

Honestly Seeking Alternatives

Presentation to Public Meeting, Mahone Bay, July 5/07

Re: Council's Proposed Development Land

Village Status-Amalgamation

Need for Change

- **Nobody seriously doubts the Town is in a serious financial viability crisis.**
- **Nobody doubts the Town is struggling to meet the present and future commitments to services required by town status.**
- **Nobody doubts that provincial and national requirements for public works will get more sophisticated and expensive.**
- **Most people see the need for development.**

But before the town is launched on a plan of action-and the present plan is drastic, involving the loss of the most used recreational facility, and wooded land- the critical question has to be answered.

Is Mahone Bay a village masquerading as a corporate town? Is it far better off amalgamating with a municipality, and becoming part of a much larger tax base? Would amalgamation result in considerable savings and debt reduction?

The only way to find the answer is to appoint an impartial committee into the possible benefits of amalgamation. A decade ago the Town of Liverpool and Queen's Municipality appointed a two person committee to study and report back.

A Real Life South Shore Example

The Town of Liverpool amalgamated with Queen's in 1996 and the following facts are available from the senior administrator, David Clattenburg:

- **A majority of Liverpool Town Councillors were initially against amalgamation. They just didn't like the idea. They changed their mind when presented with the facts from the impartial report.**
- **Real considerable cost savings resulted.**
- **The residential and commercial tax rate in Liverpool is actually lower now than it was in 1996.**
- **The garbage collection fee of \$ 155 for each commercial and residential establishment has been scrapped. The area special commercial rate for business development has been scrapped.**
- **Services by public works and policing have improved.**

- **Helped by amalgamation, Liverpool has been able to reduce its debt on the town water utility from approximately \$470, 000 to nothing. And now a new \$6.75 new water project is about to start**

These are *facts* and I could quote many more. Most of the facts were given under testimony at Antigonish hearings in 2004.

Mahone Bay is not Liverpool. Nobody [and that includes our town councillors] knows the results of an impartial survey.

No impartial survey has been done. There are only opinions.

Let's not tear out the physical heart of this Town, and split the community, before a real study of this alternative is done.

What if this proposed development goes ahead and it doesn't solve the fundamental problem ?

What if the proposal is just a band aid?

It's easy: a phone call to Stephen Fiest [424-5537] the Municipal Advisor at Service Nova Scotia initiates the process. Get Mr. Clattenburg to come and talk to Council. There are many respected local persons with administrative/financial expertise who would have people's respect as impartial investigators.

Respectfully submitted

Bob Sayer