

THE TURNIP

NEWS, EVENTS AND OPINIONS NORTH OF DORCHESTER

OCTOBER 2013



THE HOLY ANGELS PROJECT

On May 30, 2013, New Dawn Enterprises announced its purchase of the former Holy Angels property in the Northend of Sydney. The sale, which was shared with the community the following day at a celebration on site, includes the school, convent, Marguerite Bourgeois house and 2.77 acres of land.

Through preliminary conversations undertaken over the last year and a half as the purchase of the property was considered, New Dawn has assembled an outline of what it believes to be possible in this space. At the same time, this vision is seen as a living and breathing entity, something that grows and changes, something that although guiding, is dynamic enough to accommodate the new ideas that emerge as new individuals, organizations and businesses join the conversation and their own synergies, needs and aspirations become evident.

Although immediate next steps are focused on further articulating the future of the space alongside the community, the vision held at present is focused around the concept of mixed-use spaces – converting the property into a vibrant and inclusive place where the community can live, work, learn, play and converse. This includes possibilities for a centre for the arts and creativity (including performance, meeting, community program and studio space), a centre for social innovation, co-working spaces, public, private and non-profit offices, an early childhood development centre, a café/restaurant, a local fresh grocer, private and/or post-secondary education classroom space, affordable and market housing, and a community kitchen.

Based on conversations with Dr. Clarence Epstein, Director of Special Projects and Cultural Affairs at Concordia University, and Chris Borgal, Principal of Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. Architects, New Dawn will take a phased approach to the redevelopment of the site. The school is now home to a number of tenants who identify with and manifest the long-term vision as outlined above.

Three months after the purchase, the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, Nova Scotia Rural and Economic Development and Tourism, and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality announced funding for a Holy Angels Future Uses Study. This Study will help New Dawn to better understand how a centre for arts, culture, creativity and innovation can best be of use to artists, businesses, and residents looking to forge new relationships and to create new art forms, products and productions.

The study will allow New Dawn, in a more formal way, to begin conversations with the community about their vision for the centre and the ways in which it can facilitate access to the arts, a local culture of innovation, and improved quality of life for all. While the study will involve further architectural assessments and the drafting of a business plan, broader and deeper community consultations represent the heart of the effort. The study is scheduled to begin in October 2013 and wrap up in February 2014.

For updates on the study, open calls for community participation, and a detailed history of the property, visit www.newdawn.ca.

THEY WALK AMONG US

Erika Shea - George St.

Chickens? In the Northend?
Cluck, yeah!

In June of last year our small backyard and newly built chicken coop welcomed four twenty-week old Rhode Island Reds. Born in Millville, they have been the loveliest of Northend backyard residents. Before their arrival we had done a modest amount of research, but were by no means experts. This last year has brought a lot of eggs, a few epic coop escapes, and a lot of chicken learning.

The Coop: Deciding on a design and seeing the coop come together was great fun. A lot of thought and creativity has gone into chicken coop design in the last few years. There are designs built and then sided or painted to match your home, moveable coops, raised coops, A-frame coops, coops built from scratch and coops made by repurposing other materials or outbuildings. Two of our main concerns were winter warmth and protection from other Northend wildlife: cats, foxes and (just recently discovered) raccoons.

We built our coop from scratch based on modifications to a few designs that caught our eye online. It includes a slightly raised coop (on four posts) with a large window, vents, three nesting boxes, a door and ramp for the ladies and two “hatches” – one for collecting eggs from the nesting boxes and one for cleaning the coop. Attached to the coop is a covered and raised run. This lets the ladies get outside in the rain (and sometimes snow though they are not big fans of the white stuff). From the raised and covered run they can get to a larger open air pen where they can peck at the ground and admire the stars.

All three areas of the compound have separate doors to let the girls in and out of certain spaces, if desired, and to ensure that once in the main coop for the night, they are well protected from intruders. Most of the online designs have been drawn up in warmer climates and so don't include amenities for Canadian winters, hence our modifications. The coop is insulated with Styrofoam insulation that is covered with carpet to prevent them from pecking at the Styrofoam.

If we were to do it again, I think we would have made better use of heavy garbage week and saved substantially (with a little creativity) on the materials needed to make the compound.

The Eggs: One chicken will produce an egg every 27 hours. This translates into an average of six eggs per chicken per week. With our four chickens we can expect up to two dozen eggs every seven days. Initially, this was a lot of eggs and we passed them off to anyone who would take them. Over the last year, the number of eggs we can (and like to) eat each week has climbed and we rarely find ourselves with excess.

