

Section 5.5

Community Identity

Who is concerned about Community Identity?

The Nova Scotia Gazetteer identifies approximately 2,750 official community names. These range from historical communities that have been in existence prior to the founding of Nova Scotia to new subdivisions. Although there are a multitude of communities, only 55 municipalities and 22 villages have incorporated status. For some of these communities, identity has become an issue and there has been an expressed desire to strengthen the sense of community identity within municipalities.

What does “Community Identity” mean?

The term “community” or “community identity” means different things to different people, especially where physical and social boundaries cease to coincide. Community identity can be broadly defined as a community of interest or an emotional attachment or sense of belonging to a geographic area. With respect to local government decision-making, community identity is often represented as some form of geographic community within a municipal unit. Citizens’ concerns with community identity can range from simple recognition of their geographic area to community participation (representation and access) to community decision making (service levels, development control).

Why is there a weakening of community identity?

There are a number of factors which can contribute to a weakening of community identity. These can include:

- growth beyond the early historic community boundaries
- a decrease in population base
- a decline of a community’s economic base, either through the loss of industry or diminished natural resources
- realignment of municipal boundaries
- a loss of influence in decision making

Opportunities to develop community identity.

Community identity is not something that can be forced or legislated into existence and may take time to consolidate new structures and for new processes to evolve. However, the suggestion that the above factors automatically lead to a reduction in community identity is not necessarily the case. For example, with changing local government structures, there is the potential for community identity to be strengthened. Options are available under the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and elsewhere, to create structures to refocus the existing communities to deal with the variety of local issues and strengthen their community identity. There are of course a variety of areas outside of the formal committee structures to enhance identity.

Municipal Government Act

The *Municipal Government Act* provides a variety of opportunities to enhance community identity, through the establishment of various types of committees by council. These committees offer a range of forums for citizens to have a voice in local government on a variety of issues.

The types of committees include:

Standing, Special and Advisory Committees

- 1) *The council may establish standing, special and advisory committees (MGA s.24).***

This is a general provision in the MGA, providing latitude for a council to have committees on issues as they see fit and council may appoint citizens and councillors to this committee. The MGA provides municipalities the ability to set the guidelines for these committees and requires the municipality adopt the appropriate policy. More specific power to establish citizen committees are found in some subsequent sections.

Citizen Advisory Committees

- 2) *The council may establish, by policy, citizen advisory committees which shall advise the council, as directed by the council (MGA s. 26).***

This is a broad ranging provision that does not limit the potential duties of these citizens' committees or their membership and would allow the formation of a committee to work with a council on the issue of community identity and other issues of concern to the community and council.

3) *The council may establish, by policy, a community committee for an area (MGA s.27)*

As mentioned earlier, geography is a key component of communities. This is a significant provision as it allows for the creation of community committees for a geographical area. These committees work within defined boundaries (i.e., a community) as established by council. The powers that council may afford community committees are broad and may include:

- a) monitor the provision of services to the area for which the committee is responsible and recommending the appropriate level of services and identifying, areas where additional services are required or improvement is necessary;
- b) the establishment of one or more advisory subcommittees:
- c) making recommendations to council on any matter respecting improvements to services including,
 - i. inadequacies of existing services (for example street lighting and sidewalks) and the manner in which they might be resolved;
 - ii. by-laws or regulations, including planning regulations;
 - iii. the adoption of polices that would allow the people of the area to participate more effectively in the governance of the area (for example, neighbourhood groups, business groups, special interest groups).

The establishment by a council of such a committee could go a long way toward giving communities a formal voice on many issues that are of direct interest to them.

**Area Planning
Advisory
Committees**

- 4) *A municipality may establish by policy, one or more area planning advisory committees to advise the planning advisory committee or joint planning advisory committee on planning matters affecting a specific area (MGA s. 201).*

Where communities wish more participation in planning matters, the MGA also provides for the creation of Planning Advisory Committees and Area Planning Advisory Committees for specific areas (i.e., a community). These committees must include members of the public and they offer an excellent means of providing community participation on planning issues. Although most municipalities have established Planning Advisory Committees, the use of Area Planning Advisory Committees is less common. When an area planning advisory committee has jurisdiction over an area that includes a village, the village commission may appoint at least one member of the committee.

All these provisions offer opportunities for community involvement in municipal decision making.

The foregoing provisions are available to all municipalities. For the Halifax Regional Municipality only, the MGA allows the establishment of community councils.

**HRM
Community
Councils**

- 5) *The council of the Halifax Regional Municipality may by policy, establish a community council for an area (MGA s. 521).*

These “mini councils” are made up of members from the regional council for the area in question and must include at least all or parts of three polling districts. The regional council delegates certain powers such as recommending the level of services, determining expenditures to be financed by area rates or deciding on rezoning applications to these councils. There are presently five community councils in HRM. Although community councils have certain authority, it has been argued, however, the geographic areas they serve is still quite large.

**MGA
Information
Bulletin #28**

Further detail on the inclusion of citizens and community members in municipal government is provided in Tab 2, Information Bulletin #28, **Citizen Participation**, of the *Municipal Government Act Resource Binder* (see Appendix A). This Bulletin may also be viewed in the MGA Resource Binder or on the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations web-site. (www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns)

**AMA Model
Policy Manual**

If a municipality wishes to pursue the avenue of developing special or citizen or community advisory committees in municipal government, the *Municipal Government Act* requires that the municipality adopt the appropriate policy. The *Nova Scotia Model Policy Manual for Municipalities* by the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia, provides the model policies to accomplish this. The relevant Chapters include:

- Chapter 2, Policy on Committees of Council
- Chapter 3, Citizen Advisory Committees Policy
- Chapter 4, Community Committees Policy
(see Appendix B)

**Profile Antigonish
Six Step Guide**

The Profile Antigonish Advisory Committee in April 2001, with the financial assistance of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, produced a six step guide to starting a sustaining community group. The version in Appendix C, has been modified to present a more generic model for general use. This work provides an excellent summary for any group wanting to get started.

