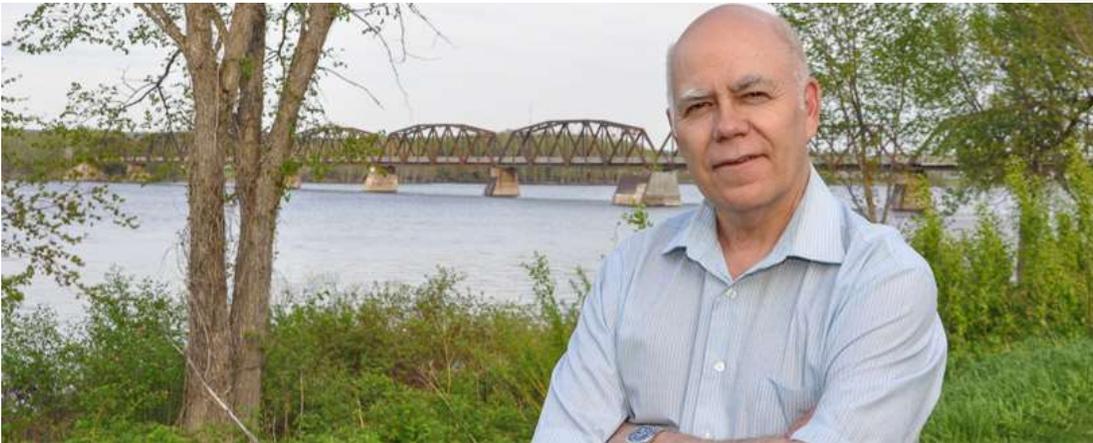


# Community Gathering West Plat & Sunshine Gardens



**October 21, 2017**

## **Content**

- 1. Summary**
- 2. David's Report from the Legislature**
- 3. John's Report from City Hall**
- 4. Top Themes**
- 5. Q&A**
- 6. Follow Up Actions**

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- David Coon, MLA  
Fredericton South



## 1. Summary

### *Political Representatives Present:*

David Coon, MLA Fredericton South

John MacDermid, City Councillor for Ward 10

On October 21, 2017, David Coon hosted a community gathering with John MacDermid. David started with a report of what was happening in the Legislature, and John followed with a report of the goings on in the City.

This was followed by an open Question and Answer period.

## 2. David Coon's Report from the Legislature

David began the community gathering by giving an update on what has been happening at the legislature since the last community gathering. Some of the topics discussed included:

- The work of our 2017 Social Action Interns interviewing seniors about making Fredericton an Age Friendly city
- Wait-time concerns for healthcare
- David's work on legislative committees including Public Accounts and Crown Corporations
- The Legislature returning on October 24<sup>th</sup>
  - The government will have a big legislative agenda this time around
    - o David will introduce two private member's bills on property tax fairness and first contract legislation, making it easier for new unions to negotiate their first contracts
- The role of the Constituency Office to help constituents by intervening with government

### 3. John MacDermid's Report from City Hall

John then gave an update on his work at City Hall since the last community gathering. Some of the topics he discussed included:

- The current budgeting process: The provincial tax assessment freeze means there is \$1.7 million less for the budget; however we received \$500,000 in relief from province for Storm Arthur.
  - Continuous improvement through Lean 6 Sigma to find up to 2% savings annually. We've achieved 1.5% annually.
  - The 2017-2018 budget for public transit. The city budgeted \$800M and spent \$4M on low floor buses. They are studying ways to be more efficient.
- The downtown parking plan which will be released in 3-4 weeks
- The report of the Mayor's task force on homelessness released in May with 17 recommendations and 12 quick actions
  - Recycling in Fredericton. The province has left recycling for regional service commissions, who have no mandate or incentive to improve.

**Comment [1]:**

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## 4. Q&A

### **Recycling:**

Q: Is there any sorting of the big bins for recycling?

John: No

Q: Why don't we recycle?

