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Item No. 14.3

Halifax Regional Council
July 9, 2024
August 6, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 18, 2024

SUBJECT: Naming of Bissett Brook

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

November 8, 2022 Halifax Regional Council Item 15.5.1:

MOVED by Councillor Purdy, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report to endorse the naming of the brook that flows through the communities of Cole Harbour and Westphal as Bissett Brook.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

BACKGROUND

In Canada, geographic naming falls under the jurisdiction of the province or territory where the feature is located. Federal lands, like national parks, involve collaboration among provincial, territorial, and federal authorities for naming. The Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) serves as the national coordinating body, preserving Canada's toponymic heritage. Established in 1897 as the Geographic Board of Canada, its purpose was to regulate and standardize geographical names due to increased resource mapping and immigration. Principles and guidelines for naming were developed in 1898, with periodic revisions reflecting changing perceptions and toponymic evolution. The GNBC, consisting of 27 members representing provinces, territories, and federal departments, is chaired by an appointee of the Minister of Natural Resources Canada. Its key functions include fostering standard naming policies within Canada and promoting international cooperation for naming standards with entities like the United Nations. GeoNOVA runs the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Program which administers the geographic naming process within the province. As outlined in the program's guidelines, as seen at the following link https://geonova.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/2011_gnbc_guidelines.pdf, public participation is central to ensuring that geographic naming remains a democratic and inclusive process. However, the final decision on naming rest with the province.

In 2022, The Geographic Names Program of Service Nova Scotia received a request to designate an unnamed brook in the Cole Harbour and Westphal communities as "Bissett Brook." (Map 1 – Location). This proposed name draws from the local landscape, with references to existing landmarks such as

Bissett Lake, Bissett Road, Bissett Trail, and George Bissett Elementary School. It pays homage to the Bissett family, one of the earliest settler families in the region, with roots dating back to the 1870s.

On July 15, 2022, the program initiated a public consultation by sending letters to property owners in the vicinity of the unnamed brook, proposing the name 'Bissett Brook' and soliciting feedback. This consultation process aimed to gather input from those directly impacted by the naming decision, ensuring their voices were heard. Following the consultation period, the program reviewed all feedback received, documenting the public's approval and support for the proposed name.

As part of the final steps in the naming process, it is customary for the program to seek formal endorsement from the local municipality. The endorsement serves as an official acknowledgment of the proposed name by the local municipal authority

DISCUSSION

At the Regional Council meeting on November 22, 2022, a motion was put forward to request a staff report regarding the proposed naming of the brook in the communities of Cole Harbour and Westphal as 'Bissett Brook.' GeoNOVA responded by accepting this request for a staff report, acknowledging it as an indication of support for the suggested name. Subsequently, on February 2, 2023, 'Bissett Brook' was officially incorporated into the Canadian Geographic Names Database.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be no costs associated with naming of the brook to 'Bissett Brook'.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

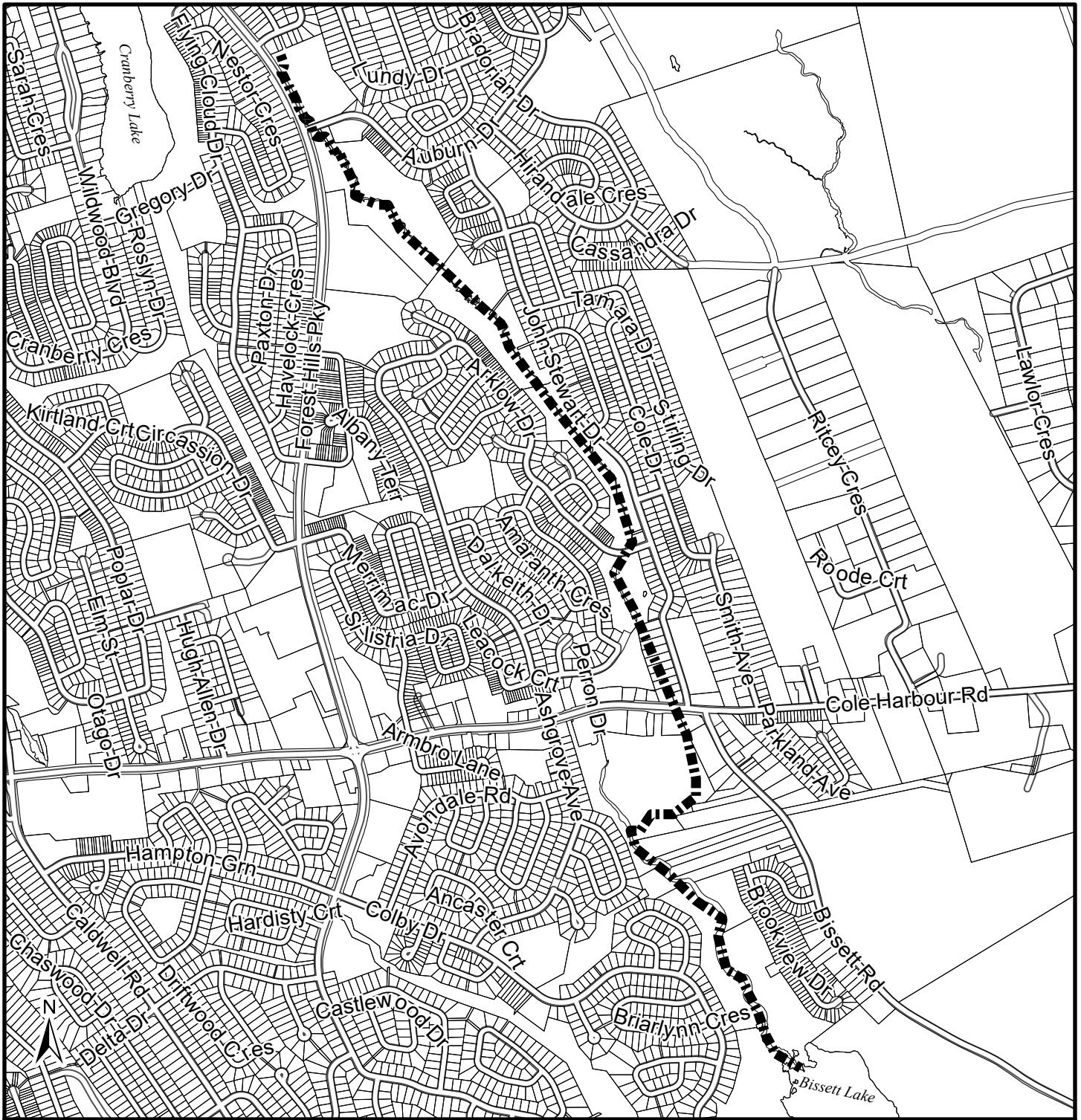
All Community Engagement for this initiative is completed by GeoNOVA.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Within Nova Scotia, the naming of geographic features, such as lakes, rivers, and streams, is done through GeoNOVA. GeoNOVA is a part of the Geographic Information Services (GIS) which is the designated mapping service provider for the Province of Nova Scotia and part of Service Nova Scotia. HRM is a participant in the GeoNOVA naming process as HRM is consulted on naming's which happen within the municipality.

