



Town of Heart's Delight-Islington Christmas Message 2020

Mayor's Report by Clayton Branton

2020 is quickly coming to an end and once again, Council has had a very busy year trying to keep up the ever-changing needs of running the town. I guess this year we can't wait until the end of 2020. As you all know, our world has been turned upside down this year because of COVID-19.

First of all, we had a severe snow storm in January and February that left everyone standing in their tracks. Just as spring was in the air a pandemic struck us and virtually shut down the whole Country. Our Town Hall was closed to the public and with a March 31st deadline for 2020 taxes, it made it difficult for residents to pay their taxes. Our Library was closed, Town Days were cancelled, Churches were closed, Weddings were cancelled, Funerals were private only, and the list goes on and on.

However, our Town still moved on. We were able to hold Council Meetings with social distancing. Our Community Vegetable Garden run by the Island Harbour 50+ Club was able to set out their crops. We were able to hire a maintenance person, who is still in training. A group of volunteers did a lot of upgrades to our walking/hiking trails and because of their hard work, the Northern Point Trail has become a very popular hiking trail. Council would like to thank all the volunteers who took part. We will look after the trails from here on, but if you would like to help, please let us know.

We cleaned up our town somewhat this year even though our annual clean up week in June had to be cancelled. We cleaned some of our ditches on our secondary roads and received a grant from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure for ditching and shouldering on Route 80. And yes, once again, we paved some secondary roads. Hopefully, we will get the remaining roads paved next year.

Thanks to Mrs. Ruby Warren and her group of volunteers we were able to open the Library to its regular hours.

Over the last several months, Council has been noticing a lot of car wrecks on properties; we now have a contractor that will come and pick up wrecks. So, if you have a car wreck on your property that you would like to get rid of, please let the Town Clerk know. When we get enough wrecks, they will come pick them up.

Due to COVID-19 our Capital Works project for a water tower at the water treatment plant has come to a standstill. However, our engineers in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Municipalities are now ready to issue a tender to get a contractor to install the tank. Hopefully, this project will be completed in 2021.

Our Fire Department continues to operate with high efficiency, even though a lot of training and meetings had to be cancelled this year. Being an essential service, they have been able to respond to any calls that come their way. **Sadly, due to recent COVID-19 outbreaks in the Province, this year's modified Santa Claus parade has been cancelled. We do not want to risk the health and safety of our residents.**

Our ambulance service continues to provide a vital service to our community and surrounding areas. As an essential service, they have overcome many COVID-19 obstacles, but if required taking extreme caution. Our call volume is at an all time high so far this year. We are pleased to announce that Ryan Branton completed his studying, has passed his exams, and is now a PCP; he achieved this milestone in June. Aaron Bishop and Stephen McIntyre just completed their studying. Aaron has written his exam and will hopefully have the results soon. Stephen will be writing at a later date. Once again, we are pleased to announce that the Ambulance Service will be holding their annual **Pack the Back on Saturday, December 12th from 9 AM to 4:30 PM.**

Our Heritage Committee continues to be an added attraction in our town. Even though meetings have to be held via Zoom conferences they still continue to educate us about the heritage and ancestors of our town. Our thanks goes out to Allan Boyce for all his hard work in providing pictures of our past and present families.

The Recreation Committee has had a tough year; as I mentioned before this years Town Day activities had to be cancelled. They also weren't able to organize any events for the kids and the Dog Park had to be closed. The annual kids Christmas party will not be going ahead this year; and we have now learned that kids will not be able to sit on Santa's knee this year. Soon with COVID-19 measures and social distancing in place, they will hold an AGM meeting and election of officers. Please come out and join our Recreation Committee, you can never have too many volunteers.

Now, for our upcoming town activities. On Friday, December 4th we will hold our annual tree lighting at 7:00 PM. Due to COVID-19, this year's event will be different, there will be no music or snacks, but please drive by the town hall to see the lights turned on.

Sadly, our Seniors Dinner will have to be cancelled. Last year, we had 129 seniors come out and it was a tremendous event! We had lots of music with Howard Sooley, Stan Reid and their groups entertaining the seniors with lots of Christmas songs. We just aren't able to social distance that many seniors. Nor are we allowed to prepare the meal like we did in the past. Hopefully, Covid will be behind us next year and we will be able to enjoy our normal way of celebrating Christmas.

Council thanks those residents who paid their taxes by the due date or made arrangements for monthly payments. However, for those of you that are in arrears, sometimes we have no choice but to turn off water or list the arrears with the collection agency. This is our community and in order to provide adequate services, everyone must pay their taxes. On that note, I would like to remind property owners who have not yet paid their outstanding taxes to ensure that they're fully paid by December 17th. **The office will be closed for Christmas Holidays from 12 PM on December 18th to January 1st. The office will reopen for regular hours on Monday, January 4, 2021.**

In closing, I would like to thank Tina Chislett for serving on Council. Sadly, she resigned this year. Tina was a Councillor who was always there for the people and certainly lived up to our motto "together we grow." We now have a new Councillor, Tony Legge; I'm sure he will fit in with our group and I look forward to working with him.

***I have enjoyed serving as your Mayor again this year and look forward to serving you in 2021.
On behalf of myself, the Councillors, Staff and members of our Volunteer Organizations,
we wish everyone a Happy, Peaceful Christmas and a Safe, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.***

Clayton Branton
Mayor

November 27, 2020