**Community
Identity requires
municipal
commitment.**

Community identity cannot be legislated or forced, this is something that must evolve and be encouraged to take root. It is clear that municipalities are crucial to fostering and enhancing community identity within their boundaries. As illustrated, the tools are available for all municipalities in Nova Scotia to strengthen their community identity through: Special and Advisory Committees; Citizen Advisory Committees; Community Committees; and Planning Advisory Committees. What is required is the commitment of the municipal council and the citizenry.

How do I become involved?

As a Council, there is the ability to set up these various committees. All that is required is the adoption of the appropriate policies and nomination of the members of the group, in accordance with the MGA.

As an individual or a member of a business group, neighbourhood group or special interest group, which is interested in forming such committees, it is suggested that you write to your council or councillor outlining your concerns. Indicate in your letter the type of committee you would like to see set up and if you wish to become more involved, offer your name or nominate an individual who is willing to sit on this committee.

The formation of these committees can be an integral part of the community and municipality working together in achieving the common goal of strengthening the sense of community in your municipality.

Appendix A
Information Bulletin #28
of the
Municipal Government Act
Resource Binder

INFORMATION BULLETIN #28

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Summary: Councils are given a wide range of options to encourage citizen participation in municipal government.

Legislation: MGA Sections 24, 25, 26, 27, 200, 204
Related - Section 23(1)(c), Sections 521-528

Discussion:

The *Municipal Government Act* provides many ways to encourage and permit citizen participation in local government. Some of the most important are in the committee provisions.

Councils normally deal with committee matters by policy: such as conferring powers on them (except the power to expend funds) s.23(1)(c). Actual appointments to committees are made by resolution.

Councils now have the authority to appoint members of committees who are not councillors: s.24(3). Procedures to appoint outside members to committees is expressly authorized.

To implement citizen appointments to council committees, council will first have to determine which of the committees should have citizen representation. Some, such as the planning advisory committee, must have citizen representation: s.200(3). Council will next have to determine a procedure for choosing people to appoint to the chosen committees. This may be as simple as appointing a nominating committee to find suitable candidates or may involve advertising for members and more formal application criteria. However, council must make all appointments to committees.

Note that citizen members of committees (though not councillors) may be paid an annual honorarium for serving on the committee if council so provides: s.24(6). The same applies to planning advisory committees: s.202(b) and (c). All committee members are entitled to have their expenses reimbursed.

Citizen Advisory

There is special authority for the appointment of citizen advisory committees: s.26. The initial concept was that a citizen advisory committee would gather citizen input about a specific field of council's responsibilities relevant to the entire Municipality and advise the council. The MGA does not limit them in any way, with council determining powers and duties.

Community Committees

Community committees: s.27 could provide citizen input about all services in a specific area.

The important element is that council must define the geographic area for which the committee is responsible and set out its duties: s.27(2). Councils may wish to ensure that the councillors representing a community are included as members of the community committee, enhancing communication between council and the community.

Community Councils

Community councils, applicable only in Halifax Regional Municipality (Sections 521 to 528), are another more formalized way to encourage access to municipal government.

Planning

Another form of citizen participation is through the public participation process in the adoption and amendment of planning documents. Councils are required to adopt public participation programs for the preparation of planning documents (municipal planning strategy, implementing land-use by-laws and subdivision by-laws, and amendments): s.204. Public participation must be complete before the first advertisement for a public hearing regarding the planning documents appears. Although not mandatory, council may also have a public participation program for other types of planning process such as development agreements.

Date Produced: March 1999

Note: The reader is cautioned that preparation of this and subsequent Information Bulletins containing practical suggestions must necessarily involve interpretation of legislation as it applies in general situations. Specific situations may require careful legal analysis and therefore reference should be made to the Municipal Government Act, other relevant legislation and to legal advisors.

Appendix B

Chapters 2, 3 & 4

of the

**Association of Municipal
Administrators, Nova Scotia**

**Nova Scotia Model Policy Manual
for Municipalities**

The following is reprinted by permission from the Association of Municipal Administrators.

Chapter [2] Policy on Committees of Council

General

1. This Policy is entitled “Policy on Committees of Council” and applies to committees in respect of which all of the voting members are Council Members.
2. Any power conferred by this Policy upon an employee of the [Municipality] to authorize expenditures shall be exercised in a manner consistent with the By-Laws and Policies of the [Municipality].
3. Any power conferred by this Policy upon Council shall be exercised by resolution.
4. The following provisions shall apply to all Committees established by this Policy, except where the Policy specifically provides otherwise for any Committee:
 - (1) Except to the extent that Committee membership is otherwise determined by By-Law or Policy, Committee membership shall be reviewed annually by Council within 3 months following each municipal general election or election anniversary, after seeking the advice of the Nominating Committee, and Council may replace Committee members who resign or who, in Council’s opinion, are unable or unwilling to discharge their duties, or who fail to attend diligently to the Committee’s affairs. The [Mayor OR Warden] shall be an *ex officio* member of any Committee to which the [Mayor OR Warden] is not appointed, with a voice but no vote.
 - (2) The members of the Committee shall be reimbursed their reasonable expenses for attending Committee meetings, and mileage shall be paid at such rate as may be prescribed by Council as the Municipality’s mileage reimbursement rate.
 - (3) Except to the extent that the Chair is otherwise determined by By-Law or Policy of Council, Council may appoint a person to serve as Chair of the Committee, after seeking the advice of the Nominating Committee, but if Council does not appoint a Chair, the Committee shall elect a Chair from one of its members. The Chair shall be entitled to speak and to vote on any motion. Subject to the other provisions of this Policy, the Chair shall have the powers and responsibilities at Committee meetings that are conferred upon the Chair at Council meetings pursuant to the Municipality’s By-Laws or Policies, with any necessary modifications for context.
 - (4) Except to the extent that the Secretary is otherwise determined by By-Law or Policy of Council, [the Chief Administrative Officer or his/her designate OR the Clerk or his/her designate OR Council] may appoint an employee of the

Municipality to serve as Secretary, with a voice but no vote. If [the Chief Administrative Officer or his/her designate OR the Clerk or his/her designate OR Council] does not appoint a secretary, the Committee shall elect a Secretary from one of its members, in which event the Secretary shall be a full voting member of the Committee. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the Committee meetings.

