



**TOWN OF SAINT ANDREWS  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES**

**February 24, 2025, 7:00 p.m.  
W.C. O'Neill Arena Complex Council Chambers**

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**A. RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE**

*A Special Meeting of the Town of Saint Andrews Council was held on Monday, February 24, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present:*

*Mayor Brad Henderson, Deputy Mayor Kate Akagi, Councillors Mark Bennet, Annette Harland, Lee Heenan, Steve Neil, and Darrell Weare.*

*Electronic Attendance: Councillor Marc Blanchard (7:05 pm)*

*Absent: Councillors Kurt Gumushel and Jamie Hirtle*

**B. LAND RECOGNITION OF THE PESKOTOMUHKATI NATION**

**C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion: 059 - 02/25**

**Moved by** Councillor Heenan

**Seconded by** Deputy Mayor Akagi

*That the Agenda for the 250225 Special Council Meeting be approved as presented.*

**6 – 0**

**Carried**

**D. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**E. PRESENTATIONS**

**F. INTRODUCTION, CONSIDERATION AND PASSING OF BY-LAWS AND MOTIONS**

**1. Discussion on the St. Andrews Civic Trust Proposal for the Courthouse, EBC250207**

*Presentation from James Geneau, Vice-President, Saint Andrews Civic Trust.*

*Project Scope & Requirements*

- 1. Looked at ENTIRE space; The Courthouse, Gaol, & Commons*
  - 2. Acknowledged clear desire that it be For Public Use - the overwhelming message from original consultant's report.*
  - 3. Provide a VISION for consideration, including Ownership options.*
  - 4. Leverage Creative Ideas from the Community.*
  - 5 Research and ensure ideas could be funded and that options for sustainable revenue generation existed.*
- 5 Key proposal elements were evaluated in the process.*
- 1. Preserving historical and cultural significance.*
  - 2. Supporting healthy and active living.*
  - 3. Positive tourism and economic impact.*

4. Supporting social inclusivity and connectivity.

5. Encouraging learning, sharing, and education.

Combination of ideas to create a multi-use four-season community hub with a combination of indoor and outdoor activities.

#### Vision Developed

The Courthouse Structure. Current state: Inaccessible. Home to the Saint Andrews Civic Trust Offices. Legion display. Underused old judges chambers. Intact courtroom setting. Two washrooms not set up for public use. Additional underused space. Main area where the heritage defining elements are and the area that is the most sensitive and hard to change because of the heritage designation.

#### Options:

Access enhancements. New accessible ramp and walkway to the front entrance and new secondary public side entrance with better grade and access from the street. Two new full public access washrooms to be developed. New enclosed service patio and gated driveway off Parr Street. Driveway with fence with swing gates and secure space.

Social enhancements: new technology room with enhanced technology (better Wi-Fi, AV equipment, etc.) with shared office space for St. Andrews Civic Trust. Community board room with a large screen presentation TV (judges chambers). Community gaming room with board game area, rentals for clubs such as chess, bridge etc. (former space of SACT office).

Tourism enhancements: Town visitor centre and gift shop (Legion Display area). Public display and exhibition space at the front of the Courthouse. Rotating seasonal displays such as items from the Charlotte County Archives and exhibit spaces for touring shows. Historic reenactments of court cases in the courthouse area. Use of the space as more of a tourist attraction than a building to look at.

Multipurpose design: upgrade technology in the courthouse area with better microphones, seating, better infrastructure that could be done sensitively without destroying the heritage defining elements. Could be used for Council Chambers, specialty meetings, court cases, etc. Reception space in exhibit area if not being used for an exhibit for municipal functions, fundraisers for the Courthouse or Charlotte County Archives, or another organization. Multipurpose outdoor access space an area to support food truck catering, miscellaneous storage, loading/unloading, court services.

