

Community Gathering Downtown and College Hill



February 11, 2017

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**“I support the efforts
of community
members
advocating for an
aquatic centre for
Fredericton,”**

*-David Coon, MLA
Fredericton South*



1. Summary

Political Representatives Present:

David Coon, MLA Fredericton South

Kate Rogers – City Councillor for Ward 11 and Deputy Mayor

On February 11, 2017, David Coon hosted a community gathering with Kate Rogers in the Downtown and College Hill area of Fredericton South. David started with a report of his work in the Legislature, and Kate followed with a report of her work at City Council.

After a few short Questions and Answers the meeting proceeded to a World Cafe forum with participants discussing two questions at their separate tables:

1. What is your top priority issue for the province?
2. What is your top priority for the city?

Top themes were then presented to the larger group.

2. David's Report from the Legislature

1. I have been developing a series of videos on issues in the riding. A video with transcript of the provincial budget can be viewed on the website. The legislative interns have created videos regarding affordable housing, also available on the website and YouTube.
2. I have met with the head of the emergency department at the Dr. Everett Chalmers and Moncton Hospitals. The question is raised in the Daily Gleaner every week.
3. There are shortcomings in public housing buildings dedicated to senior citizens. Some concerns include the lack of on-site security guards or a superintendent, and the high fees for key loss.
4. Road issues are both municipal and provincial.
5. A budget has been set aside for a new Seniors Advocate which will report directly to the Legislative Assembly.

3. Kate's Report from City Hall

1. We've been working on the Strategic and relations external committee to find partners at different levels. We want to identify more strategic partners in the community, other than the usual suspects.
2. Streets and sidewalks are the biggest ward issues and the weather conditions are making it difficult. There is a rethinking of snow removal operations that would include streets, sidewalks, cross-country trails, and parking.
3. There are municipal plans that would anticipate a population growth of 30,000.

4. Q & A

1. Q: What will be done about parking and speeding on University Avenue?
Kate: Engineers said speed bumps would not slow down traffic. Parking slowed down traffic. I believe it is an affordability issue; and also empty parking spaces in the summer due to lack of students.
2. Q: Why are some streets ploughed and some not?
Kate: Court streets are Priority 3, therefore ploughs come by last, but street prioritization has made ploughing more efficient.
3. Q: Will there be more lighting and more crossing time on the Regent intersection?
Kate: The crossing time has increased, but the lighting has not been addressed. Action will probably not be taken until Beaverbrook is done.
4. Q: The snow is not cleared enough to get to the push button.
Kate: Call dispatch number 460-2020 for issues regarding streets. They like to receive calls and feedback from residents.
5. Q: Mounds of snow makes bus stops inaccessible.
Kate: Call 460-2020, it does help. It is discussed at council and at the transportation committee a lot. The transportation chair and paramedics agree with the issue. A public push would help create a sense of urgency.
6. Q: What about the pool closure?
Kate: The university is a strategic partner. The kind of facility that the city would provide would meet needs, but not opportunities. The most successful kind of facilities are partnered with regional, provincial, or university. Concerned that people would expect a new pool to be built within 2 years. Priority projects need to be out of the way first before an aquatics facility can be built. Talk to the regional service commission, your MLA, the university.
7. Q: The pool is an asset for the city. Why don't they join together to do a needs assessment?
Kate: The priority of the city is the performing arts centre. The performing arts centre is city infrastructure while the Beaverbrook pool is university infrastructure.
8. Comment: We should be lobbying to have a focus group for the pool. We are missing a big opportunity there.
Kate: I agree. We discuss it routinely with the university. We are aware as a city, that we are responsible for replacing the facility.

5. Top Themes

Healthcare

- We want to see health become more accessible to international students.
- There are innovative senior care programs, such as a “home first”, or the Dutch system integrating community health facilities and non-senior residents.
- we should be looking at integrated health care. This would see teams of health professionals collaborating to meet the holistic needs of the patient: biological, psychological, social etc.

Education

- Student achievement scores are low.
- Our education system is not attractive to immigrants.
- A longer school year could be beneficial, especially as the teaching year is further shortened by snow days.

Transit System

- We need a better bus route system and the inclusion of express routes.
- We could promote use of the bus with lower fares for seniors and those with low-incomes, reduced fare days, or free ride vouchers.
- Seniors have difficulty getting on and off the bus during the winter.

Recreational Activities

- The next step is to present the need for a regional aquatic centre to the Regional Service Commission.
- We need more places for physical activity and exercise, including trails, walking bridges, and bike lanes.
- We could use a broader recreational centre.

Wealth Creation & Employment

- There are ample tourism opportunities in Fredericton. The city needs more attractive signage, to promote the beauty of the river, and create a tourist ad campaign. We also need a tourist/visitor welcome centre.

- There is concern about the lack of employment opportunities.
- We need to create economic opportunities to attract and maintain immigrants as well as to cultivate local talent and keep it here.

6. Follow-Up Actions

David Coon:

1. To tap the potential for tourism in New Brunswick it was suggested that better use of the St. John River be made, that signage be improved and the province establish rest stops along the four lane highways. I will meet with the Minister of Tourism to advocate for these improvements. I will also write the Minister of Transportation about the importance of integrating rest stops into our highway infrastructure.
2. I will bring the proposal for more innovative seniors programming to my next Seniors Round Table where we expect to meet with the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care.
3. With regards to the need for a more strategic immigration plan, I plan to meet with the Director of Immigration, Settlement and Multiculturalism for New Brunswick to better understand their current plans and to discuss what would be involved in gaining the level of autonomy over immigration that Quebec has achieved.
4. The provincial government will be receiving a new round of funding to improve public transportation from the federal government this year. I will be sure to find out how this money is to be used to improve public transit services in Fredericton.
5. I support the efforts of community members advocating for an aquatic centre for Fredericton and will push for support at the provincial level.