John: There is no incentive to recycle. Apartment owners don't want to take up a parking space for a recycling bin.

David: It really depends on the system. In Moncton, sorting is done at the site. Waste management is a patchwork in the province, and differs by region. Moncton has the best system which includes wet bag and dry bag with sorting at site.

John: We could use the Ontario waste management model. Fredericton has a 13-18% diversion rate while Markham lies at 85%. We need to look at the building permitting system that requires space set aside for recycling.

Q: Why don't we recycle glass?

John: There is no market available for recycling after the glass processing plant closed down. With a low population there is not enough critical mass for glass to be viable. The economic state of the region doesn't fit.

Comment: In the UK, a microchip system weighs garbage bins to encourage less waste. Glass could be used on the roads with a charge for garbage bags.

David: There are plenty of great examples of good waste management. However, the province needs to lead and work with the cities. Currently the patchwork system differs by cities and regions.

Q: What happens to the glass at the recycling center?

John: It gets shipped out. Companies then arrange for them to be recycled. Some get ground down. They pay \$.10 and get \$.5 back, the other 5 cents goes to recycling cost.

### **Playhouse:**

Comment: The new Playhouse should concentrate its culture downtown where the old Playhouse was, even if the Playhouse shuts down. The current proposal for the Playhouse behind City Hall is bad for business, and takes up parking.

David: I'm meeting soon with Tim Yerxa, Artistic Director of the Playhouse. It's good to know what people think.

### **Fredericton Aquatic Facility**

Q: Update on replacing the UNB Pool. Have petitions been received?

David: Yes, I have received petitions.

Comment: It will most likely miss the upcoming city budget; it will have to wait for following budget. If the pool closes during Sept. of 2018, I will miss out on going to the pool for a full year. It's not about the arts centre or pool, we need to take action now, no more room for discussions. It's extremely frustrating.

David: Lately, there have been positive discussions between the city and UNB, to possibly approach a long-term solution. The potential scenario would be: if an agreement for a long-term solution is reached, maybe the university would agree to a short-term solution with the current pool (i.e. keep it open until a new pool is built). The province will only move once there is a city agreement.

Comment: We are missing this budget window.

Comment: The committee for a replacement pool holds the city accountable, not the university.

Q: Will the UNB Pool be safe if it goes on past Sept. 2018?

David: There's a possibility that may keep the pool open beyond the Sept. 2018 deadline.

John: The city has built sports centres and Chancellor's Place with borrowed money. They have reached their cap for debt and have enough money for one major project, either the performance art center or the pool. Both are important for drawing in population and enhancing quality of life. But the Playhouse is city-owned, so the city is liable for that, not the pool. The city has also built two hockey center's using majority of the money from the city. There are imposed outside rates for residents outside the city, but some fraudulent use of the rink by outside city residents claiming city residence. We must ensure that the city does not subsidize outside city use. We want to ensure fairness to Fredericton rate payers.

Q: Are regions included in conversations between the city and UNB?

John: Communities outside the city are saying they are "not interested", along with the Playhouse. The support stems from the Regional Service Commission, but with no willingness of enforcement. There is low contribution from outlying regions, with the main contribution being from the city and the university. First thing is first, the city and university must agree. Then proceed by taking it to outlying regions.

Comment: The Province should support the pool as an age friendly facility.

David: The Province's form of structuring departments and the way it budgets don't align well. Wellness (and preventative health) is housed in Social Development rather than Health, so its budget is separate from Health. The way government structures itself really matters. Wellness should be in Health because it affects the Health budget.

## **Airport**

Q: What's going on with federal funding for the airport? Why is there no money from them yet?

John: The city is not contributing money to the airport; it supports it in political manner, but there is no

money .With regards to the city it is not allowed to spend outside of their boundaries.

David: The next 11 months may be bad for budgeting because money will be spent in political ways as the election nears.

