

Dalhousie to host Francophonie event

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DALHOUSIE - The Town of Dalhousie has joined the villages of Charlo, Balmoral and Eel River Crossing in a co-ownership windmill project led by PRENEAL, a company that develops wind farms in cooperation with communities. The municipalities would receive part of the profits from power sales.

As explained by Mayor Clem Tremblay and Christy Arseneau, the town administrator, the town can set the level of its investment in the project. Even if it makes no investment, it would receive some benefit, although that would be minimal.

Arseneau said that the town can borrow to invest, provided the return on that investment would exceed the interest payments. Any investment would be geared to the town's financial situation at the time.

The involvement is for a three year period and is renewable. As well, the town can withdraw from the agreement after giving six months notice.

The Province of New Brunswick intends to see the creation of wind farms developing 400 megawatts of wind power. Of that amount, 300 MW has already been constructed or has been contracted. Tremblay said that the communities want to see the final 100 MW come to this area.

The farm would be created on Crown land, south of Balmoral.

Tremblay was appointed the project's interim management committee.

At Monday's council meeting, council gave second reading to a new by-law relating to its proceedings. The by-law opens many committee meetings to the public. As well, minutes from those meetings will be posted on the town's new website. Some meetings, particularly those where personal information, matters protected by privacy legislation, negotiations, and litigation are discussed, will remain closed.

Arseneau explained that the new by-law was required under the Municipalities Act.

The town has received word from the Canadian National Railways that the railway intends to reclassify the Dalhousie Spur, which runs from Dalhousie Junction to Dalhousie, from "retain status" to "Candidate for discontinuance."

Earlier this year, the New Brunswick East Coast Railway had discontinued service on the line after Olin Chemical closed its plant. Olin was the railway's only customer on that line. As a private short-line railway, NBECR was responsible to the provincial transportation department. CN is a national railway and, under the Canada Transportation Act, is responsible to the federal Minister of Transport and the Canadian Transportation Agency. Recently, CN purchased the lines operated by NBECR.

When asked how the situation has changed, Councillor Ken Savoie said that he believes the railway doesn't want to maintain the line and intends to abandon it. If the town or another party were to assume ownership, it would be responsible for maintenance and liability.

The town will write to the railway informing it that it objects to the decision; copies will be sent to the federal transport minister that the provincial transportation minister.

The town has been advised that it has been selected to host "La Journée internationale de la Francophonie" on March 29. Events will include a reception at Manoir Adelaide and a free concert at the L. E. Reinsborough Theatre. Among those expected for the event will be the Premier and Lieutenant-Governor, the Consul General for France and representatives of various cultural organizations.