 - Would need to take any concerns to your area councillor
 - In an LSD, to pay from the tax base it needs to go out to a vote by residents
 - *Unsure of how this would work, will try to gather more information to better answer this question.
- A RC would be based on the same principal of a Village, City or Town in terms of Councillors and Mayor but some aspects may differ depending on what services the RC is administering to.

Conclusion of Meeting

- Is there any consensus of how you would like the LSD of Douglas to proceed on your behalf?
 - We have no problem with moving ahead with discussions
 - More information on RC's need to be brought back to us
 - We need to decide which area to proceed with
 - A subcommittee will be established with Lower Douglas/Carlisle to further discuss the merits and decide which direction we would like to go.
 - Another meeting will be scheduled with Government Officials in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted
 Wendy Brewer
 Secretary
 LSD of Douglas