Egg production is strongly tied to daylight and so naturally slows in the winter. You can install artificial lighting in your



coop to keep production steady over the winter months but risk wearing out your generous producers a little earlier. Chickens (without artificial winter lighting) will lay eggs for 2-3 years and live for 10-15 years. At the start of year two, we haven't yet decided what we will do with the ladies as the end of year three approaches: let them retire where they are and try to add some new young hens to the flock or well, you know.

Eggs that aren't produced in industrial settings have a natural coating on them called a bloom. The bloom, which is washed off when eggs are cleaned vigorously en mass in larger operations, helps to keep bacteria from entering the egg through the shell and means that our backyard eggs don't need to be refrigerated. In countries where industrial egg farming is almost non-existent grocers keep their eggs on shelves right next to the bread.

The Food: The United Farmers Coop sells chicken mash and chicken pellets. The mash, ground up corn and other grains, is our favourite. In addition to food in their feeder, we'll toss some on the ground in their pen and they love to peck around in it and pull out their favourite parts. We buy a 25kg bag (for about \$18) every two to three months.

They also love our food. All of it. Any time we enter the backyard now, they come running, expecting a treat. We feed them a lot of table scraps, the things that would normally have ended up in the compost. There are a few restrictions (avocado, uncooked beans and eggs themselves) but otherwise they enjoy just about everything.

Water is so important for chickens. Each chicken drinks about

2 cups of water a day. Cool water is especially important on the hottest days of summer. In the winter, without a heated water dish, water needs to be changed each time it freezes, sometimes 3-4 times per day. Chickens also eat a little more in the winter, enjoy a nice serving of corn before bed, and love warm oatmeal on cold February mornings.

The Girls: For us, chickens are wonderful pets. We chose Rhode Island Reds because of their winter hardiness and their good temperament. This breed has also been known to take on small predators (birds, cats and foxes) if feeling threatened.

Our only major challenge has been feather pecking. In a non-aggressive, the girls like to eat each other's feathers and sometimes their own. Weird, I know. We've narrowed the cause down to boredom or a lack of protein. Truly free range chickens, with much larger pastures in which to wander, will satisfy both their protein and their pecking and stimulation needs as they search for and find all sorts of bugs. We've tried to increase their protein and decrease their boredom, but alas, we have ourselves a bunch of bare-bummed chickens.

The Resources: When chicken questions arise we tend to turn to these resources:

Backyard Chickens: <http://www.backyardchickens.com>

Better Hens and Gardens: <http://www.betterhensandgardens.com>

Success with Poultry: <http://successwithpoultry.blogspot.ca>

Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens 3rd Edition: This is the chicken bible. We bought this a few months after getting our chickens and I wish we had bought it before. Every possible consideration, from breed characteristics to coop maintenance and chicken health and wellness, is covered. I can't recommend this book highly enough if you see chickens in your future.

United Farmers Coop: Although I don't think it's an officially offered service, a few of the staff at the United Farmers Coop also keep chickens and have shared insight and advice from time to time.

Just for the Love of Singing

Every Thursday – 7:00pm to 9:00pm (starting October 3rd)

Love to sing but only in the shower? You are invited to join vocal coach Robyn Cathcart, at the Holy Angels school, to set your soul free and slowly be comfortable singing in front of a few others.

The fee is \$12.50 per week for either 9 or 10 weeks. If interested, please contact Bev Niven, bjn@eastlink.ca and 539-8231.

Holy Angels Tour

Wednesday October 16th – 1:00pm

Thursday October 17th – 7:00pm

Sunday October 20th – 1:00pm

New Dawn would like to cordially invite residents of the Northend to hear more about the history and future of Holy Angels at one of three Northend-only tours scheduled. To reserve a space please RSVP to AJ Fraser at ajfraser@newdawn.ca or 578-3633.

Halloween Community Fireworks Shoot-Off

Thursday October 31st – 8:00pm @ Louisa Gardens Field

On behalf of the Northend Park Project Association, we'd like to invite residents of Sydney's Northend to a Halloween fireworks display at the Louisa Gardens Field. If you have fireworks you would like to contribute (the more the merrier), please come by the park before the show is scheduled to begin.

Help keep our neighbourhood safe, contribute to a wonderful shared light show, and set your fireworks off in a controlled community setting.

PROVINCIAL ELECTION: SYDNEY-WHITNEY PIER

The Turnip invited all registered Sydney-Whitney Pier candidates to submit a 500-word answer to the question: How do we build healthy and sustainable communities in Cape Breton? Their responses appear unedited and in alphabetical order on the next page.