Very strategic in thinking about the multi-purpose design that we are proposing. The reason for it is that we heard repeatedly that it should be a courthouse. We were not able to get anything concrete from the Province to say that there is a proposal for it to become a full time courthouse. Still an option. Design and enhancements would make it usable as a courthouse, a meeting space, an attraction, and a council chambers. Because it has all the infrastructure in place, could be used as a courthouse 1 - 2 days a week. It is easier to sell the Province on court cases 1-2 days a week versus purchase a building, completely repurpose it and turn it back into a courthouse.

#### The Gaol and Commons

##### Commons

Inaccessible green space at a lower grade to street with single gravel driveway. Large deposits of deer feces and ticks. Popular sledding hill in the winter. Offers commanding views of Courthouse and Gaol.

Access enhancements - improving grading to SW street level of entire site with slope of sledding hill entrance. Picket fence and two gates with access hours. The concept is that it keeps the deer out, not a place for people to

hang out and drink at night, or to cause trouble and ensures it is quiet after a certain hour for the local residents so it is not a late venue. New paving stones to improve access. New deer resistant hedges and plants inside the space.

Public realm enhancements - new picnic tables along a retaining wall and donation wall. Space for outdoor yoga and tai-chi. New series of plaques on the architectural history of Saint Andrews. New benches and garbage bins for public enjoyment of space.

Cultural Enhancements - new bandstand next to yoga space for the arts. New contemporary art installation to be lit up at night. Make part of a major competition and symbol of arts and culture in Saint Andrews. Ticketed experiences for the first floor of the Gaol and use as a dedicated museum. Upstairs would remain Charlotte County Archives. How do we use the Gaol and get the funding for the Gaol to actually be a cool space where you could do augmented reality, escape rooms, etc. throughout the year.

Tourism Enhancements - new directional signage to other sites in Town. Make this the first part of tourism experience in Saint Andrews. Dedicated non-idle drop off and pick up site for tour buses. Passengers get off. Bus parks at W.C. O'Neill Arena Complex. Return at designated time to pick up passengers. While they are there met by period costumed individuals, given an introduction to Saint Andrews, the Visitor Centre there so they can get a map and understand how to navigate throughout the Town. Properly defined parallel parking with curbs and sidewalks to improve traffic flow and improve safety.

Social Enhancements - new social enterprise building with direct fenced in access to courthouse and gaol. This would be a space for better facilities for the Civic Trust, additional office space for the Charlotte County Archives to support the vault that they have in the gaol, potential future office space for Explore St. Andrews and other organizations. Bring non-profits together for collaborative space and optimization. Option for a fountain square plaza. Fountains at grade which can be turned on or off in summer. Skating rink in the winter.

Green Enhancements - no trees being culled with new trees being added for cover. No more than 30 - 35% of the existing grass in the Commons being used if including fountain plaza. Solar panels to the back of the buildings and heat pumps to reduce cost on buildings and functionality. Option for electric car charging stations in central located spaces within walking distance to downtown.

Idea is for a four-season outdoor public space. A place to meet period actors, option for a Christmas Market, a splash park, outdoor skating, and family activities in the centre of Town.

#### Public Feedback on Ideas

##### Courthouse:

Council Chambers 16%

Visitor Centre 16%

History Experience 14%

Cultural Exhibits 14%

##### Commons:

Fountain 20%

Outdoor Rink 16%

Town Bandstand 15%

Architect's Garden 8.5%

Fence and Gates 8%

Public Art 8%

#### Potential phases for the vision

\*\*\* WARNING\*\*\* None of the items shared in the vision section are necessarily set in stone and will transpire. They are concepts submitted by members of our community and voted on by the public through the Courthouse Commons project. The proposed timelines are for consideration only and it does not mean that ALL phases will be executed or realized.

#### Estimated Project Costs

Courthouse - \$852,000, includes restoration and repurposing per the plan. Vast majority would be covered through grants.

Commons \$2.1 million, assumes ALL enhancements noted in the plan including Fountain Square and the outdoor ice rink. Ice rink and fountain square make up more than half this cost (62.3%).

Social Enterprise Annex - \$420,000 for optional annex building.

