

Open letter from the Village Commission of Lawrencetown

Date: 31 March 2012

Re: Discussion Paper of the Association of Nova Scotia Villages;

(Proposed changes to the Municipal Government Act)

To : The Village residents of Lawrencetown, our fellow village communities, the ANSV, and the Honorable John MacDonell, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs.

In recent months our commission became aware that the Village Discussion Paper that had been circulating for some years now, had been presented to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia. Initially we were of the understanding that this department would be consulting the villages on this document's content. Subsequently, we were informed that there would be no further discussion and that the document would go directly to departmental review, minister's approval, and then onto the Cabinet for approval, and subsequently to the Nova Scotia legislature.

Upon realizing this, our commission determined that a number of the items in that document would not be well received by our community if passed into legislation. While some of our residents, namely commissioners, were aware of its contents, the vast majority of our residents were neither aware and most certainly not in possession of the details of the Discussion paper.

Our commission undertook to meet with our municipal advisor from Service Nova Scotia, and have him explain the Minister's process and also the potential consequences of some of these items in the Discussion paper. Upon the close of that meeting we communicated to both the ANSV and Service Nova Scotia, that we wished to hold a public meeting to discuss these potential issues for our community, as they related to this document and the possible legislative changes. That meeting took place this past month.

It must be said that there are a good number of items in that document that really should be addressed by the Minister's department as it relates to the Municipal Government Act (MGA).

However, there are a few sections that the majority of our residents would take exception to, should they be passed into law. Our residents have no desire to give up their right to vote on borrowing authorities presented by our Village Commission. Secondly, residents attending our special meeting to discuss these issues were not in favour of changing the roles/responsibilities of the Clerk/Treasurer as outlined in section 18 of the proposed changes to the Act. There was also some concern voiced regarding the impact a student population could have on our small village should the voting residency requirements be reduced to 3 months. We hope that our residents' position on these items are noted during the government's review of this document.

For those Village communities that have already communicated the details of this Discussion Paper to their respective residents, we apologize for any delay of process that our efforts to do so, may have caused.

Respectfully submitted,

The Village Commission of Lawrencetown