- (5) The Committee shall meet at such time and place which it sets at a preceding meeting or at such other time and place as Council, the Committee's Secretary, the Committee's Chair or a quorum of Committee members may set by providing notice of meeting to all Committee members at least 3 days in advance. The date, time and location of Committee meetings shall be posted by the Secretary at [insert prominent location used for posting notices].
- (6) Subject to any resolution of Council, the resources which may be utilized by the Committee include:
 - i. advice and support of [the Chief Administrative Officer OR the Clerk] or his or her designate;
 - ii. use of the [Municipality's] facilities and supplies for meetings, photocopying, postage and other administrative needs, through [the Chief Administrative Officer OR the Clerk];
 - iii. use of external services reasonably necessary to discharge the Committee's mandate, through [the Chief Administrative Officer OR the Clerk]; and
 - iv. such other resources as may reasonably be required, through [the Chief Administrative Officer OR the Clerk].
- (7) All meetings minutes, and records of the Committee shall be open to the public except as expressly authorized by law.
- (8) A quorum of the Committee shall be the same as that which applies to Council pursuant to provincial legislation, with any necessary changes for context.
- (9) Subject to the other provisions of this Policy, the rules of procedure, conduct and debate that apply at Council meetings pursuant to the [Municipality's] By-Laws or Policies, apply at Committee meetings with any necessary modifications for context, [except that no notices of reconsideration shall be permitted at Committee meetings].
- (10) Committee members may prepare and submit a minority report or recommendation to Council if they do not concur in a report or recommendation of the majority.

- (11) In the event the Committee fails to provide a report or recommendation to Council within any deadline set by Council, Council may proceed with a decision regarding a matter within the Committee's mandate without awaiting the Committee report or recommendation.

Provisions Regarding the [Committee of the Whole]

5. Council hereby establishes [or confirms the establishment of] the [Committee of the Whole] as a standing committee of Council.
6. The mandate of the [Committee of the Whole] is:
 - a. to discuss, consider, advise and make recommendations to Council concerning the affairs of the [Municipality] that may come before Council, in advance of Council making decisions or taking action on such matters, except where Council determines that consideration by the Committee is unnecessary or inadvisable, and except that the following matters shall normally be dealt with by Council without having to be forwarded to the [Committee of the Whole] for its recommendations:
 - i. correspondence;
 - ii. reports and recommendations from other committees of Council;
 - iii. planning matters;
 - iv. first or second reading of By-Law enactments, amendments or repeals; and
 - v. matters which are the subject of a statutory hearing by Council.
 - b. to take action on such matters as are lawfully delegated to it by the [Municipality's] By-Laws and Policies, or by Council resolution including, but not restricted to [insert any specific delegation of authority intended by Council, e.g. hearing appeals from the exercise of licensing and permitting powers by staff, undertaking hearings and making decisions pursuant to unsightly or dangerous premises, receiving submissions or presentations from members of the public];
 - c. to take such other steps not inconsistent with this Policy that the Committee reasonably deems necessary to carry out its mandate.
7. The Chair of the Committee is [the Warden OR Mayor], and the Secretary is the [Municipality's] Clerk.]
8. Subsections [(1), (5) and (8)] of section [4] of this Policy do not apply to the [Committee of the Whole].
9. The [Committee of the Whole] consists of all Council Members, and membership on the Committee automatically extends to Council Members, without the necessity of formal appointment by Council, and automatically terminates upon the termination of a person's status as Council Member.
10. Unless otherwise specified pursuant to section [11], regular meetings of [Committee of the Whole] shall be held
 - (1) at [name and location or address of meeting place];

- (2) on the [e.g. the second Thursday of every month] except that there shall be no regular meeting [e.g. during the months of July and December];
 - (3) commencing at [time of meeting].
11. Regular meetings of [Committee of the Whole] may be rescheduled, relocated or cancelled, and additional or special meetings convened, in the same manner and with the same notice to Council Members and the public as applies to meetings of Council, with any necessary changes for the context.

Provisions Regarding the [Nominating Committee]

12. Council hereby establishes [or confirms the establishment of] the [Nominating Committee] as a standing committee of Council.
13. At the first meeting of Council following a municipal general election, Council shall appoint the [Mayor or Warden] and [insert number] additional Council Members to serve as members of the Nominating Committee and the membership of the Committee may be reviewed by Council at any time, but, except to the extent of any changes made by Council or by resignation, membership shall continue until the next municipal general election.
14. The mandate of the [Nominating Committee] is:
- (1) to discuss, consider, advise and make recommendations to Council concerning the nomination of persons to various committees, boards and commissions to which Council appoints or may appoint members, in advance of Council making decisions or taking action on such matters, except where Council determines that consideration by the Committee is unnecessary or inadvisable;
15. Council may, by resolution, accept, reject or vary a report of the Nominating Committee in whole or in part.

Provisions Regarding the [Executive Committee]

16. Council hereby establishes [or confirms the establishment of] the Executive Committee as a standing committee of Council.
17. The Chair of the Committee is [the Warden OR the Mayor].
18. The Executive Committee shall be consist of [the Warden OR the Mayor], [the Deputy Warden OR Deputy Mayor] and one other Council Member appointed by Council.
19. The mandate of the Executive Committee is:
- a. to review and set the Agenda for [Council OR Committee of the Whole], which setting of the Agenda shall not preclude a Council Member from raising other business at any regular meeting;

- b. to conduct the annual performance appraisal of the Chief Administrative Officer in accordance with the Municipality's Personnel Policies;
- c. to authorize disciplinary action against the Chief Administrative Officer and report same to Council at its next meeting;
- d. to give advice to [the Chief Administrative Officer OR the Clerk] on matters in which political advice is sought in regards the likelihood of Council support for alternative possible courses of action, including, but not limited to, advice in regards contract or other negotiations with third parties, which advice shall not bind Council;
- e. to act as Council's representative in negotiations or meetings, at the request of [the Chief Administrative Officer OR the Clerk];
- f. such other duties as are lawfully assigned to the Committee by the [Municipality's] By-Laws and Policies, or by Council resolution.