Estimated tax payer burden AFTER eligible grant funding applied \$282,700 (8.3%). Quite a few grants that can be attained to cover the rest of the funding.

Median annual revenues, from programs and events estimated at \$143,000 to be used towards the upkeep and maintenance of the building and the site.

#### Phased Execution of Vision

Phase 1. Courthouse Building - restore structure and enhance interior space to support court and meeting space concept. Community boardroom, game room, visitor centre, public washrooms, improve accessibility, green enhancements.

Phase 2. Commons Space - re-imagined public space with grading, pathways, amenities, and landscaping; fence and gates, bandstand, public art installation, architectural garden, gaol museum.

Phase 3. Future Enhancements - undefined timeline - pre-work to support optional fountain square and rink, social enterprise annex, town enhancements to parking, sidewalks, and pedestrian access.

#### Options for moving forward

1. Town ownership with committee - gives town full-control of the facility as a town asset. Remains fully for public use with Oversight Committee established to execute elements of the vision or some of the changes, accessing some of the grants, etc.

#### Pros and cons

- makes town primary beneficiary of grants and project management
- town pays property tax on space
- lots of prior attempts with previous committees unsuccessful
- Town continues with operating costs and benefit from potential revenue

2. Transition back to SACT - SACT becomes the owner, as originally discussed with the Province back in 2007. Remains an accessible space for the town, but owned and managed by SACT.

#### Pro and Cons

- SACT becomes beneficiary to grants and project management

- no property tax as SACT is a not-for-profit
- SACT has proven 50 year record of success
- operating cost fully absorbed by SACT over time and benefits from revenues

#### Working with SACT

- SACT take over ownership of Courthouse, Gaol, and Commons resulting in an immediate tax-savings to the Town
- discussions with Council around a special zoning for entire space, allowing for some or all elements being executed
- commitment from the Town up to 5 years for operational costs as SACT works to make the space "self-sufficient" as per the plan.
- support, as needed, in applying for and securing grants to execute on the plan from both Town and SNBSC.
- similar "Caretaker" arrangement with the Town to ensure open communication and success in executing elements of the vision.

#### Why Work with SACT

- precedence - served as caretakers for 34 years (1983 - 2017)
- experience - 50 years of experience/service to the Town (Pendlebury Lighthouse)
- track record - solid track record of owner and restoring (Macklem House, Niger Reef)
- collaboration - very interesting history for creating outcomes with partners (Niger Reef)

#### Council Discussion

Council thanked Saint Andrews Civic Trust (SACT) who volunteered and raised their hand for this project and took it on and for their dedication to this conversation. It was a great presentation. Really appreciate the work that was put into this. What you are proposing would be significant change and you are embracing this. Thank you for being open to that. NIMBYism is active in the community but you have presented on the public feedback received as to their vision on the future of the Courthouse. It hits on so many positive things for the community; structure, facility, central gathering point for the community. There is a lot of potential there. See this as a community hub space with a look and feel that fits with Saint Andrews. Think it would be a great resting place for the Visitor Information Centre. Tremendous welcoming space and get a sense of our history. Love the ideas for the commons and the vision. Appreciate the fact you considered the Archives and Gaol. The green enhancements such as solar panels and things of that nature are also great additions. You have demonstrated again, the history that the Civic Trust has had. You are a trusted part of this community and think in terms of visioning forward.

If we were to transfer the property to the Civic Trust, the reality is, when Town leads the project, there are not a lot of donations that come in. Think you would see a lot more success with this. It provides another opportunity to donate to a project. See a lot of potential success with this. A multi-year approach is open for discussion. As far as the process, Council will need to discuss. i.e. seeing about discussions from the Province to pay for the Courthouse and services. Options include a chance for the Province to have a courthouse back in the County if not, we can move forward on this proposal. Another option is we could put it to RFP and with your proven track record you could compete with other RFPs. Or does Council say Civic Trust is in a leadership position to move forward with this project and just transfer it over to them and give them the support that they need to do it.

