

Mahone Bay Tourism and Chamber of Commerce (MBTCC)

Presentation to the Mayor and Council

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL)

Uniform Signage Initiative

Tuesday July 26, 2022

Presenters:

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Beautification Committee, MBTCC

George Anderson, President, MBTCC

Topic: Uniform Signage @ Exit 10 entrance to Highway #3

Introduction:

As you travel down Highway 103 and take the turn off at Exit # 10 which takes you to our beautiful town of Mahone Bay, often referred to as the “Cape Cod of Nova Scotia,” you may become quite overwhelmed. Not from the beauty, but the hideous number of signs, at the entrance to Highway # 3, in Oakland.

In September of 1965 the Highway Beautification Act was signed into law by then President Johnson. Though it was his wife Lady Bird Johnson who spearheaded the effort to clean up and beautify the nations interstate system, by preventing or reducing the number of billboards and planting wildflowers along roadsides.

Here we are decades later, 2022 and in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and all over Nova Scotia, services providers/owners, tourist related, and other businesses have erected non-permitted advertisement signage, on provincial right of ways and private properties. Including Highway # 3 entrance point which leads to the Town of Mahone Bay. For years, many in the town have felt that the confusing array of signs at Exit 10, is not the best

way to greet visitors and a general clean up is needed. It is our hope to have only uniform signage at that sight and install a wild flower garden behind the new provincial signs and up the hill in the back.

Background Information:

These illegally erected signs have the effect of obscuring and detracting from many of the provincial signs which offer directions to travellers. A few have been knocked down or have fallen, either from age or poor installation. Others are advertising businesses as far away as Chester and Lunenburg. This is similar to litter on the ground, when signs are nailed to poles, derelict or the sign owner's enterprise no longer exists.

This takes on more urgency and possibilities, now that the move has been taken up by the province to put up standard signage. You may have noticed that the Province has put up new signs at Exit 10. This development has opened up the conversation about the private signs in that location, once again. The Municipality of Chester (MOC) have already done this with their Uniform Signage and are well into a successful pilot project. The MBTCC has formed a Beautification Committee and have asked the committee to work on aesthetic improvements to the area of Exit 10.

Like the Municipality of Chester, The Mahone Bay Chamber wishes to improve advertising along Highway # 3. By doing so, it will provide the travelling public with clear directional information, promote tourist-related and other businesses in our town. It is not the projects intention to ban these signs but a means of controlling their placement on private property, with signed permission of the owner and by permit. This will enhance the highway appearance, allow visitors and residents to enjoy our scenic beauty, and provide the travelling public with clear directional information. We do not plan to "invent the wheel" but would like to follow a program similar to MOC's Uniform Signage Project.

I have been in contact with Emily Statton, Planner for MOC and current lead of the Uniform Signage Project, to collect information and to acquire a better understanding of the process they created.

In our conversations with the Town of Mahone Bay, (TOMB) they indicated that they have no jurisdiction over by-laws or approval of this initiative, and directed our committee for approval to you. (MODL) The Chamber has a proposal before the Town, to allow uniform signage on the Visitor Information Center (VIC) property for those who wish to have uniform advertising space within the Town. (* The MBTC has recently signed a long-term lease with the TOMB)

I have had discussion and encouragement from Mike Croft, Manager, Traffic Engineering and Road Safety, *Provincial Traffic Authority*, Department of Public Works and Logan Webb, Area Manager, Department of Public Works. Both have indicated that the current signs were erected without permits. Also, the distraction of signage has caused accidents and near accidents. They also favour the planting of a wild flower garden at the Exit #10 site.

Also, I contacted District 8 Councillor, Kacy Peterson-Delong to inform her of the Chamber's intentions and to discuss this proposal.

It would be ideal for current sign owners in this location to voluntarily remove their signs and the Chamber plans to periodically ask for sign owners' cooperation in removing their own signs. However, in the end, any decisions about removal of the signs will have to be made by MODL and the Province. It is likely to be a lengthy process involving a by-law change. Before we can move forward with this initiative, we need a partnership with MODL Planning Department to develop/change a by-law, to remove derelict and neglected signs, enforce the by-law and consult the public. This could benefit MODL's Wayfinding Strategy as well, by having uniform signage at Exit 10 and throughout the municipality.

Our Ask:

A Uniform Advertising Signage Program provides tourist businesses with a clear and effective means to advertise their services. Tourist-related businesses include accommodations, attractions, eating establishments. Tourism is a growing industry in Nova Scotia, communities such as Mahone Bay relies heavily on tourism for

income and vitality. Evaluating, Improving and creating new the tourist-related experiences and infrastructure is a goal of

the Mahone Bay Tourism and Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is asking the Council for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to consider and approve a Uniform Signage Initiative, which will clean up the area where exit 10 meets Highway #3 in Oakland, Lunenburg County. Should Council wish to pilot a Uniform Signage Project, the Mahone Bay Tourism and Chamber of Commerce would gladly be a test organization for the Town of Mahone Bay and area communities.

“We love the beauty around us and welcome you to share it”

Mahone Bay founded 1754

FAQs

Q: Why are you asking us to support this initiative?

A: Because the area of signage most affected is in MODL’s jurisdiction and it could compliment MODL’s Wayfair Strategy.

Q: Will there be a cost to MODL?

A: Yes, there could be because the area affected falls in the MODL’s jurisdiction, the municipality would be responsible for removal of owner neglected signs and enforcement of by-law on illegally placed signs on private property. (A by-law could make removal at the cost of the sign owner.) Signs on the DOT right of way would be enforced by DOT.

Q: What will uniform signage cost sign owners?

A: We are not sure, but here are the fees being charged in MOC

\$150.00 Application fee for each new uniform advertising sign

\$100.00 Fee payable for a change on an existing sign

\$40.00 Annual renewal fee, due January 1st annually

.References:

<https://chester.ca/uniform-signage-program>

www.voicesandchoices.ca/uniform-signage

Emily Statton, Planner for MOC, Uniform Signage Project lead

Logan Webb, P.Eng, Area Manager, Department of Public Works

**Michael Croft, P.Eng, Manager Traffic Engineering and Road Safety,
Department of Public Works**

Document Library

- [Uniform Advertising Signage By-Law & Program.pdf \(11.2 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- [Uniform Advertising Signage Factsheet \(286 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- [Presentation to Business Associations \(847 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)