Provisions Regarding the [Audit Committee]

- 20. Council hereby establishes [or confirms the establishment of] the Audit Committee as a standing committee of Council.
- 21. The Audit Committee consists of [the Warden OR the Mayor] and [insert number] additional Council Members appointed by Council.
- 22. The mandate of the Audit Committee is as specified by legislation.

Provisions Regarding [Committee Name]

- 23. Council hereby establishes [or confirms the establishment of] the [Committee Name] as [a standing committee OR an *ad hoc* committee].
- 24. The mandate of the [Committee Name] is:
 - a. to gather information [insert any particular information gathering steps required];
 - b. to carry out public consultation [insert any particular consultative steps required];
 - c. to take such other steps consistent with this Policy that the Committee reasonably deems necessary to carry out its mandate;
 - d. to advise and make recommendations to Council [periodically OR annually OR before [insert date]] concerning [insert precise description of the mandate] [and concerning such other *ad hoc* matters as Council, by resolution, may direct]; and
 - e. to take action on such matters as are lawfully delegated to it by statute or by Council including, but not restricted to [insert any specific delegation of authority intended by Council when creating the Committee].

25. The [Committee Name] shall be composed of [insert number or allowable range of numbers] Council Members appointed by Council [after obtaining the recommendations of the Nominating Committee].

Policy on Committees of Council

Editor's Annotations

Enabling Legislation

Municipal Government Act, S.N.S. 1998, c.18

- 23 (1) The council may make policies
- ...
- (c) providing for committees and conferring powers and duties upon them, except the power to expend funds;
- 24 (1) The council may establish standing, special and advisory committees.
- (2) Each committee shall perform the duties conferred on it by this Act, any other Act of the Legislature or the by-laws or policies of the municipality.
- (3) The council may appoint persons who are not members of the council to a committee and may establish a procedure for doing so.
- (4) A committee shall operate in accordance with the procedures provided in this Act and the procedural policy for the council applies to committees unless the council, by policy, decides otherwise.
- (5) A member of a committee established by the council who is a council member is not entitled to additional remuneration for serving on the committee but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred as a committee member.
- (6) A committee member who is not a council member may be
- (a) paid an annual honorarium for serving on the committee, as determined by the council by policy, and an honorarium may be a different amount if the person is chair of a committee and honorariums may differ for different committees; and
 - (b) reimbursed for expenses incurred as a committee member.
- (7) Where a council member is appointed to a committee, board or commission as a representative of the council, the council members appointment ceases if and when person ceases to be a council member.
- 44 (1) The council shall annually appoint an audit committee.
- (2) The responsibilities of the audit committee include
- (a) a detailed review of the financial statements of the municipality with the auditor;
 - (b) an evaluation of internal control systems and any management letter with the auditor;
 - (c) a review of the conduct and adequacy of the audit;
 - (d) such matters arising out of the audit as may appear to the audit committee to require investigation;

- (e) such other matters as may be determined by the council to be the duties of an audit committee;
- (f) any other matters as may be determined by the council.

See also s. 22, and s. 24(3) to (7)

Important Notice

The reader is cautioned that editorial and drafting choices involve interpretation of the law. Municipal units should consult with their own legal advisors before relying upon, and applying to their own circumstances, the comments or drafts contained in this Manual.

Comment

- The model Policy can be used for the creation of committees consisting of Council Members. Each such committee should be specifically created in the Policy, by completing the equivalent of sections 23-25 of the model Policy. Council may not need the amount of detail contained in the mandate provisions for each committee.
- The Policy has been drafted on the assumption that except for advisory and community committees, which are dealt with under Chapters 3 and 4 of the model Policies, committees with action powers should be comprised of persons accountable to the municipal electorate.
- The Committee may be struck as an *Ad Hoc* (temporary) committee or as a standing (permanent) committee (Section 23).
- The general procedures and structure outlined in sections 1-4 will apply to all committees created in the Policy, except where specific exemption is made. The sample wordings for specific committees provide examples of variations from the generally applicable structure and procedure.
- The procedures in sections 1-4 can be modified to suit the wishes of each Council.
- The model Policy contains provisions for several illustrative committees, a Committee of the Whole, a Nominating Committee, an Executive Committee and an Audit Committee.
- The Committee of the Whole and Executive Committee provisions assume that Council submits most of its substantive business to the Committee of the Whole. It is important that Council consider carefully what items it does not wish to have twice considered by this process and the list in s. 6(1) should be amended accordingly.
- The Executive's primary role is to set the Agenda for Committee of the Whole meetings and to give non-binding political advice to staff during negotiation processes.
- The Audit Committee is a statutorily-mandated committee under the *M.G.A.*, section 44, and it is not necessary to define its mandate in the Policy.

- For any Committees, Council may or may not create an automatic position for the Warden/Mayor or the Deputy Warden/Deputy Mayor.
- The chapter # in the Policy title bar should be replaced by each municipal unit with the chapter # it assigns to this Policy.

Chapter [3]

Citizen Advisory Committees Policy

1. This Policy is entitled “Citizen Advisory Committees Policy” and applies to Advisory Committees which include members who are not Council Members.
2. Any power conferred by this Policy upon an employee of the [Municipality] to authorize expenditures shall be exercised in a manner consistent with the By-Laws and Policies of the [Municipality].
3. Any power conferred by this Policy upon Council shall be exercised by resolution.
4. The following provisions shall apply to all Committees established by this Policy, except where the Policy specifically provides otherwise for any Committee:
 - (1) The provisions of Section [4] of the Policy on Committees of Council shall apply except to the extent otherwise specified in this Policy.
 - (2) [The (non-Council Members) citizen representatives on the Committee shall be paid an honorarium of \$[insert number] per year, and a non-Council Member Chair shall be paid an additional honorarium of \$[insert number]].
 - (3) The Committee shall meet at such time and place which it sets at a preceding meeting or at such other time and place as the Secretary, the Chair or a quorum of Committee members may set by mailing a notice of meeting to all Committee members at least 7 days in advance. The date, time and location of Committee meetings shall be posted by the Secretary at [insert prominent location used for posting notices].
 - (4) The Committee shall not utilize external services or otherwise commit the [Municipality] to money expenditures except by requesting funds from Council. Nothing in this paragraph limits Council’s authority to grant or refuse a request by the Committee.

