



**TOWN OF SAINT ANDREWS
PUBLIC HEARING OF OBJECTIONS MEETING
MINUTES**

**March 6, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
W.C. O'Neill Arena Complex – Council Chambers**

A. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

A Public Hearing of Objections and Comments Meeting on By-Law No. 23-01, A By-Law Relating to a Tourism Accommodation Levy in the Town of Saint Andrews by the Town of Saint Andrews Council was held on Monday, March 6, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Deputy Mayor Kate Akagi, Councillors Mark Bennett, Marc Blanchard, Kurt Gumushel, Annette Harland, Jamie Hirtle, Steve Neil, and Darrell Weare.

Staff: Chris Spear, CAO/Treasurer, Paul Nopper, Clerk - Senior Administrator.

Absent: Mayor Brad Henderson and Councillor Lee Heenan.

B. LAND RECOGNITION OF THE PESKOTOMUHKATI NATION

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: 061 - 03/23

Moved by Councillor Harland

Seconded by Councillor Hirtle

That the Agenda for the 230306 Public Hearing of Objections and Comments Meeting for By-Law No. 23-01, A By-Law Relating to a Tourism Accommodation Levy for the Town of Saint Andrews on Monday, March 6, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. be adopted.

7 – 0

Carried

D. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

E. PRESENTATION

F. HEARING OF OBJECTIONS

1. By-Law No. 23-01, A By-Law Relating to a Tourism Accommodation Levy in the Town of Saint Andrews for Second Reading, BTHC230205

Clerk Nopper noted that Council had received three submission letters with their package and two letters digitally regarding By-Law No. 23-01.

Dominique Berlenger - I live in Saint Andrews and am the owner of the Kennedy House. I thank Council for the feedback session. As a new member of the community and business owner, it is important to embrace and support the opportunities from the local government launches to improve the quality of its citizens, culture, and heritage, whether publicly or privately funded. The tourism tax is self-fulfilling as it creates budgets and accelerates the potential next visits of the public. To my understanding, this tax was brought in at the start or height of COVID. It goes without saying the pandemic has changed habits, businesses, and the way people travel. I am a member of the Chamber of Commerce and as I understand, the mechanisms of oversight and results of the stacks of funding remain unclear today, not just for me but the public. New life is in the TALB processes, and every actor needs to find their role. The spending of the dollars is not completely clear. I am not implying anything but understand funds are sitting

in an account ready to be spent. Guests from my previous year and other colleagues will have contributed to that fund and that fund has not been spent. The objective of the funds is to improve and basically make it more attractive to visitors in Saint Andrews. I consider myself a tax collector for some and as a collector, we also get questions. What happens to our tax dollars? Guests ask me about HST but need more information on the local tax levy. People would like to know and see what that improves. It is difficult to explain that to the guests what we have done with that money and what we have improved from previous years. To ask for more, to increase the tax rate from 3% to 3.5% we need to explain that to our guests and what that funding is being used for and need arguments to justify an increase. In light of inflation, people are conscious of the rates and why we need to pay more. We need to explain what we use the money for and coming out of COVID, we should wait and spend our money first before asking for more. Thank you.

Chris Aerni - It is the first time I have attended a meeting like this and the first time in 22 years that I am officially part of the community as Chamcook has become part of Saint Andrews. Since I have been in tourism for 22 years at the Rossmount Inn, I naturally have an opinion. Tourism is competitive around the world, not just in New Brunswick. Marketing is a big thing and an expensive thing. How do you attract and keep people coming back? Who is going to support what is being marketed? You need lots of money to market today. I agree with the 3% to 3.5% but would like to speak to Section 10.7 of the By-Law. When reading through it, as a principle, I am not opposed to a marketing levy and this has been done around the world for decades. In some cities, you can pay 5% - 8%. At 3.5% we are at a good level. As we manage the funds coming in, I propose we hold off on putting through the By-Law until TALB has their budget presentation. With the changes in the Town and the Regional Service Commission, I think we need a good working session, with professionals around town, and talk about how we are going to do that. Section 10.7 is not what it costs us this year, which is \$28,000 to the RSC, for this year. In future years, we are prepared to lose control over our tourism dollars if it stays written like this. I propose we hold onto the 10.7, have a working session, and think about how we want to move forward with the Town, the service provider, and the RSC. It sounds like the Town is ready to send money to someone else to take care of it. I believe in the region of Charlotte County; Saint Andrews is the tourism centre and should claim this. We should see if maybe we are the elected people to take care of tourism in our region. This is what Fredericton has done. The Development Marketing Organization is getting funding from three sources and has a five-year deal with the RSC to take care of tourism for Fredericton and the surrounding area. We want to be the ones taking care of tourism. In Fredericton, they reached out to all the communities and found out their needs. They can keep control and money in the town. Because of that example, I think 10.7 for me says we are prepared to give control of tourism away to someone else and we should hold onto that. Thank you.

Ken Knight – Co-owner of the New Brunswick Bed and Breakfast. We are well into bookings for this year and if we change to 3.5% in April, we are hoping there is a mechanism to account for the change from 3% to 3.5%.

Clerk Nopper noted that there is a mechanism in place in the By-Law to stipulate a change from 3% to 3.5% on future bookings after April 1, 2023.

G. QUESTION PERIOD

H. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 062 - 03/23
Moved by Councillor Gumushel
Seconded by Councillor Blanchard
At 6:52 p.m. the meeting be adjourned.
7 – 0
Carried



Brad Henderson, Mayor



Paul Nopper, Clerk – Senior
Administrator