### **Parks**

Comment: I like the park plan to keep Odell as a nature preserve.

John: I don't agree that Odell should not have any recreation in it; rather that recreation must be done to the highest of standards. Add different views in the community regarding the parks. There are more public consultations coming.

Q: What does the sign 4 1/2 acres regarding the city park off Allison Blvd. mean (at the new developments near the Fredericton Direct Charge Co-op)?

John: That area is zoned for development; the park is a part of the vision of the development. The big question is do you build the buildings or the park first? The four acres would be a neighborhood park. The tricky part is that the planned development has not gone as scheduled yet.

### **Saint John River to Wolastoq**

Q: The sign on the walking bridge refers to the St. John River. Can Provincial government do anything about the sign, to change it to Wolastoq River? Is it true that it can't be done because the river goes through Maine?

David: Yes, the sign can be changed. There are examples of this throughout Canada. Signs can be changed locally. Formal process exists through Heritage and Tourism. The effort now is to build support before filing papers. This occurs in other provinces routinely.

Comment: The world knows the St. John River as the St. John River. It's an important river and it should maintain its name.

David: Sure, but the indigenous people here are defined by that river, as the People of the River.

John: Mayor and Council got a letter from Ron Tremblay and there is unofficial support from some in the city.

David: It's a legal process, separate from what the city can do.

### **Parking**

Q: Will more parking at Wilmot Park take away from the park itself?

John: Angled parking will be added to Odell Ave., and other parking additions will allow us to add 50 more parking spots around the park. Odell Ave. will widen by a meter, so this will take some park land away, but Rookwood will narrow in an upcoming road fix, and this will include a mixed-use trail, which will add more parkland. Saunders will also narrow. Public engagement will take place this November.

### **Public Transit**

Q: Will the city bring the bus back on Saunders for the seniors at Stepping Stone?

John: A transit Study is being done and results will come out. In the last transit update, we discovered overall increased access, but it was a loss for Stepping Stone (and MCAF) which lost its bus route.

Comment: We need bus service on Sunday

John: Yes, I agree. Would we be willing to raise property tax for this? We need to have a seven day a week bus service for people to use transit as transportation. We want to bring bussing back to Wilmot for families and their kids.

Comment: Raise parking charges

John: There is a parking strategy currently in process and a draft report ready. Our estimates show that 30,000 people will move to Fredericton in the next 20-25 years. They'll have cars but where will they park? The core focus will be on the downtown area.

Comment: Park n' Ride solution.

David: There is a proposal through the Skyline Acres community for an Active Transportation Connection that includes a Park n' Ride. It would be good consideration as a first effort to see how it works.

John: The Parking Strategy is an inventory of public and private parking, to establish what the parking capacity is so we know how the city should structure parking going forward.

## 4. Follow Up Actions

### David Coon

#### Recycling

All the concerns regarding recycling services may come to a head with China closing its borders to recyclable materials. Much of what is collected from the Fredericton area and elsewhere was being shipped there. I am hoping this will finally force the provincial government to once again play a leadership role in waste management in New Brunswick. I will be raising this in the Legislature.

#### Playhouse

My meeting with Tim Yerxa, the Executive Director of the Playhouse was very informative. As you probably have heard by now, the decision has been made by their Board of Directors to rebuild on the same site, concentrating cultural activities in that area. This is exactly what a number of the participants in the community gatherings favoured.

#### UNB Pool

There has been very encouraging news from UNB regarding the pool. The discussions with the City on a new pool have apparently advanced sufficiently that UNB has publicly said they would consider ways of extending the life of the existing pool, if there is a clear commitment to a partnership to build a new aquatic centre. Once there is a joint agreement, the Province can be brought into the discussion about funding.

#### Renaming the St. John River

Regarding the official use of the name Wolastoq for the St. John River, officials from the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, and the Wolastoq Grand Council met to discuss the proposal. Further meetings are apparently planned that will include anyone and everyone with an interest.