Tuesday October 8th is Election Day. On this day you can vote from 8:00am to 8:00pm at your polling station. To find out where your polling station is check the Voter Information Card you received in the mail or phone Elections Nova Scotia toll free at 1-800-565-1504. Polling stations will have level access for wheelchairs, and tools and services to assist those who have vision or hearing difficulties.

For those who wish to vote early, Elections Nova Scotia sets aside two days of advance polls in each electoral district. This year the advance polls will be open on Friday October 4th and Saturday October 5th from 10:00am to 8:00pm. To find out where the advance poll is in your electoral district, check your Voter Information Card, visit the Elections Nova Scotia website or contact Elections Nova Scotia by phone.

You can also vote at the Returning Office in your electoral district from 9:00am to 6:00pm every day except Sunday up to and including the Thursday before Election Day.

The Turnip thinks your excuses for not voting are crap. Go vote.

Gordie Goss, New Democratic Party

How do we make our community healthy? It is an easy question to ask but a very very tough question to answer. The easiest way for me to answer that question is to talk about the priorities that I have brought to my work over the last decade or more as an MLA for this community.

I believe that a healthy community first and foremost is one where the residents of the community have a say in their future. The people who live in the neighbourhoods and streets of Sydney-Whitney Pier are intelligent, passionate and compassionate people. They are the best people I have had the absolute privilege of knowing and serving. So that is my first position: a healthy community is an empowered community.

An elected representative listens and acts. And everything I have heard from my constituents gives me my direction. And listening to the needs of the community have led me to accomplishments that I have been very proud to play a role in. One example would be the assistance given to New Dawn Enterprises in their redevelopment of the former Holy Angels convent and school. It was a pleasure to bring three members of the privy council, including the Premier, to visit the site and eventually offer significant financial assistance to help the community members involved to make their goal of energizing the North End with such a creative and exciting project.

I believe that healthy communities are those that are vibrant, offer employment and connect members of the community to each other. This project will meet these outcomes in short time.

Another example of responding to the community was the honour I had in assisting the Cape Breton Highlanders Association to develop their Museum at Victoria Park. Visitors and residents of the community alike will have the opportunity to learn more about their past, celebrate their heroes and remember that peace and justice have been won at a high price to many of our families.

I believe that healthy communities are those that educate and enlighten their next generation. This project will meet these outcomes in a short time as well.

We are on the verge of new history for our community. We understand now, more than ever, that the overall health of the community is essential to our future prosperity. And we have new parks, new museums, new development and a new perspective in the Sydney-Whitney Pier in general, and in the North End of Sydney in particular, to match that future.

Out of the shadows in this neighbourhoods, our children have a new skyline. And a clear view of just how healthy we can all become.

I thank you for this opportunity to share these thoughts with this community.

Derek Mombourquette, Liberal Party

How Do We Build Healthy, Sustainable Communities in Cape Breton

I want to start by thanking The Turnip for giving me this opportunity. As I was writing this response, I was thinking about my time as a municipal councillor from 2008-2012. Many wonderful community projects took place during that time and my response to The Turnip's question is based on my experiences working with community members.

I believe the following are some key objectives:

1. Providing a long-term land-use strategy, giving communities the ability to connect with one another and ensure that community projects can succeed and expand into the future. The CBRM has made great strides in recent years with the implementation of the Active Transportation Plan and the development of Open Hearth Park.
2. Providing an environment that promotes small business development. As we continue to transition from our past industrial era, more emphasis must be placed on providing a climate to encourage entrepreneurship, research and small business development. We are seeing more and more entrepreneurs coming forward and starting businesses but I believe government has to do a better job in this area. More support is needed to help ideas become reality.
3. A strong public transportation system that is fully accessible for everyone. CBRM sanctioned a transportation study to review its operations. We need to utilize this report and enhance the current public transit system.
4. The resources to ensure public safety in our communities. We have a strong public safety presence and we need to continue to grow and promote the concept of community policing.

The four points I present are key areas that I believe are needed to grow and sustain communities but most importantly, communities are built by the people who live in them. I believe the role of government is one that supports the initiatives that come forward by its citizens. I believe the most important component to developing sustainable, healthy communities is pride. Having pride in your community empowers you to make it a better place to live, work and play. The Northend Park Project is a great example of community pride. The community came together, found the resources, and the end result is a major asset for the area. This project was not designed by implementing any of the points above. It was developed out of the desire of the community to give their families a place to gather. These are some of my best memories as a councillor - projects built with the help of neighbors.

In closing, I think it comes to this: the foundation to a healthy, sustainable community is the belief that it's the greatest place in the world to live and the desire to make it better for everyone.

Thank you again for the opportunity to answer your question.