

Community Gathering The Hill

March 4, 2017



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“There is a pressing need to overhaul our property taxation system to make it fair.”

-David Coon, MLA for Fredericton South



1. Summary

Political Representatives Present:

David Coon, MLA Fredericton South

Stephen Chase – City Councillor for Ward 9

On March 4, 2017, David Coon hosted a community gathering with Stephen Chase in the Hill area of Fredericton South. David started with a report of his work in the Legislature, and Stephen followed with a report of his 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. The latest topic is housing. There are also videos about the legislature and role of the MLA on the website, YouTube, and Facebook
2. The Department of Environment and Local Government is being cut in the provincial budget.
3. The legislature has 20 new bills on the agenda including a revamp of the Municipalities Act and Local Governance Act.
4. I have spoken with the head of the Emergency Department from the Dr. Everett Chalmers and Moncton Hospitals. I've also met with the new CEO of Horizon Health Network in regards to patient safety.
5. Some seniors' issues are addressed with a dementia strategy and age-friendly community, especially with dollars. The Senior Round Table provides feedback for the youth advocacy extending to seniors.
6. The Youth Round Table helps identify priorities such as mental health.
7. The property tax system is unfair.

3. Stephen's Report from City Hall

1. Ward 9 has expanded due to last year's revision.
2. An annual newsletter comes out around April or May.
3. There are 4 new members at the council table.
4. By-law enforcement is the biggest issue for the ward. For now the officers cannot issue tickets; the hope is to improve compliance once they are allowed to ticket.
5. A new school is another provincial priority in the Bishop Drive area.
6. Hope to make the city more attractive to the future addition of 30,000 residents.
7. A master plan initiative is underway for Odell Park and Killarney Lake Park. There are already park plans in place for Carlton Park and Wilmot Park.
8. The city must put in \$1-1.5M for Officers' Square and renovations for the museum. Officers' Square to City Hall is part of the garrison district master plan.
9. Imagine Fredericton initiatives has open houses.
10. Stephen Chase's Facebook posted a ward challenge (prize is a barbeque). There is a municipal plan revision survey and people must indicate that they are from Ward 9.
11. A first-draft report on waste management is open for consultation on March 14, 2017.
12. The mayor's goal is to invest in renewable energy. The city is working with Siemens, NB Power, and UNB. The city will also offer their buildings as candidates for renewable energy infrastructure.
13. Airport is ready to be upgraded but it is missing funding from the government.

4. Q & A

1. Q: With the projected growth, what about a new bridge out of town?
Stephen: I am not aware of any plan. If there is a new bridge, Ring Road to Silverwood area or where McKinley Ferry used to be.
David: We cannot use the dam as a bridge once it is renovated.
2. Q: Officers' Square is congested and dangerous.
David: Proposal underway for the first park & ride to sit across from the university and transport people into town.
Stephen: There will be tightening up on free parking downtown and itinerary parking.
3. Q: Youth unemployment is very high in New Brunswick. Are there any plans for how the province and city will tackle issues?
David: There are government-established programs that employ youth temporarily in an effort to create permanent jobs. Jobs are growing mostly in the IT sector. There is a huge shortage of health professionals. Growth strategies need to be pushed to create more opportunities. A challenge is that the government eliminated the institution needed to carry the ball. The Crown Corporation doing economic development work is specifically mandated to support high growth sectors and businesses seeking to expand export sales. The jobs board from the Premier's office can only do so much; they only have 3 people.
4. Q: Are you committed to ensuring the new pool is a competitive pool?
Stephen: I am committed. In terms of priority, the pool was number 1 for a couple of years before it got pushed back by the performing arts centre. The pool fits into sport tourism and makes the city attractive. Also, it has business and economic attraction.
5. Q: Is the province and city working together with UNB for a new pool?
Stephen: In 2008, the pool was a priority. We tried to partner with UNB and the YMCA, but the YMCA did not want to be a part of it. We are now five years past the time that UNB said they would close the pool. I think the city could come up with a share for the pool and still have enough for the performing arts centre. We would like to get the federal and provincial government to contribute as well.
David: I will do whatever I can to move this on the provincial side.
6. Q: This is an urgent issue for us; we have to have a priority for our youth. A "Band-Aid" solution of a small pool is not going to attract business.
Stephen: What the aquatic community has to do is to approach the council in the same fashion as the performing arts centre.
7. Q: We want to see girls do as well as boys and aquatics is a good opportunity for that.
Stephen: We should be getting the city and Regional Service Commission on board if we

want to get provincial support. We can do this ourselves, but we would like to do it with partners.

8. Q: The lack of separate rubbish and recycling bins in the park is a problem.

Stephen: We have those bins in other parts of town.

9. Q: What about the city market?

Stephen: It's true, the market facility needs work. The city can only patch up the property since it is not owned by the city. However, the city runs the market.

10. Q: There's been a lot of bad news regarding the police department recently, what's going on?

Stephen: The fire department was in a similar situation. That was fixed and I am optimistic that the police department can be fixed too. They are looking for a new chief soon. We are short on people; about 100 officers and only 3 are on traffic.

5. Top Themes

Aquatic Centre

- A new facility should fulfill many needs, including practice space to meet Olympic standards.
- It would create opportunities for business and the economy, as well as meet with the sport tourism feel of the city.

Environment

- We should prioritise a sustainable green economy and using renewable energy, while maintaining our natural environments.
- We need to revamp our recycling programs to include glass, all plastics and compost.

Roads and Transportation

- We need to rethink development by looking into settlement and transportation patterns, and how central locations can be reached.
- We need to prioritize the road network such repairing roads that are most damaged rather than working on a less popular highway.
- Snow removal needs improvement; residents have trouble leaving the driveway or getting to the bus.
- The school bus network seems to dictate school days.

Health

- There is a safety concern for food handling at the city market.
- The long wait time in the emergency room is solvable; however, there is not enough regular staff for the overcrowding. Hospitals can only ask for additional personnel if there is a disaster; overcrowded and understaffed is not currently classified as a disaster.

Economy

- The city should be allowed to make improvements to the Farmer's Market. Currently the city cannot make needed improvements because they run but do not own the market.
- There is concern that in 10 years or less, there would be 50 percent unemployment. Is it possible for universal income (basic income guarantee) to be a solution?
- For small independently-owned businesses there is too much confusing red tape.

6. Follow-Up Actions

David Coon:

1. I will speak to Rick Doucet, the Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries about finding provincial support for investing in upgrades to the Boyce Farmers' Market in light of the new public health regulations.
2. I will champion the institution of a Basic Income Guarantee for the most vulnerable in the Legislative Assembly.
3. Apparently, the budget for helping high school drop-outs get their GDE has not changed for 25 years. I will dig into this.
4. There is a pressing need to overhaul our property taxation system to make it fair. I will pursue this through the Legislative Assembly.
5. The Province will be receiving new funding for affordable housing, so I will be sure to track this to determine how effectively it is being invested.
6. I will promote provincial investment to establish an Aquatic Centre for Fredericton.