

COR/2015/04168

September 4, 2015

To the residents of Witless Bay:

RE: Municipal Plan for the Town

On June 6, 2012, the Town Council of Witless Bay advised the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs of its intent to review and adopt a new municipal plan for the period 2015-2025. Since that time there has been considerable interaction between municipal and department officials on this process.

With significant guidance and assistance that the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs has provided to the town, especially during the last 12 months, Council has been unable to fully complete the steps necessary to register a new municipal plan.

On June 9, 2015, I directed that Council adopt a municipal plan for departmental review and registration by July 15, 2015. Past procedural issues with respect to the plan, and ongoing conflict of interest issues, currently leave the Council unable to advance further toward a new plan due to the absence of an appropriate quorum.

Due to Council's inability to advance the process toward a new Plan for review and registration, and in light of the concerns the residents of the town continue to bring to my attention, I will exercise my authority under the *Municipal Affairs Act* and the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000* to commence a process to register a new municipal plan for the Town of Witless Bay.

In accordance with section 7 of the *Municipal Affairs Act*, I will be ordering a plebiscite to be undertaken so the residents of the town will have the opportunity to vote on their preference from the two versions of municipal plans previously submitted by the Witless Bay Town Council to the department. The May 2014 plan has already been the subject of a public Hearing by an independent Commissioner. The December 2014 plan includes amendments to the May 2014 version that have not yet been subjected to a public hearing with an independent Commissioner.

The Plans will be made available for viewing during the following periods at the Southern Shore Arena.

Date	Time
Thursday, September 10, 2015	5:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Saturday, September 12, 2015	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Monday, September 14, 2015	2:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Staff of my department will be available during the viewings to answer any questions residents may have. In addition, the plans are available on-line at the following link www.gov.nl.ca/miga.

The vote will take place at the Southern Shore Arena on Tuesday, September 15, 2015, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

The Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs will lead this process. The role of the department in conducting the plebiscite is simply to facilitate the process. The vote of the residents will dictate which plan I, as Minister, will bring through the remaining steps of the registration process. If the plan voted by the residents is the May 2014 plan, registration will proceed thereafter. If the plan voted by the residents is the December 2014 plan, then there are steps that need to be undertaken, per the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*, before I can register the plan. This will involve appointment of a Commissioner who will hold public hearings and make a report to me. Those steps will be undertaken as quickly as possible, and the recommendations made by the Commissioner will be accepted and the resultant plan registered.

I have heard from many residents of Witless Bay on this matter and recognize that it is important to find a way forward. For this reason, I am taking the steps as outlined above. I know that you, as residents, are invested in the future of your town and this plebiscite provides you with the opportunity to move your town forward.

Sincerely,



KEITH HUTCHINGS, MHA

District of Ferryland

Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs