



**FORM "A"**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY ANYONE**

**WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL**

***No decision will be made at the same meeting as your presentation.***

***Names of individuals making the presentation:***

***Amy MacKinnon, Executive Director of the Shelburne County Youth Health and Support Association, Our House Youth Wellness Centre, and the Barrington Care and Recovery Centre***

***Points to be made:***

***At the Council Committee of the Whole meeting convened on February 20th, Cindy Stoddard delivered a poignant report concerning the Barrington Care and Recovery Centre's impact and advancements. During the session, Council raised various operational inquiries, which Cindy redirected to me for further clarification. Some of these queries include, but are not confined to:***

- 1. What makes that location "special"? As in, would it be possible to provide your services elsewhere?***
- 2. Have other locations/options been explored?***
- 3. What would be the necessary investments you've noted in the first action listed on the last page?***
- 4. How much space do you need to provide your services?***
- 5. Is funding or are partnerships at risk if you do not stay in that space?***
- 6. Can you provide more detailed participation data?***

***Purpose and any requests that may be forthcoming from the presentation:***

***To request and extension of our occupancy of 2517 Trunk 3, Hwy 330 until March 31st, 2026.***

***Please attach a copy of your written or power point presentation.***

***Will your presentation be made in person or virtually? \_\_\_\_\_ in person\_\_x\_\_***

***Time requested for presentation: 15 minutes \_\_\_\_\_ 30 minutes\_\_x\_\_***



Shelburne County Youth  
Health & Support  
Association



Subject: Response to Questions Posed By Members of MOB Council

Dear Municipality of Barrington CAO and Council Members ,

Thank you for allowing Cindy Stoddard the space and time to share her insight and experience serving the community through the Centres work at the Committee of the Whole meeting held February 20, 2024 . There were some lingering questions from the Council that I am happy to answer. I feel it may have been an oversight not to recognize that there hasn't been another organization quite like ours in Barrington before now. While there are non profits and compassionate community groups, we are distinctly different in operations. However, there may be information or prior knowledge that can help address this now. To start, I believe it's important to provide context on why the Barrington Care and Recovery Centre having its own dedicated space is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Control:** Having your own space gives you control over the environment and facilities. You can tailor the space to meet the specific needs of your charity and the people you serve without being subject to the constraints of providing them through outreach and off site locations.
2. **Consistency:** Having a permanent location provides consistency for both the Centres operations and the people it serves. Regular access to a familiar space can help build trust and stability within the community.
3. **Visibility:** A dedicated building or space can increase visibility and awareness of the supports and services we offer. It serves as a physical presence in the community, making it easier for people to find and access the services offered.
4. **Long-term Planning:** operation of a dedicated building allows for long-term planning and sustainability. It provides a solid foundation for the Care Centre to grow and expand its programs and services over time.
5. **Sense of Ownership:** Having our own space instills a sense of ownership and pride among staff, volunteers, and community. It fosters a stronger sense of belonging and commitment to the organization's mission and goals.

Overall, having a dedicated building or space can enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of our work in the community.

***What makes that location “special”? As in, would it be possible to provide your services elsewhere? Have other locations/options been explored?***

The previous VIC center located at 2517 Trunk 3 HWY 330, possessed a unique atmosphere that is unmatched elsewhere. Its design and current decor fosters a sense of comfort and care, appreciated by all who entered. The striking murals painted by local artist John Smith adorn the walls consistently sparked conversations and instilled pride in visitors. With its spacious layout, the Care and Recovery Centre is able to facilitate diverse programming objectives. Moreover, its main floor, already equipped for accessibility, not only provided ample programming space but also served as a communal living room—a place where individuals gathered akin to a relative's home, sometimes even kicking off their shoes and putting their feet up. Such an atmosphere is impossible to replicate in a standard office space or within our neglected and outdated recreation center.

Are there any other municipally owned properties that Council can offer for us to replicate our work?

In the Barrington area, there are no other spaces available to us. We have been inquiring about space for almost over a year prior to the wildfire to find a site for our work in Barrington, contacting local businesses and the municipality, but this led to only securing office space in the current Municipal Building. If you recall we sent a letter to inquire if we may purchase or rent the former VIC on April 15, 2022. We are happy with the location, while it may be outside the central area of Barrington, it is not viewed as a hindrance but rather an advantage. Its secluded nature, coupled with the diverse range of programming offered, ensures privacy and confidentiality for participants. Additionally, our ongoing partnership with Sou West Nova Transit has facilitated discounted or free transportation for community members, addressing the challenges often faced in rural areas lacking public transportation access.

To further support our tenancy below are the many advantages of running the Community Care Centre, that the Municipality of Barrington should consider when deciding on why they should extend our occupancy of a municipality owned property.

1. **Community Benefit:** Community centers often provide essential services and programs that benefit residents, such as recreational activities, educational classes, and social support networks. Allowing the center to operate out of a municipally owned property ensures that these valuable resources remain accessible to the community.
2. **Utilization of Public Assets:** Municipal-owned properties are public assets, and allowing a community center to use them maximizes the utilization of these resources for the public good. It's a way to ensure that taxpayer-funded facilities are being used to their fullest potential to serve the needs of residents.
3. **Cost-Effectiveness:** In many cases, it may be more cost-effective for a community center to operate out of a municipally owned property compared to renting or purchasing private space. Municipalities may offer favorable leasing arrangements or subsidies to support the center's operations, making it financially sustainable for both parties. We are happy to cover the cost of operations while we are tenants. There is no expectation of free space.
4. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Allowing a community center to operate out of a municipally owned property fosters collaborative partnerships between the center and the local government. This

partnership can lead to joint programming initiatives, shared resources, and coordinated efforts to address community needs more effectively.

