

Hamilton Parish Council (HPC)
Report to Minister
April 2012

Membership:

During the course of the year there was one resignation. Chantel Simons citing pressure of work as the reason.

The Council is pleased to acknowledge and welcome the appointment of two new members of the council and notes that Winifred Simons was not reappointed.

The Council notes that Ms. Simons was the oldest member of the Council and had served for many years. As such she was often able to put problems into a historical context. We have therefore invited Ms. Simons to join the Council in its future deliberations.

Meetings:

The Council is scheduled to meet on the second Thursday of each month at the Crawl Church. The Council met 11 times during the course of the year with an average attendance of 9.73. This included one public meeting held on the 8th of December 2011.

Ministerial Buy-in:

The Hamilton Parish Council does not have its own source of revenue therefore it is entirely dependent on Government for any initiative it wishes to undertake. It is therefore very important that we have Ministerial Buy-in for any program which we wish to pursue.

Our last report was submitted in June of 2011. Within weeks of its submission both the Permanent Secretary and the Minister were changed.

Today this report is being submitted to yet another Minister and Permanent Secretary.

The Council owns two pieces of land which are adjacent to each other on Radnor Road. A house is built on one lot and is valued at \$481,654.00 (for insurance purposes). It is rented at \$1,500 per month. In today's market it is difficult to value the second lot of land. We have been trying for some time to obtain the deeds for the lot from the Ministry without success, so we are not in a position to even give the size of the lot.

The mortgage on the house is \$48,437.05 held by the bank of N.T. Butterfield & Son Ltd. It is serviced by the rents. During the course of 2011 the cost of upkeep of the house was \$8,785.99.

In the absence of any independent source of revenue, any decisions involving financial expenditure must depend on Government Ministers. Thus as stated it is imperative that the Minister responsible for Parish Councils has bought into any Hamilton Parish Council proposals and inform us with respect to her views on such matters. Sections 5 & 6 of the Parish Councils Act 1971, under which we function, envisions such a dialogue. Despite our efforts we have not as yet been able to arrange a meeting with any Minister.

Shelly Bay Beach House

The HPC has written to the Minister Responsible for Estates but has not yet received a response with respect to renting this property for a nominal rent to be used as our headquarters and more specifically to be used as a thrift shop and café during the summer months.

1. In January of 2008 we attempted to gain control of the documentary possessions of the Council. In spite of our efforts this was not possible until May 2008, and it was only then made possible with the assistance of Mr. Ottiwell Simmons, the Parish Council coordinator. The Council was then able to call its first meeting. This brings us to our first recommendation. **Government should provide a central facility where Parish Council Records are kept.**

2. The next compliance issue which we faced was that of our accounts (Section 11 of the Act) After many years of criticism by the Auditor our

accounts are now up to date, requiring a special thanks to our Treasurer and others on the Council with specialized knowledge of accounts. **By way of recommendation we suggest that in future any criticism by the Auditor should not be a blanket criticism of the Parish Councils in general but Council specific and issue specific. Any such criticism should be communicated to the relevant Council before such criticism is published.**

3. Attached is a Balance Sheet for the Council. The Council owns a house which is being rented out to the Bermuda Housing Corporation. The house carries a mortgage and after fixed charges yields approximately \$4,225.00 per year. To date surpluses have been committed to maintenance of the property.

4. To discharge its function the Council has established three committees reflecting the three areas of concern which every policy decision must take into account if it to see development take place in a sustainable manner. Physical (concerned with land related issues) Economic (concerned with the economic issues of the Parish) and Social (concerned with such other issues).

5. The Council has held 3 public events since the new appointments;

Public Meeting was held December 3, 2009

Public Meeting was held April 23, 2010

Youth Night was held November 12, 2010

Public Meeting was held December 8, 2011

6. The major long term goal set by the Council is to have a Senior's Community located in the Parish catering to the Parish Seniors so that they are not isolated from the people and places with whom they are familiar. To this end the Council was addressed by Paget Wharton. **The Council would like to have the Minister's input as to how it might proceed with this project.** This project involves all three areas with which sustainability concerns itself; physical environment, economic environment and the social environment.

7. Other areas with which the Council is concerned and would benefit from the Minister's input are as follows;

- (1) **Physical Environment:-** The Council has identified 4 parcels of land which should receive public attention.
- (i) The **railway trail** is not continuous throughout Hamilton Parish but should be made so.
 - (ii) The **salt water pond** next to the Market Place should be maintained as a part within our Park System.
 - (iii) Land adjacent to the **Francis Patton** School should be purchased for the school's development.
 - (iv) Marsh land at **Bay Corner** should be made a part of our Park System.
 - (v) The Council is pleased to see that Government has taken steps to calm traffic both through Flatts Village and on Radnor Road. Although we think that the work in Flatts needs to be revisited as the speed bumps are a little too steep; presently the traffic needs to slow more than is appropriate.
 - (vi) We trust that road conditions in the Parish will continue to be addressed, especially with respect to Private Estate Roads which should be brought up to a standard whereby they are safe for Emergency vehicles.
 - (vii) The Shelly Bay field is without any type of facility appropriate for persons to change clothing, use toilets or even shelter from the rain. This needs to be improved.
 - (viii) Trinity Church provides the only burial site in the Parish and we understand that they have been refused permission to use some of their adjoining property for additional graves. We met with members of the staff of the Planning Department and believe that it is possible that the needs of the church can be met within the context of sound planning policy.

- (2) **Economic / Social Environment:-** The Council is concerned that we have approximately two dozen persons languishing in prison who gave Hamilton Parish as their last address. We believe that the Council should be involved in a Parish initiative which encourages these persons to be contributing members of society.

(3) **Social:-**

- (i) Using a variety of formats the Council hopes to repeat the '**Youth Night**' held in November. This is an effort to

bring the community together not only for the benefit of young people but also parents and neighbours.

- (ii) The Council is also expecting to develop a relationship with the various **existing organizations** in the Parish as well as facilitating their coming together with each other. Along these lines the Council contributed \$500 to the Hamilton Parish Workman's Club Youth Sports Program football team which traveled to Florida where they won the 2010 Weston Soccer Cup Tournament.
- (iii) The Council is of the view that they should develop a web site for the transmission of information about the Parish and what is going on in the Parish. Whether or not this should be simply a Hamilton Parish site or a part of a site for all of the Parishes or a part of the government's **web site** is a matter that will need input from yourself.

Signed:



Arthur Hodgson

Chairman