Provisions Regarding [Committee Name]

5. Council hereby establishes [or confirms the establishment of] the [Committee Name] as [a standing committee OR an *ad hoc* committee].
6. The mandate of the [Committee Name] is:
 - (1) to gather information [insert any particular information gathering steps required];
 - (2) to carry out public consultation [insert any particular consultative steps required];
 - (3) to take such other steps consistent with this Policy that the Committee reasonably deems necessary to carry out its mandate;

- (4) to advise and make recommendations to Council [periodically OR annually OR before [insert date]] concerning [insert precise description of the mandate] [and concerning such other *ad hoc* matters as Council, by resolution, may direct].
7. The [Committee Name] shall be composed of [insert number or allowable range of numbers] citizens [insert any special restrictions on composition] [and [insert number or allowable range of numbers] Council Members] appointed by Council [after advertisement for interested volunteers, and after obtaining the recommendations of the Nominating Committee OR of the Chief Administrative Officer OR of the Mayor/Warden].

Citizen Advisory Committees Policy Editor's Annotations

Enabling Legislation

Municipal Government Act, S.N.S. 1998, c.18

26 The council may establish, by policy, citizen advisory committees which shall advise the council, as directed by the council.

See also s. 22 and 24-25 regarding various matters pertaining to committees generally.

See also s. 200-203 regarding Planning Advisory Committees.

Important Notice

The reader is cautioned that editorial and drafting choices involve interpretation of the law. Municipal units should consult with their own legal advisors before relying upon, and applying to their own circumstances, the comments or drafts contained in this Manual.

Comment

- The model Policy can be used for the creation of citizen advisory committees, the most common form of which are currently Planning Advisory Committees. Each such committee should be specifically created in the Policy, by completing the equivalent of sections 5-7 of the model Policy. Council may not need the amount of detail contained in those provisions for each committee.
- The Committee may be struck as an *Ad Hoc* (temporary) committee or as a standing (permanent) committee (Section 6).
- The mandate in s.6 of the Policy for a Planning Advisory Committee should contain language from s 200(4) of the *M.G.A.* indicating the mandate includes advising respecting the preparation or amendment of planning documents (Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use By-Laws, and Subdivision By-Laws), and respecting planning matters generally. The Act also provides for Area Planning Advisory Committees and Joint Planning Advisory Committees (with another municipal unit).
- For other types of advisory committee it is suggested that the mandate be clearly worded to indicate whether Council is seeking advice on a narrow and specific question or on broad policy questions.
- Most municipalities conduct some form of public recruitment for citizen representatives on advisory committees, and there is an option in s.8 of the model Policy for an

advertisement and staff/political review process of the candidates before Council appoints.

- Essentially, the provisions for regular committees of Council are made applicable with modifications to recognize that Advisory committees contain unelected citizen members.
- The general procedures and structure outlined in sections 1-4 will apply to all committees created in the Policy, except where specific exemption is made. Consideration should be given by Council, for example, as to whether the same honorarium (if any) is to be provided to citizen representatives for different advisory committees, recognizing that some may have more demanding burdens than others.
- The procedures in sections 1-4 can be modified to suit the wishes of each Council.
- The chapter # in the Policy title bar should be replaced by each municipal unit with the chapter # it assigns to this Policy.

Chapter [4]

Community Committees Policy

1. This Policy is entitled “Community Committees Policy” and applies to the committees expressly established in this Policy.
2. Any power conferred by this Policy upon an employee of the [Municipality] to authorize expenditures shall be exercised in a manner consistent with the By-Laws and Policies of the [Municipality].
3. Any power conferred by this Policy upon Council shall be exercised by resolution.
4. The following provisions shall apply to all Committees established by this Policy, except where the Policy specifically provides otherwise for any Committee:
 - (1) The provisions of Section [4] of the Policy on Committees of Council shall apply except to the extent otherwise specified in this Policy.
 - (2) [The (non-Council Member) citizen representatives on the Committee shall be paid an honorarium of \$[insert number] per year, and a non-Council Member Chair shall be paid an additional honorarium of \$[insert number]].
 - (3) The Committee shall meet at such time and place which it sets at a preceding meeting or at such other time and place as the Secretary, the Chair or a quorum of Committee members may set by mailing a notice of meeting to all Committee members at least 7 days in advance. The date, time and location of Committee meetings shall be posted by the Secretary at [insert prominent location used for posting notices].
 - (4) The Committee shall not utilize external services or otherwise commit the [Municipality] to money expenditures except by requesting funds from Council. Nothing in this paragraph limits Council’s authority to grant or refuse a request by the Committee.

Provisions Regarding [Committee Name]

5. Council hereby establishes the [Committee Name] as a standing committee with a geographic area of responsibility as follows: [insert accurate description of the boundaries of the area and referencing a map if necessary]
6. The mandate of the [Committee Name] is:
 - (1) to monitor the provision of services to the area for which the committee is responsible;
 - (2) to carry out public consultation as it deems necessary, including appointment of advisory subcommittees;
 - (3) to take such other steps consistent with this Policy that the Committee reasonably deems necessary to carry out its mandate or which Council directs to be taken;

- (4) to recommend the appropriate level of services, areas where additional services are required and ways to improve the provision of services;
 - (5) to make recommendations to Council respecting any matter intended to improve conditions in the area for which the Committee is responsible including, but not limited to, recommendations respecting
 - (a) inadequacies in existing services provided to the area and the manner in which they might be resolved, additional services that might be required and the manner in which the costs of funding these services might be raised,
 - (b) by-laws or regulations, including those regarding planning, that are required, and
 - (c) the adoption of policies that would allow the people of the area to participate more effectively in the governance of the area.
 - (6) to advise and recommend on such other matters as Council, by resolution, may direct.
7. The [Committee Name] shall be composed of [insert number or allowable range of numbers] citizens [insert any special restrictions on composition] [and [insert number or allowable range of numbers] Council Members] appointed by Council [after advertisement for interested volunteers, and after obtaining the recommendations of the Nominating Committee OR of the Chief Administrative Officer OR of the Mayor/Warden].