We have lots of items to discuss as a Council in terms of which option to go for. Note if it is a Council asset, SACT would have to deal with each new Council every 4 years. A non-profit with a history of great work, would work better and would be inclined to get more donations than if run by the Town and save on the property tax as well. You have the community element supporting you as well. SACR noted In exchange for some type of stipend for heat and hydro as SACT transitions it would be significantly less cost to the Municipality than paying the property taxes annually over the transition period. There are a lot of grants out there for heritage preservation. Have a lot of leverage in asking for those grants as Saint Andrews has a large collection of heritage structures and national historic sites. Council noted would need a separate meeting with the Archives to find out what they would want.

Council asked for clarification concerning the annual revenue of \$140,000; what would the annual operating costs be if everything was up and running? Mr. Geneau responded capped it at what the current operating costs are based on current heat and hydro. With green investment, insulation, etc., energy efficiencies such as heat pumps and solar panels will help to reduce additional costs. Current cost is \$36,000 annually. Council noted recent issues with upgrades needed for the roof, lead based paint, etc. issues seen and unexpected costs that pop up. Understand and appreciate that future planning long term is difficult to figure out. Mr. Geneau responded that part of the process is to do a formal engineering study and see all costs and that would help prioritize the projects moving forward. Each phase would be looked at to determine if it will drive enough real revenue to be sustainable long term. Council noted there are a lot of good ideas, but some of them are not going to be financially viable while a lot of others are very practical and can be implemented at relatively low cost.

Council also asked for clarification when talking about working with Saint Andrews Civic Trust for us as a municipality, we are always at the whim of the Council of the day. Having this become the responsibility of the Civic Trust takes away some of that uncertainty. Help us to understand about similar caretaking relationships in terms of what we had 30 - 40 years ago? Mr. Geneau responded the relationship would be similar to the one with the Province from 1983 to 2017. We see it as similar role with the Town, but in reverse. There would be constant open lines of communication, formal annual update on the facility, a lot of crossover with the Town's recreation department, different programming, etc. that happens here that could happen there. Would make a great Council Chambers which can be arranged. Using it as the place where community announcements and proclamations etc. can be made as kind of like an unofficial Town Hall and a central unowned asset with the Town.

Mr. Geneau wanted it noted that these ideas are not from the Civic Trust. They came from the community; we listened, we let people submit their ideas, we gave them a platform, we reviewed their ideas, and put them together for a vision. It was a great process with the public for open houses, passion was seen, people want to protect and make positive growth of this area. It was civil and healthy debate.

#### Public Questions

Sadie McGinn 34 Demonts Avenue - Will there be any youth programming for VMES and SJDA for hosting classes, programs, etc.?

Mr. Geneau - That did not come up formally, but open to all options. Because it is a multipurpose space the board room could be used for youth activities, games room, etc. Great opportunity to grow programs such as an acting or theatre program. Entertain tourists dressed up in period costumes or put on a skit at the Courthouse. Would be a great way to engage youth in the community in addition to using the space for programs like that.

Mayor Henderson commented received request from VMES for outdoor classrooms. Lots of ideas from the youth. It is a working and living document and ideas can be added. Maybe consultation with the schools.

Brett Vottero 123 King Street - I want to begin by echoing what a great vision. I confess I think you have had this 120 page document for Council for 6 months. It was emailed to me on Friday so I have not been able to look at it. I cannot speak for the Historical Society. We have sent it on to our board members to have a look at. It sounds as if you had a presentation already and reviewed it.

Mr. Geneau - After giving Council this large document we gave them an opportunity to ask questions, so I came in and met with them so that I could answer any questions they may have. This presentation was done to condense it and make it easier.

