



## Moving Forward Together

### *A Statement to the Community Following the June 24 Town Hall*

**SHELBURNE, Nova Scotia** — More than 80 residents attended the Town of Shelburne’s Town Hall on Wednesday evening to hear directly from scientists, engineers, researchers, and community representatives about water quality, the Morvan Road landfill, and the ongoing decommissioning of the site.

The Town Hall was an opportunity to listen, to learn, and to share the best available scientific information in plain language. Residents asked thoughtful questions, expressed differing perspectives, and demonstrated a shared commitment to the future of their community.

The panel reviewed nearly four decades of environmental information, including provincial testing completed in 1988, the comprehensive 2018 Rural Water Watch and NSCC residential well study, Dillon Consulting’s recent environmental assessment, and newly released information from Nova Scotia Health regarding cancer rates. Together, these independent studies provide a consistent understanding of the impact of the former landfill on off-site residential wells. While each study had a different purpose and scope, the scientific evidence has remained remarkably consistent over time.

The 2018 residential well study found no evidence that the sampled residential groundwater was being contaminated by the former landfill. Dillon Consulting’s 2025–2026 investigation reached the same conclusion regarding off-site residential wells while identifying areas within the landfill itself that require continued monitoring as part of the decommissioning process. Nova Scotia Health also advised that overall cancer rates for the Town of Shelburne are generally similar to those across Nova Scotia, with the exception of bladder cancer, which is elevated across much of southwest Nova Scotia. The cancers most commonly associated with landfill exposure were not found to be higher than expected in Shelburne.

Mayor Stan Jacklin said the Town Hall reflected the Town’s responsibility to communicate openly with residents.

*“Our responsibility isn’t simply to commission good science. It’s to help people understand what that science means for their families and to respond when confusion*

*or significant inaccuracies create unnecessary fear. Tonight was about listening, sharing the best available evidence, answering questions openly, and continuing to move forward together as one community.”*

Chief Administrative Officer Sarah Mattatall said one of the Town’s most important lessons was about communication.

*“Looking back, the Town believes it could have done a better job of helping residents understand what the scientific studies concluded, and what they did not conclude. We also recognize that, when significant inaccuracies about those studies and related public health information became part of the public conversation, we were sometimes slow to respond and, at times, did not respond at all.*

*Going forward, the Town accepts responsibility for communicating scientific information in plain language, responding promptly and respectfully when significant inaccuracies create confusion or fear, and creating opportunities for residents to hear directly from the experts conducting the work. We understand that trust is built through openness, transparency, listening, respectful dialogue, curiosity, and a willingness to keep learning.”*

Throughout the evening it became clear that residents hold different understandings of the history and identity of the South End. Some identify strongly with the historic African Nova Scotian community. Others describe the South End as a long-standing blended neighbourhood where families of many backgrounds have lived together for generations.

The Town acknowledges that it is not its role to define how individuals or communities identify themselves. Those perspectives reflect people’s lived experiences. The Town’s responsibility is to ensure every resident is heard, respected, welcomed, and included in the conversation, while continuing to create opportunities for learning, understanding, and reconciliation.

The Town also recognizes that questions surrounding the Morvan Road site have existed for many years. Looking back, the Town understands that producing technical reports alone was not enough. While scientific studies continued to build our understanding over time, the Town could have done a better job of helping residents understand how those studies related to one another and what they meant for the safety of their families’ drinking water.

As the decommissioning process continues, the Town recommits itself to communicating scientific information in plain language, responding promptly with evidence-based

information when significant inaccuracies create confusion regarding matters of public health or environmental science, continuing environmental monitoring in accordance with provincial standards, engaging openly with residents throughout the decommissioning process, and continuing to learn from the community it serves.

The Town recognizes that trust is earned over time. No single meeting, report or conversation will answer every question. Our commitment is to continue sharing information openly, listening carefully, communicating clearly, and working alongside the community as the decommissioning process moves forward.

For further information:

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