Community Committees Policy Editor's Annotations

Enabling Legislation

Municipal Government Act, S.N.S. 1998, c.18

- 27 (1) The council may establish, by policy, a community committee for an area.
- (2) A policy establishing a community committee shall
- (a) define the boundaries of the area for which the committee is responsible and set out the duties of the committee; and
 - (b) include such other matters as the council deems advisable.
- (3) The powers and duties of a community committee may include
- (a) monitoring the provision of services to the area for which the committee is responsible and recommending the appropriate level of services, areas where additional services are required and ways in which the provision of services can be improved;
 - (b) the establishment of one or more advisory subcommittees;
 - (c) making recommendations to the council respecting any matter intended to improve conditions in the area for which the committee is responsible including, but not limited to, recommendations respecting
 - (i) inadequacies in existing services provided to the area and the manner in which they might be resolved, additional services that might be required and the manner in which the costs of funding these services might be raised,
 - (ii) by-laws or regulations, including those regarding planning, that are required, and
 - (iii) the adoption of policies that would allow the people of the area to participate more effectively in the governance of the area.

Comment

- The model Policy can be used for the creation of community committees which have a specific geographic jurisdiction. Each such committee should be specifically created in the Policy, by completing the equivalent of sections 5-7 of the model Policy. Council may

not need the amount of detail contained in those provisions for each committee, but the mandate should probably follow the wording in s. 27 of the *M.G.A.* to maximize the opportunity for the committees to provide an effective voice for their area.

- Where the Municipality has a CAO, the resources available to the Committee (s.7 of the model Policy) should normally be controlled through the CAO or his/her designate. Otherwise, Council or a specifically identified staff person should be in charge of authorizing resources.
- Most municipalities conduct some form of public recruitment for citizen representatives on committees, and there is an option in s.8 of the model Policy for an advertisement and staff/political review process of the candidates before Council appointments.
- Essentially, the provisions for regular committees of Council are made applicable with modifications to recognize that Community committees contain unelected citizen members.
- The general procedures and structure outlined in sections 1-4 will apply to all committees created in the Policy, except where specific exemption is made. Consideration should be given by Council, for example, as to whether the same honorarium (if any) is to be provided to citizen representatives for different advisory committees, recognizing that some may have more demanding burdens than others.
- The procedures in sections 1-4 can be modified to suit the wishes of each Council.
- The chapter # in the Policy title bar should be replaced by each municipal unit with the chapter # it assigns to this Policy.

Appendix C

Mobilizing Your Community: A Six Step Guide to Starting A Self-sustaining Community Group

Note: This guide is based on the experiences of a group called Profile Antigonish, a community-led project to promote the attractions of the Antigonish region, that was formed in Spring 2000.

How to form a self-sustaining community group.

A Public Meeting provides a forum for people with similar concerns to come together.

Introduction

At various times in nearly all communities, residents may want to join together to try and improve the well-being of their community. Their emphasis may be economic, social, cultural or recreational. What unites them is their desire to make conditions better.

This guide is for anyone who may be considering forming a self-sustaining and effective community group.

Step One — Hold a public meeting

To determine if an idea by a few people has broad support, a public meeting needs to be held. It should be advertised in the local newspaper or local radio station. In addition, people who may have an interest in the group's initiative should be identified and contacted by phone or in person. Someone has to take a leadership role in the process. Ensure a suitable meeting place is found and an acceptable agenda is in place and followed.

For people in other areas who don't have a similar organization, the local Regional Development Authority may be able to provide help in setting up an organizational meeting. Or group members can make the contacts themselves. Phone lists can be divided up with each person responsible for contacting people in their area.

Registering Your Group

If you have the commitment, then it may be time to consider a structure. Nova Scotia's Societies Act provides details on forming a non-profit society. Information can be found at the following website address:

www.gov.ns.ca/legi/legc/statutes/societie.htm

What is the group's *raison d'être*?

Step Two — Thrash out the mandate, mission and vision

The word “thrash” is appropriate here because when any new group is formed there will likely be as many views on the appropriate mandate, mission and vision as there are group members. This activity may be spirited - if people are passionate about the group, they'll be passionate about its purpose and direction.

The mandate and mission are similar, it is basically a statement of the group's reason for being. The vision is a shared view of a desired future.

What vision does your group have for the future?

Defining these terms is definitely a group exercise that should be carried out as soon as possible after the organizational meeting, as it may provide the group with better direction and focus on conducting its activities. Alternatively, waiting until the group has been active for a period of time allows the group time to reflect on its purpose, vision and abilities. On balance, these activities probably should be done within the first month or two of the group being formed.

Defining the group's mandate and vision is best done in a workshop setting. If feasible, a facilitator should be hired or a volunteer found to guide the group through this exercise. This session gives members a chance to know each other better and start forming a group bond that goes beyond individual interests.

A sample mandate may be:

“... to act as a catalyst in stimulating partnerships and collaborative efforts to improve the area economy (more visitors, more residents, more businesses). In implementing this mandate, our goal is to avoid duplication and maximize incremental efforts.”

What are the group's strengths and weaknesses?

Step Three — Assess the group's commitment and abilities

Once the first two steps have been completed, it's time to carry out a realistic assessment of the group's strengths and weaknesses. Consider preparing an asset map of the group's members. For example, how much time can volunteers devote to the group? If summer is approaching, should work continue or be postponed until the fall? Can the group operate with volunteers alone, or will a part-time or full-time staff person be needed? Is any start-up funding available? Will a budget be needed? If funding is received, how will the group continue to operate after the funding ends? These are some of the issues that should be considered. Initial enthusiasm has to be tempered by realistic expectations, or group members will become frustrated and dissatisfied.

You need a realistic approach to encouraging volunteers to join your organization. There is a need to determine when is the best time for volunteers; for example, potential volunteers in the tourism sector would be too busy during the summer but the fall and winter might be better to allow them to volunteer their time. Others may express interest in working with particular projects, or working on a weekly basis or when needed. Each of these considerations needs to be included in the work plan of the organization to accommodate the volunteers.

Funding is usually the other critical factor, as it is difficult to continue operation without funding even for basic supplies. Grants can often be used for an organization to start up or for a special project, but long term funding is a far more critical concern and needs to be addressed before grants are exhausted. Options for long term financial sustainability may include:

- contacting area organizations and businesses for contributions towards continued day-to-day operations;
- partnering with existing organizations on future staffing and other areas; and
- operating grants for special projects only and not day-to-day operations.