Mr. Vottero - I want to emphasize that personally this vision looks great, and the Historical Society participated by sending a pretty lengthy proposal and I feel heard. There were pieces in it that we did not propose and there were some things that we did propose. We really like how it has been put together and presented. One critical process is if and how to transfer ownership. I think the Civic Trust could be a fantastic owner. I do think the challenge for the Council would be in the details of that process in what the specific conditions are about the transfer. Concerns about safeties you put in place at the time of transfer, so if there is a problem, can the Town get it back. Who is the operational body overseeing it. Is it the Civic Trust themselves or a separate body that you make part of that. There are all kinds of things to discuss. I know that my board members are going to want to review it and discuss it. What is the timetable going forward with Council? Knowing that the goal is to move this forward before the end of this year. How much time do we have to read this document, to discuss it and sit down again with James and Barbie. There are other stakeholders in the community. What is the process going forward?

Mayor Henderson - Unsure of timeline. There are some meetings that have to happen. Need to check with Council. They will need time to digest everything. Probably looking at a 3 - 4 month of process. Want to do process and then discuss. Your points on the transfer are well taken. There are a lot of different factors that come into play and although there is a great history and a lot of trust with the members of the Civic Trust, we do need those safe guards in place. Have to be concerned about safeties and proper written documents. Municipality needs to ensure safe guards and end goals are protected and Courthouse is preserved. Need to do due diligence not just for the community but for the history of the building.

Mr. Vottero - One thing that we discussed, about this process, is this is a long-range vision. This kind of planning is so vital for the Town and Town Council to do. Last September you revised a policy about advisory committees of Council. One of the possible advisory committees was on cultural assets. When I looked at the budgets I appreciate that you are funding more than just the courthouse. You are deficit funding the museum, Sheriff Andrews House, etc. Maybe it is time to try and have an advisory committee to look at all heritage and cultural assets in the town. Need to look at the long term viability of them all to avoid the deficit funding of those as they are getting worse.

Mayor Henderson - It is a worthwhile comment and think you will see cultural assets as part of Municipal Plan process.

John Kelly 1 Canterbury Close - As a law student in Saint John, took old historical courthouse and started a summer stock theatre company there. It was a big draw to the community and people came up with historic trials that we held in there and that is the origin of the Saint John Theatre Company. Some of the things that you mentioned are great options. Many

*of these ideas have worked before and I may want to look at reading the report if Council can make it accessible for people to look at.*

*Mr. Geneau - As of now this document can now go out for everyone to read and review.*

*Mr. Kelly - It is interesting how we take something very historic and bring it to life in an entertainment way.*

*Mayor Henderson - Some of these ideas can be very good revenue drivers in the long term vision and really to cover those operating costs that we know are difficult to do the sustainability is an important piece of it to whoever manages it.*

*Mr. Geneau - The key to a vibrant tourism community is having multiple attractions to create more heads in beds and make it a place to do so many things and want to come back for more.*

- G. **NEW BUSINESS**
- H. **QUESTION PERIOD**
- I. **COUNCILLORS' AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S COMMENTS**
- J. **MAYOR'S COMMENTS**
- K. **CLOSED SESSION**

**Motion: 060 - 02/25**

**Moved by** Councillor Heenan

**Seconded by** Councillor Harland

*At 8:36 p.m. that the Council enter Closed Session as per the Local Governance Act Section 68(1)(c) information that could cause financial loss or gain to a person or the local government or could jeopardize negotiations leading to an agreement or contract.*

**7 – 0**

**Carried**

**Motion: 061 - 02/25**

**Moved by** Councillor Heenan

**Seconded by** Councillor Blanchard

*At 9:14 p.m. that Council returns to Open Session.*

**7 – 0**

**Carried**

- L. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: 062 - 02/25**

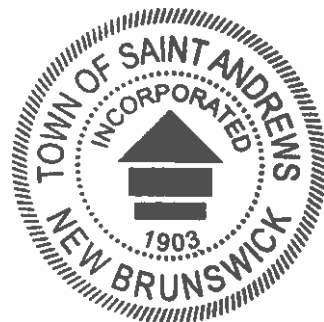
**Moved by** Councillor Neil

**Seconded by** Deputy Mayor Akagi

*At 9:15 p.m. that the meeting be adjourned.*

**7 – 0**

**Carried**



Brad Henderson, Mayor

Paul Nopper, Clerk – Senior  
Administrator