

# COUNCILLOR PAUL RUSSELL DISTRICT 15 NEWSLETTER

*Lower Sackville*



HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

SPRING 2024



## GREETINGS FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS:

Thank you for being such a wonderful community! I appreciate the compassion and support that so

many of you have shown while I am recovering from my health issues. I miss seeing you around the community, visiting coffee shops, attending meetings, at outdoor concerts, and enjoying all that our community has to offer, and I am looking forward to doing all of that again.

My recovery is taking more time than expected and so I need to ask for your patience for a little while longer.

I do plan to increase my activity in the community starting in April.

There are a lot of good things happening in Lower Sackville related to housing and homelessness.

There are also a lot of legitimate concerns about what is happening. Most of these center around the Beacon House shelter at 125 Metropolitan Ave. Beacon House is operating that property, and the leadership team are aware of the concerns. They are also acting on them in an effective manner.

Unfortunately there is also a lot of confusion, misunderstanding, and some incorrect information is being shared. In this newsletter I will cover the good things that are happening, and try to dispel some of the misconceptions.

I have a lot more written about housing and homelessness on my website here: [paulrussell.ca/housing](http://paulrussell.ca/housing) I have also written about the developments that are around Lower Sackville here: [paulrussell.ca/lower-sackville-developments](http://paulrussell.ca/lower-sackville-developments). I encourage you to have a look at both of those pages.

As usual, if you have routine non-emergency municipal issue then please call 311 first.

For further help, if I am not available, please contact:

Vicki Palmeter, who helps me out at City Hall  
902-490-2012 [victoria.palmeter@halifax.ca](mailto:victoria.palmeter@halifax.ca)

Lisa Blackburn, my neighbouring Councillor  
902-579-7164 [lisa.blackburn@halifax.ca](mailto:lisa.blackburn@halifax.ca)

Steve Craig, MLA for Lower Sackville  
902-864-6271 [stevecraigmla@gmail.com](mailto:stevecraigmla@gmail.com)

May you have a peaceful, healthy, and happy spring.

*Paul*

HALIFAX



## COUNCILLOR PAUL RUSSELL

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#### **WHO CAN BECOME HOMELESS?**

Every single one of us is at risk of becoming homeless. We were reminded of this last year with the wildfires and the floods. If there is a fire or a flood; if you have a job change; if you get sick; if you are new to the community; if you have a relationship change; if you rent and your lease expires or your building is sold or your rent goes up too much - you are still a wonderful person, but you don't have a home.

I have seen labels like "violent offenders" and "unhousable" used as blanket categorizations of those who are homeless. These categorizations are completely inaccurate and inflammatory and are disrespectful to so many. If my house burned down then I would certainly not want to be labelled as an offender or unhousable.

#### **LIVING IN A TENT**

Over the past number of years there have been people living in tents or sleeping around buildings in and around Lower Sackville.

This became more obvious in 2019 as the number grew. Tents started popping up around our community, and then a small encampment started by the Little Sackville River. This eventually moved to the Cobequid Road ball field.

When you are living in a tent everything is harder. Everything that you have is always cold and damp. Food storage and preparation is much harder because you have no heat, no power, and no running water. You worry about one meal at a time, not knowing where the next meal will come from.

You have no security at all.

You are now just trying to survive.

Living in a tent is horrible.

#### **BEACON HOUSE SHELTER**

Beacon House manages the shelter at 125

Metropolitan Ave. The main building has been in operation since Hurricane Fiona. At this point it is a 24/7 shelter and is able to house 24 individuals. It also expands that capability during severe weather events.

This site also has 8 micro shelters and 19 pallet shelters, and so is able to accommodate 51 individuals.

Beacon House also has 24/7 security, which is keeping eye on the activities on the site, all of the residents of and visitors to the site. This includes the micro shelters and the pallet shelters.

#### **MICRO SHELTERS**

These were first introduced by the Archdiocese as a temporary option for an individual. These shelters are built to code and provide one room that is dry and insulated and powered, but has no water.

There is a strict set of criteria that you must meet before being granted residency in one of these micro shelters, and if you break the rules then you can lose your place.

#### **PALLET SHELTERS**

Pallet shelters are similar to micro shelters, but there are some key differences.

The set of criteria for residency is more strict than for the micro shelters. Those who are granted residency in pallet shelters are on the by-name list, so we know their history and their character, and they are just about ready for market housing.

The challenge is that there is not enough market housing (see the intro for the housing projects).

#### **TINY HOMES**

Work has started on the community of 52 Tiny Homes at the Cobequid Road ball field.