In many situations, volunteer contributions and not financial issues are what will allow the community group to thrive and make a difference in their community.

How do you plan to keep the public informed of your groups activities, goals, progress, etc.?

Asset Mapping

Asset mapping is a process that identifies the skills, interests and abilities of a group and its members. The group can then effectively mobilize those assets to make the most of their project(s).

Step Four — Let people know what you're doing

There is really no reason for a newly formed community group to be working in secret. Even if people don't seem to be interested, there will be some community members who will want to know something about a new group's activities. Try to make your public communication plan as open and accessible as possible.

A starting point is to distribute a news release to area newspapers and any local radio and TV stations. Weekly newspapers can be approached about the possibility of running short progress updates—either weekly, every second week or monthly. Newspaper columns can be used to solicit comments from the public, by providing contact names, phone numbers or e-mail addresses. As people become aware of the organization or projects, they are given a chance to become involved through this medium.

With more people using the Internet, setting up an e-mail contact list is also a good way to keep people informed on a weekly basis. The e-mail contact list can also be used to generate informal discussions during the time between the more formalized monthly meetings of the group. Always try to include a contact person's name, phone number, mailing address or e-mail address to make inquiries about the group as simple as possible.

Do a Strategic Plan

Step Five — Start planning a strategy

If you've made it this far, now the real work begins. Depending on the commitment of the group, you may be ready to start looking at **Goals**, which are outcomes that can be reached in two to five years, or **Objectives**, usually defined as specific results achieved in a year or less, or even an **Action Plan**, a step by-by-step outline of tasks leading toward completion of the objectives. A group workshop is usually the best way to tackle these issues - your local regional development authority should be able to provide advice and support. Strategic planning takes time, commitment and often money, and if these are lacking, one approach is to start by working on a specific project. Objectives and actions will still be needed, but the process is a little more informal.

Section 6.1 of the Local Government Resource Handbook provides guidelines on developing a Strategic Plan.

The group may find it doesn't have enough information to proceed, so more research may be needed. One way of gathering information is through questionnaires that ask people to list the community's perceived Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (a SWOT analysis). These findings can later be used as a basis for developing an action plan.

As a community group, the goal should be to accomplish in the first six months the following:

- communication of the group's intent;
- identify courses of action;
- conduct primary research and review research reports which have been conducted by other community organizations;
- hold consultations with other community groups and various stakeholders;
- conduct a SWOT analysis; and
- develop an action plan, which identifies specific objectives.

Step Six — Assess what you've done

Periodically, every six months or once a year, it may be useful to assess the group's progress. No matter what framework you follow — this one or any other — there will usually be things you'll look back on and wish you'd done differently.

Have you accomplished all you set out to do? The answer likely will be 'No.' Have you made some difference in your community? If the answer to this question is 'Yes,' then you can feel good about what's been done and build on this success. Remember the old adage "Rome was not build in a day."

A Few Do's and Don'ts for Community Group Members
DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to focus on what the group wants to accomplish• Consider getting outside help from a regional development authority or other agency• Take the time to develop an action plan to meet your objectives• Keep the community informed of your initiatives• Be realistic• Have a little fun
DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to start without a public meeting, so that any interested people have the opportunity to join• Overlook the importance of determining a group mandate and vision• Set up a group that can only survive with ongoing government help• Be shy about talking to members of other groups to find out what they've learned• Make being a group member a chore

Appendix D

Community Branding

Branding Your Community – A Short Guide to Building a Community Marketing Identity

Note: This guide is based on the experiences of a group called Profile Antigonish, a community-led project to promote the Antigonish region.

Introduction

This guide is intended to help communities develop an identity that demonstrates the pride they have in their community. By developing a unique graphic presentation of their community or “Branding”, a community has a useful tool for marketing and promotion.

Creating an identity

What is Branding?

Brands have several vital functions. Branding involves the positioning of a product or service, creating an image in the mind of the consumer of what they might expect from the product, service, establishment, or the community. Branding creates the foundational underpinnings of a marketing program. A brand can communicate various pieces of information to visitors by using a visual image and the phrase that is developed to describe it. For example, if your community wants to be recognized for its historical Victorian architecture and friendly community personality, it will not want to use a logo that implies modernity or mountain vistas.

Branding is about marketing the attributes and qualities of your community, and creating a visual representation of the pleasant experience a visitor can expect when visiting your community. A brand, allows you to convey a simple yet striking and memorable image of your community.

Why Branding is Important

A branded community is one with a cohesive and recognizable community identity. A brand allows a community to demonstrate

**Instant
recognition for
your community**

pride in the community and showcase the assets that it can offer to the world. Branding is about marketing the community. It is a visual and verbal identity of the community that will instantly explain relevant and attractive features and characteristics providing instant recognition so that the consumer can connect the brand with the community.

An excellent example of a community brand is the “Big Apple”. This two word phrase provides instant brand recognition to millions of people without any further explanation of what the phrase means. This particular phrase has been used for so many years that people instantly connect the two words with the city of New York. The actual origins and meaning of the words “Big Apple” have become obscure, and most people no longer know what it means but they do know it refers to New York City. Your community doesn’t have to be as large as New York but it can start on the process to building its own brand recognition.

How to Brand Your Community

Step 1 – Establish a branding group:

The branding group will lead the process of managing the development process and answering community member concerns and questions. The participants in this group should be committed members of the community who are prepared to put time and extensive efforts into this process. These people need not be marketing experts but must be open minded and willing to learn about marketing and branding. It is advantageous to have a mixture of different sectors in this group – for example, business people, educators, local government, and private citizens. Diversity on the committee helps to ensure that the final brand that is developed will meet the needs of a good cross-section of the community. This is important as the brand will be used by, and represent, everyone.

