

Presentation to Inverness County Council

February 18, 2021

Margaree Area Development Association

Presenters:

Bernadette MacLeod, Vice President of MADA Board

Mary MacNeil, Secretary of MADA Board

Eileen Coady, President/ Chair of MADA Board

Brief Backgrounder on Margaree Area Development Association

- MADA was established in 1972 with representation from throughout the Margarees.
- MADA held discussions, offered DEVCO opportunities and was involved in a week-long Margaree Summer Festival from the early 1970s onward.
- Approached in 1976 to consider a way to commemorate Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins as native sons, MADA determined to build a library.
- Acquired property from Margaree Forks Athletic Association and accessed grant funding for construction of the library – opened in May 1978. The library continues to evolve as a community hub for many programs and projects.
- Lower floor of library has housed a variety of space - among them: a doctor's offices, a pre school program, Public Health nurses' office, and writer's work space over the years.
- MADA built an annex portion onto the library structure in the 1990's in hopes of providing a medical centre in the Margarees. Unfortunately, the medical centre did not succeed. However, until 2017, a weekly blood collection service was provided in fall and winter months at the annex.
- MADA has provided space for the Visitor Information Centre to be located in the annex for the tourism season (June through October) – with appreciative support from the Municipality.
- Since 2019, following renovations, the annex has become an attractive small meeting space called Margaree Meeting Place – used for Board and community meetings and other rentals
- MADA continues – an active Board of 11 members with monthly meetings and a commitment to our area.

Programs, Activities, Responsibilities – February 2021

Margaree Area Development Association

BUILDING and GROUND SUPPORT - 2020

- **Day to day upkeep of the building and grounds of the Drs. Coady Tompkins Memorial Library and Margaree Meeting Place** including significant property cleanup following Hurricane Dorian in September 2019 – with support from the Municipality and Margaree Salmon Assoc.
- **Involvement in the County plan**, through a TRIP funding grant, **to build a comfort station with fully accessible public washrooms** on our property in 2020. Through this grant, our property acquired a new septic system for shared use with the comfort station. Impacted by the pandemic, we look forward to the opening of the comfort station this year.
- In conjunction with this project, **a site plan for our library grounds** was developed by Conrad Taves, with funding support from the Municipality – a positive opportunity for MADA discussion of our long term goals for the property including a stage, a walking trail and a children’s play area.
- Providing **space for the Visitor Information Centre** which operated mid June to mid September, 2020 in Margaree Meeting Place. (The VIC is supported by Margaree Tourism Assoc. and Margaree C@P site as well.)
- **Employment of a student** as groundskeeper under the Canada Summer Jobs employment grant.

PROJECTS - 2020

- Involvement with representatives of other Margaree organizations in a **Branding/ Signage project for the Villages of the Margarees**. This project which began in 2019 is moving closer to completion and we are appreciative of the funding and staffing support from the County in this progressive move toward a Margaree brand in area signage.
- Ongoing advocacy for **improved internet and cell service**. Since last Fall, we have been working with other County communities, together with the Municipality, in making these connectivity issues a priority for our area. A very active committee continues this important effort.
- Ongoing upkeep of our MADA website, ***this-is-margaree***; administered by Board members as a volunteer commitment going forward.

- An active **Communities in Bloom committee** – working throughout the Margarees – *in spite of the pandemic*
- Space provided in the lower floor of the library for **tutorial work by the Inverness County Literacy Council** and as a **depot for producers for the Cape Breton Food Hub**

EVENTS and PROGRAMS – 2020

- A week long **Spring clean up of community roads** in May
- **Summer events** including Canada Day Literary Event at Library and Anything that Floats in August – *cancelled due to pandemic*
- Sponsorship of several **Celtic Colours programs** – *all cancelled due to pandemic*
- **MMP rentals** - *limited due to pandemic*
- Local hosts for five 5 wk/ 40 hr **Workplace Initiative courses** under Dept. of Labour & Advanced Education since 2017– with participants from throughout the county. Our most recent course in Basic Bookkeeping, carried out virtually due to the pandemic, was completed in November.
- Support for **Margaree COOKS outdoor oven**, an initiative of the library/ECRL – *not operational during 2020 due to the pandemic*

The **Margaree Area Development Association's mission** is to represent all the peoples of the Margaree communities by celebrating their heritages and protecting and developing the area's environmental, social, cultural and economic resources.

Our Requests to the Municipality

- **Continued commitment to funding support for the Drs. Coady Tompkins Library and the template that we have established together to cover costs.** Valued and necessary.
In that regard, an invoice has been sent to the Municipal CFO in early February for these shared-cost library expenses for 2020.
- **Connectivity, connectivity, connectivity!**
- Our appreciation for the **on-going support to the Visitor Information Centre in Margaree Forks** for the benefit of the local area but also as it serves the entire Inverness County tourism sector.
- Our appreciation for **continuing support for the Branding/ Signage project** as we plan for the next phase of sign work.
- Our appreciation for the **on-going support for our Communities in Bloom committee.**
- Finally, recognition of the Municipality's support in the on-going **upkeep of roads and bridges in our communities** for the safety of our residents and visitors as well as for the benefit it is to our tourist-related businesses and services.

In closing, we want to acknowledge our thanks to the CAO and the staff in various departments of the Municipality who continue to work with MADA on projects and initiatives. We value their responsiveness, their competency and their good humour in helping us to work for the shared benefit of our communities.

Thank you for your time today.

Eileen Coady, President
Margaree Area Development Association

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