ATTACHMENTS

Map 1 Location of Bissett Brook
Attachment A - Ns Geographic Naming Process



Map 1 - Location

HALIFAX

■■■■ Approximate Bounds of Bissett Brook



The accuracy of any representation on this plan is not guaranteed.



NS GEOGRAPHIC NAMING PROCESS

Updated August 2023

THE ROLE OF GEONOVA IN GEOGRAPHIC NAMING

GeoNOVA's role is to administer the geographic naming process in Nova Scotia. GeoNOVA is an active participant on the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) which is the national coordinating body for geographic naming and establishing guidelines and principles.

GeoNOVA maintains the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Database which contains all official and previously official names in the province. The process includes adding new names or changing existing names for geographic features such as lakes, rivers, populated places, and more. GeoNOVA does not have jurisdiction to name incorporated places or other geographic features named through legislation, however, ensures the database contains all name changes.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL RESIDENTS IN GEOGRAPHIC NAMING

Public participation is an integral aspect of the naming process. Our goal is to empower local-resident decision making to ensure that geographic naming is a democratic and inclusive process.

WHO CAN APPLY TO ADD OR CHANGE A NAME:

- People eligible to vote in a Nova Scotia provincial election

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS:

- Existing names that may cause harm
- Names of indigenous origin

THE PROCESS TO ADD OR CHANGE AN OFFICIAL GEOGRAPHIC NAME:

STEP 1 APPLICATION (COMPLETED BY APPLICANT)

For a new name or name change, an application form is filled out with as much detail as possible. The applicant will also consider or include the following:

- Any other names used or previously used
- The meaning and verified spelling
- A current map including the location and size of the feature being named
- Alignment with the GNBC Guiding Principles¹
- The reason for the name change
- Why the change is important

GeoNOVA will assist wherever possible in the completion of Step 1.

STEP 2 APPLICATION REVIEW (COMPLETED BY GEONOVA)

Research and appropriate engagement with stakeholders are carried out to ensure the proposed change conforms to the GNBC's Guiding Principles and General Procedures for Geographical Naming. The application form is reviewed by the Nova Scotia representative on the GNBC and advanced to the next step if it meets the guidelines. Otherwise, the application is rejected and communicated to the applicant.

¹ <https://geonova.novascotia.ca/2011-gnbc-principles-procedures>

STEP 3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (ADMINISTERED BY GEONOVA, PARTICIPATED IN BY LOCAL RESIDENTS)

If the application meets the criteria to move ahead, the level of local-resident engagement is determined. All changes are determined with a vote.

- Any changes to community² names require public engagement with residents of the local community. This may consist of in-person and/or virtual sessions and surveys. There may be name suggestion and selection activities in some cases.
- Other applications for either a new name or a direct replacement of one name with another name: a local-resident survey will determine if the change is supported.

Name suggestion and selection criteria must adhere to principles and procedures outlined by the GNBC.

Adherence to the following local-resident voting procedure will ensure that a fair and accurate measure of the resident's wishes can be documented. Participants must:

- Reside within the boundary of the community or in most cases within one kilometre of the geographic feature.
- Be eligible to vote in a Nova Scotia provincial election.

If the area is unpopulated, participants may include special interest groups for remote features (e.g., fishers, trail users, etc.).

There may be additional stakeholder engagement by GeoNOVA during this step, for example municipalities, special interest groups, or property owners, etc.

STEP 4 DECISION AND FOLLOW UP (COMPLETED BY GEONOVA)

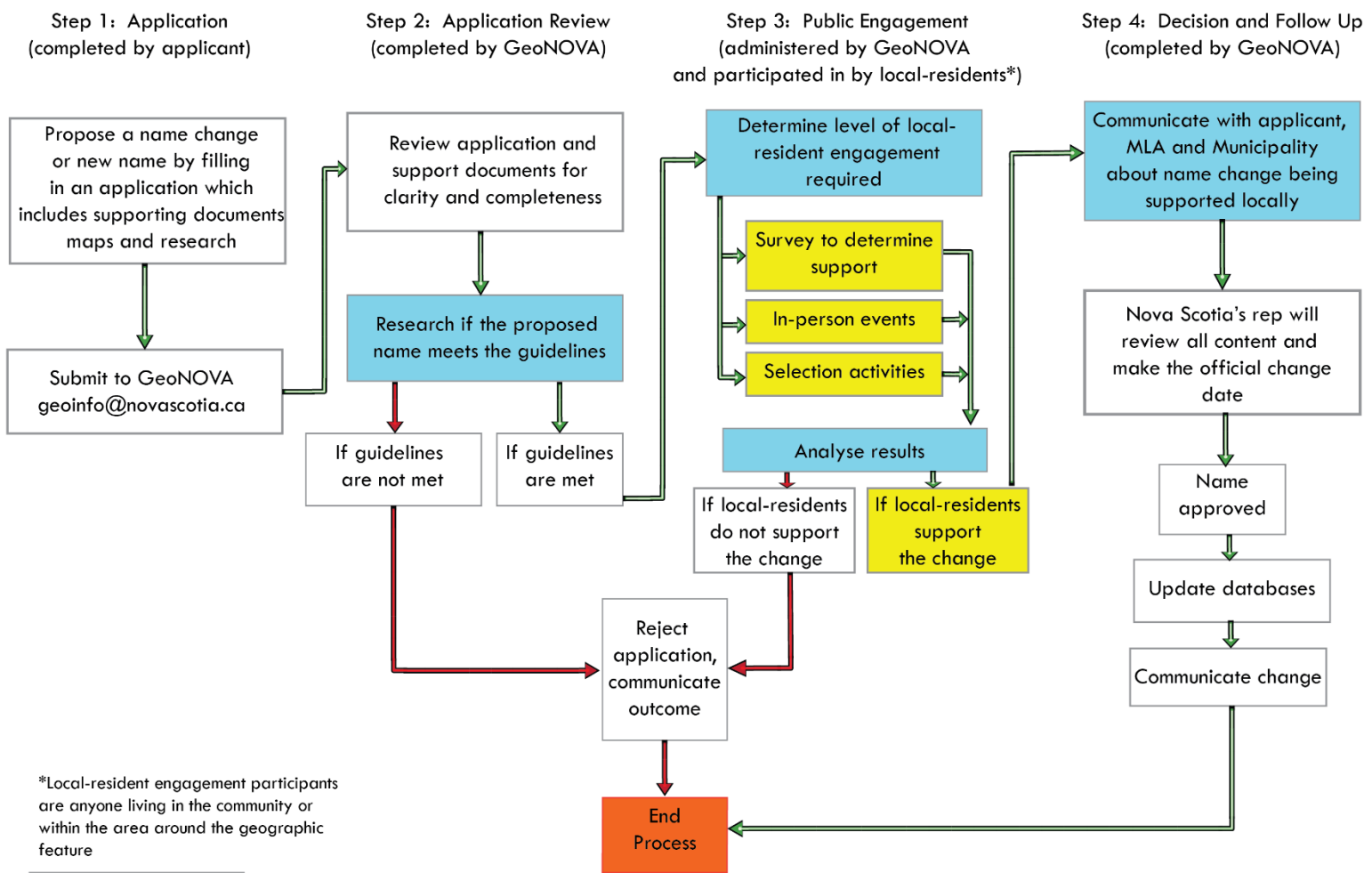
- Public engagement results are shared with local municipalities and MLAs.
- The Nova Scotia representative of the GNBC reviews the results of public engagement³.
- Relevant databases are updated to include the new or revised name if the application is approved.
- If not approved, the application is rejected and communicated to the applicant.
- The results of the application are communicated with the public.

QUESTIONS, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the naming process or would like to discuss this in more detail, contact GeoNOVA by emailing geoinfo@novascotia.ca or by visiting nsplacenames.ca.

² Community refers to an official community in Nova Scotia. A community is listed in the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Database, has a boundary approved by the municipality in which it resides, and is included in civic addressing.

³ Final decision resides with the Nova Scotia GNBC representative.



*Local-resident engagement participants are anyone living in the community or within the area around the geographic feature

- residents participate
- partners participate