Each of these will be a complete home with one main



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room and a bathroom, similar to a bachelor apartment. Tenants will pay rent that is based on their income.

There will also be 24/7 wrap around supports on site to help residents with their housing needs and with the other needs of life.

### RCMP / CART PRESENCE

The RCMP have a Community Action Response Team (CART) that would regularly visit the ball field and other sites, and now regularly visits the Beacon House Shelter site.

This team is the gentle touch of policing. Their visits are to destigmatize seeing the police so that, during critical incidents, tensions are not as high.

These visits have also been shown to stop unwanted behaviour before it starts.

### FINALLY

At the end of the day, we all need and deserve a place to call home. In Lower Sackville we have made great strides forward with this, especially over the past four years. We have a lot of new apartment buildings with more on the way, and we are working as a community to help those who need it.

There is certainly room for improvement, but right now we are in a very good place.

### VOLUNTARY VULNERABLE PERSONS REGISTRY

The Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry (VVPR) is a self-referral list for residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality who may require support during emergency situations. The VVPR provides important information to Emergency Management staff, volunteers and first responders to help appropriately respond to resident needs in situations such as sustained power outages, severe storms, and more.

Registering for the VVPR is voluntary and easy and starts by completing an intake form. Visit [halifax.ca/vvpr](http://halifax.ca/vvpr) or call 311 to get started.

The Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry is for residents without 24-hour support who experience severe difficulty with any of the following: mobility, vision impairment, hearing impairment, developmental disabilities, cognitive impairment, mental health conditions, or, any resident who requires electricity for life-sustaining equipment such as oxygen, dialysis, etc.



### HFXALERT NOTIFICATIONS

hfxALERT is the municipality's mass notification system for informing residents about emergencies and operational updates. hfxALERT will send urgent and non-urgent notifications as well as municipal winter parking ban notices. Residents can sign up for notifications via the website at [halifax.ca/hfxalert](http://halifax.ca/hfxalert).

**hfxALERT**  
Notifications  
when you  
need to know.

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### IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Provincial Government Services	211
Municipal Contact Centre	311
Directory Assistance	411
Provincial Road Conditions	511
Phone Repair Service	611
Public Health Inquiries	811
Emergency	911
Paul Russell, District 15 Councillor	902-240-0441
Vicki Palmeter, Constituency Coordinator	902-490-2012
Councillors' Office	902-490-4050
Mayor's Office	902-490-4010
MLA Steve Craig	902-864-6271
MP Darrell Samson	902-861-2311
RCMP, Sackville Detachment	902-244-7208
Police, Non-Emergency	902-490-5020
Fire, Non-Emergency	902-490-5530
Halifax Water	902-420-9287
Sackville Sports Stadium	902-869-4141
Kids Help Phone	902-668-6868
Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team	888-429-8167
Victims of Human Trafficking Helpline	833-900-1010
Red Cross Home Equipment Loan	902-423-3680
Poison Control	800-565-8161
NS Legal Aid	902-420-7921
Access Nova Scotia	902-424-5200
NS Occupational Health & Safety	800-952-2687
NS Power	902-428-6230
NS Power Outage Line	877-428-6004
NS Property Valuation Services Corporation	800-380-7775

### CHISHOLM SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Chisholm Services for Children has been operating in downtown Halifax for decades.

They house and provide services for children, ages six to twelve, who have complex needs, while fostering a sense of personal value, self-worth and the development of life skills. Please visit [chisholm4children.ca](http://chisholm4children.ca) to find out more about them.

Chisholm needs to find a new location because the property that they are currently in is due to be sold.

Chisholm is working with the province to relocate to some provincially owned land on First Lake Drive. Their plan is to have two four bedroom homes for the children plus a small administrative building.

Wade Johnston is the Executive Director. Wade is committed to being a good community partner and has reached out to the nearby residences.

I am pleased to welcome them to the neighbourhood.

### COLLECTION SCHEDULES AND WHAT GOES WHERE

Never miss another collection day.

Search What Goes Where, sign up for weekly reminders and service alerts, or print a calendar customized for your address using our web app.

You can also download the free Halifax Recycles app on your Android or iOS device to have waste information at the palm of your hand!

For more information please visit [halifax.ca/whatgoeswhere](http://halifax.ca/whatgoeswhere).



Please recycle.

#### Delivery Note:

Due to the delivery routes followed by Canada Post, it is possible that some of these newsletters may appear in other Districts. If you are not in District 15 then I hope you will still find this useful.