

LSD of Douglas
Information Session
April 28th, 2016
Burtts Corner Lions Club

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 and a newly formed committee called the York Incorporated Community has been put together to further identify the need or desire for a rural community, this name was chosen as a generic name that reflected the area but is by no means the name of a Rural Community if we are successful in forming one.
- 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.

John McPhee, Chair of LSD of Bright

- This is the 8th year for the LSD for me, our area includes the Mactaquac area, most of Route 104 and up and out to the Becaquimic area. If we don't have an LSD then we don't have a voice and I think it is important to have a voice, I stay on because we need a voice. With the talk of a Rural Community, we really do need a voice or we will just be where Government puts us and we may not like that.

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.
- Local Government present the varying LSD's maps and proceeded to tell each that we were all on board.
- Our LSD began talking with the LSD of Kingsclear, this talk began with the issue of the Mactaquac Dam.
- We are now talking with the LSD of Douglas, Kingsclear, Bright and Queensbury to determine an interest.

- We have since learned that Local Government has chopped off pieces of the LSD's of Kingsclear and Douglas, we feel the residents of the areas should choose where they want to be.
- 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.

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.

Robin Anderson, Chair LSD of Estey's Bridge:

- I can't add much more other than to say that change is coming so we should be thinking of this concept.

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.

- I live in the Douglas area, what choice do we have? Are we going to be told regardless?
 - It should be your choice, you have choices. Stay with LSD of Douglas and with the York Community, move with the LSD of Estey's Bridge, stay as is and possibly be amalgamated with Fredericton at some point.
- Tax rate is a factor, will we be paying more?

- Those are questions that will be answered by the feasibility study, all taxes go up but we do not expect a huge increase. Taxes are higher in a Village, Town or City but near the same for a Rural Community, they may increase a bit do to the need to have an administrator and a Town Hall Office.
- How does this impact taxes and services?
 - We currently don't believe that we are getting the services that we deserve. Again, we may have a slight increase due to administration, all of these tax questions would be answered by the feasibility study. We should only take on the services that would be to our benefit that would realize a tax savings to the community. We could also apply for grants and gas tax, we currently cannot access any of those monies.
- If we do become an RC, any say on our roads?
 - This would be the last service that we would want to take on due to the cost, we would have more say to prioritize road work in the RC.
- Is these maps the result of consultation with residents or just a first draft by Government?
 - No consultation from Government on these maps. However, they are just draft and can be changed to reflect our desire and what works best for us.
- Is this movement by Government going at a quicker pace now?
 - It is progressing quicker than we initially thought it would. They have a string of losses so we want to be sure what we do is correct. It will take at least two years for this action to be completed.
- For Businesses is it a concern for tax rates?
 - Yes, Lincoln failed because they wanted to become a Village which would mean higher tax rates for the businesses in the area, they in turn banded together to not get Village status, had they have went for Rural Community which would have had little effect on businesses, they may have been successful.
- So we get our RC – do we then become self sufficient ? Can we access Government Funding?
 - We will have access to the Capitol Borrowing Board and it would be Mayor and Councillors that would govern those needs.
 - The LSD's are becoming obsolete – case in point was how our local Fire Department was regionalized without any input from the LSD of Douglas, we read it in the news, that completely shows how much disregard that Local Government has for the LSD Advisory Committees.
- Would this slow down Fredericton in expanding their boundaries?
 - Yes but at the end of the day, if any part was courted and a vote was held and you decided to go with the city, you could do so, that is your choice. It would be more difficult if you are part of a Rural Community.
- You have done a great job in showing the pros and cons, I think we should proceed with the discussion.
 - We would like to have this done with a number of options to find our true communities of interest, we don't know if a number of questions could be asked on the plebiscite.
- I would like to have more information before saying I would vote yes for a RC.
 - And that is what we are asking – do you want us to proceed with seeking a feasibility study for a Rural Community to answer those questions.
 - We may find that not all of the LSD's will want to be in, some of Queensbury is not in as they flow to Nackawic. When we go to the North Tay, Cardigan area, we may find the same as they flow into Stanley, it is their choice.

- We have our boundaries based on background work that we are doing now.
- Would it be a good idea for a brochure to go out to the area with this information? I have been asked what a Rural Community is but I couldn't answer that.
 - We are also in the beginning stages of a website to help inform people of the LSD of Douglas.
 - 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.
 - Flyers are hard to get out once we have the feasibility study complete there is funding for that purpose.
- Is there a concern that some areas will be cut out?
 - Yes, we are trying to keep the communities of interest.
- What happens if the feasibility study comes back non feasible?
 - That should not happen, we already have more than enough numbers, this should give us a better picture of our tax base.
- Will you be having more meeting in other areas?
 - Yes, we will be moving around.
 - We will also have an email database where everyone will be notified of meetings and updated on progress.
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Conclusion of Meeting

- Is there any consensus of how you would like the LSD of Douglas to proceed on your behalf? By show of hands would you like us to proceed with a feasibility study?
 - Proceed with feasibility study

Other ideas of how the message could be delivered out were discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted
 Wendy Brewer
 Secretary
 LSD of Douglas