Step 2 - Determine relevant features and characteristics to investigate as possible branding items:

Every community has unique features or attractions that they can promote. The branding group should develop a comprehensive list of features and characteristics of the community that they feel would be useful to put forward. These might range from geographic features, cultural aspects, historical connections, economic or recreational

**Choosing
features to
promote**

Getting expert assistance

features. Perhaps what you might want to showcase is more along the lines of the friendly nature of the people in your community. Is there already a well known festival or theatre event such as the Apple Blossom Festival in the Annapolis Valley that can be showcased? Is there something unique about the ancestry or culture of the residents in your community that could be promoted (Scottish, Acadian, etc)? Perhaps you might choose to promote the fishing or farming industry as a key feature. Geographic features also provide an opportunity to market your community such as an “Ocean Playground” with lots of boating, swimming, surfing, fishing or other recreational opportunities.

Step 3 - Engage a branding consultant:

A branding consultant is knowledgeable about all elements about developing a brand and can assist you with creating a graphic design, slogan and various promotional materials that will showcase your community. Be cautious in who you select because a branding consultant is more than simply a graphic designer. The consultant must be aware of how to translate your community’s unique message into a simple yet recognizable graphical presentation that is unique to your community. She will work closely with you to understand what you want to project but should also be ready to guide you in the right direction if you get off track. A good branding consultant will be someone who has the artistic skills as well as the communication skills required, and in addition is prepared to challenge your committee in order to create the best image for your community.

In order to select a consultant, the first thing to do is to develop a “Request for Proposals” outlining exactly what you expect the consultant to accomplish, and indicating the qualifications he or she will be required to have. Once the RFP has been completed, it should be sent to a number of potential candidates. The responses you receive and how they are presented can tell you much about how the consultant will work with you. Narrow the list and then conduct interviews with those candidates who make the short list to ensure your committee and the consultant are compatible, and can work well together. A branding consultant may be expensive to engage but don’t choose him simply on the basis of lowest cost as you may get what you pay for!

Communicating with the public**Step 4 - Host community information meetings:**

It is critically important to gather the input and value the opinions of your fellow community members. Publicize and host a number of

Developing an image

information and opinion gathering meetings throughout your community. The branding consultant should be present at all meetings to ensure she hears what the community members are saying. During these meetings, clearly explain the project and branding (rest assured that it may be a difficult concept for some people to comprehend but persevere). Ask those in attendance for their own ideas of what features and characteristics they feel should be used to develop a community brand. You might use the preliminary list that the committee came up with to generate discussion but try not to present your group's list as the only ones that are under consideration.

Public meetings such as this should either confirm that your branding group is heading in the right direction or lead to new ideas the committee might choose to develop.

Step 5 - Develop a number of possible images and branding tools :

With the results the community meetings, the committee can now work with the branding consultant to develop some brand images and phrases. A good brand presents an image or logo that is visually striking yet flexible for use in many applications. Consider what the image will look like when it is used on billboards, in print, as embroidery, and in both colour and black and white. Not all designs will translate well in all uses so be careful of the complexity of the image. Have your designer create several different schemes to review.

The consultant will need to develop a short report on each scheme to explain the reasoning and strengths and weaknesses of each design. Remember that you and your committee are not design experts, but the final design you select will be one that you and your community will have to live with for a long time to come.

Ensure that the committee members are completely comfortable with the chosen design. If there are areas where concerns are expressed, ask for changes so the design fits the intended objectives and uses. A brand is intended for long term use so the final choice must be exactly what the community wants.

**Keeping your
image consistent****Step 6 - Develop standards and construct a manual of appropriate uses:**

Once a final design has been selected, the branding consultant will begin to develop a manual of standards and uses. One of the fundamentals of effective branding and marketing is the consistent use of visual and verbal messages. A standards manual will explain in detail how the brand items (logo, phrases, and images) are to be used. It will define the exact colours, typefaces, sizes, phrases and other technical specifications of the brand. It will also explain acceptable uses of the brand images and slogans. The intention of the brand standards manual is to explain how the brand can be used in marketing material so that the quality level of the brand is maintained and not corrupted by improper or sloppy usage. Remember that the brand is reflective of your community. It is only to your community's benefit that the brand is used correctly to showcase the community to the world.

The brand standards manual is only a tool to explain appropriate usage. Designate a community group, local government, or perhaps a local business organization as the "keeper of the brand". It will be their responsibility to ensure that the brand is used properly wherever it may appear. This does not mean that the organization charged with ensuring the brand standards are maintained can be heavy-handed enforcers. It is preferable to simply explain the benefits of using the brand as it was intended and assist the end user in its proper implementation.

**Getting the
community
"on Board"****Step 7 - Build community support:**

A community brand is only useful if it gains local support and is used by community groups, local government and businesses. Once the brand is created and the standards manual is finalised, the next task is to present the brand to the various stakeholder groups and explain how it will positively impact their own work. Not everyone will be familiar with the concept of branding nor with the continual work that must be done to bring the brand's promises to fruition. Explain the reasoning behind it and how the various pieces of the community identity fit together. Explain how the visual and written components are only as good as the people and community spirit behind the brand. It is critical that everyone in the community learns about and understands the brand concept so it is used properly. Community support is probably the most critical piece of the branding puzzle to ensure that the brand is

**Public
announcement
and promotion**

used properly and fulfils its promise for the community.

Step 8 - Launch the brand with public announcement and promotion:

The last step in the branding process is to make a public announcement about the new community identity. Since this new brand represents the entire community and serves to demonstrate pride in the community, this public announcement is an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the success. Invite guests from local governments, the business community, education, health and non-profit sectors. Everyone has a stake in the success of the brand so ensure a wide-ranging group of representatives.

Publicize the event in the local media by inviting local reporters from radio, television and newspaper to cover the event. Since the brand represents a focal point for community marketing, now is the time to begin the process of promotion. Follow the public announcement with a marketing campaign involving local partners in the community. The brand is the marketing identity for the community. Ensure the new identity is used often in every conceivable manner that fits with the standards you have developed. A good brand is one that is instantly recognizable but this brand recognition will require a concerted and long-term effort.

A branded community identity is a proven tool for marketing and promoting your community. It will aid in attracting new visitors, new businesses and new residents to the area. However, a branding program says much more about a community than simply that it is open for business. A community that has taken the effort to develop a community brand is one that is proud to tell the world about itself. The community brand demonstrates a confidence in the community that will translate into increased prosperity for all residents for many years to come.