5. **Community Engagement and Cohesion:** A community center operating in a municipally owned property can serve as a hub for community engagement and cohesion. It provides a physical space where residents can come together, participate in activities, and build social connections, ultimately strengthening the fabric of the community.
6. **Supporting Local Nonprofits:** Many community centers are operated by nonprofit organizations or community groups that rely on the support of local government to fulfill their missions. Allowing them to use municipally owned property demonstrates the municipality's commitment to supporting these organizations and the valuable services they provide. We are currently providing space for The Rosiland Nickerson Care Fund, The Jevon Link Society, VON, The Wild Fire Benefit, Roots of Hope, Bereaved Families of Nova Scotia, The Tri County Womens Centre, TLC Angels, The Canadian Red Cross, and most recently a collaboration with TEMA to provide support and space to train 20 peers supporters for our community and we are just getting started.

***What would be the necessary investments you've noted in the first action listed on the last page?***

***"Securing Sustainable Space/ Funding: Ensure consistent and adequate funding to maintain and expand the center's services. We would like to extend our residency of 2517 Trunk 3 for a minimum of 2 years. This will allow us to secure funding through grants and partnerships and make some necessary investments into the space to allow for other community partner use."***

The upstairs area currently poses accessibility challenges for individuals with mobility concerns. With the assistance of accessibility grants, we aim to invest in mobility aids to facilitate access to essential supports such as clothing, hygiene products, and school supplies for those in need. One of our primary objectives is to establish a functional kitchen and a larger private office space, not only for our organization but also for other service providers such as mental health and addiction support services, as well as family meetings with the Department of Community Services. This dedicated space would offer a quiet, private environment for staff and clients to connect. Additionally, there is considerable underutilized space on the main floor. In one of the accessible washrooms, we envision installing a washer, dryer, and shower for individuals to access when needed, providing comfort and dignity, particularly for those experiencing homelessness or precarious housing situations. As a grant-seeking organization with a track record of self-sustainability, we do not rely on funding from the Municipality of Barrington for these projects. Instead, we aim to enhance the property's value by implementing these improvements.

***How much space do you need to provide your services?***

When it comes to the matter of space, there never seems to be quite enough. This community initiative is continuously expanding, and as our community programs and capacity grow, so does the demand for diverse spaces to accommodate them. Fortunately, the Care and Recovery Centre currently occupies a generously spacious area capable of hosting numerous initiatives and programs. As mentioned earlier, we recognize that some of the space remains underutilized due to construction and its original intended

use, rather than a lack of necessity.

***Is funding or are partnerships at risk if you do not stay in that space?***

No, the stability of our committed funding is not in question if we were to lose the current space. However, what is at stake is the investment of that funding in Barrington. Over the past 8 months alone, we have invested nearly \$130,000 into the residents and programs in Barrington. This investment has supported various initiatives, including wildfire relief, provision of food boxes, distribution of clothing and school supplies, assistance with heating costs, rent support, and hosting community dinners. Through our community engagement efforts during this period, we have witnessed a significant increase of \$300,000 in provincial investment in our work since October. This funding is not only sustainable but also renewable. The property in question currently costs the MOB approximately \$7-8000 to operate annually, which we are happy to pay for the next two years as tenants. The cost of operating is insignificant compared to the investment of funds through our work back into the community. While our preference is to continue operating in the Barrington area, if not supported, we will be compelled to relocate our work to another part of the county as there is no other space that is designed for our particular use.

At our core, we are an organization dedicated to serving Shelburne County, and our journey into community work here was born out of a unique alignment of tragedy and resilience. If there is no space available for us here, we will extend our support to another community.

Along our journey, we have forged valuable friendships and partnerships with various community groups, as well as with the individuals themselves—the remarkable people who find fulfillment in attending programs, volunteering, or contributing in small ways, such as donating a bag of socks. These connections and collaborations are precious to us and are now at risk. One significant partnership that would be profoundly affected should we relocate from the Barrington area is our collaboration with The Shine the Light - Jevon Link Society. Through this partnership, many individuals have found healing and support. We have provided a space and resources for those seeking to engage with the community and work towards their personal growth and well-being.

***Can you provide more detailed participation data?***

Nonprofits like ours are not typically recognized for their extensive data tracking capabilities. While we do maintain daily number tracking, we do not delve into the intricacies of documenting every new or returning individual who enters our space, as it does not fully capture the essence of the services or support provided. For instance, assisting someone with a power bill may fulfill their immediate need, whereas another individual may visit us daily simply to alleviate loneliness. The nature of our work is complex and nuanced, centered around building relationships that extend beyond mere data points. On average, we receive 50-60 visits per week, with new individuals joining our community regularly, often attracted by specific programs or services offered. In the Month of February 2024 through various programming efforts and community dinners we have supported over 500 people, this does not account for the ripple effect of how that support is passed on

**Something we wish for you to consider:**

We acknowledge that there have been discussions and actions in the past regarding the sale and most recently the repurposing for other uses of the property located at 2517 Truck 3 Highway 330. We are requesting a postponement of the decision to sell the building and propose extending our lease for the next two years. During this period, we aim to collaborate with the municipality to explore either a possible future purchase agreement or an alternative arrangement that benefits both parties and enables us to stay. Given the tradition of accommodating nonprofits and community organizations in this space, we respectfully seek the same consideration extended to previous groups. We are open and have a willingness to work alongside MOB in finding a solution that accommodates everyone.

Thank you for your attention and consideration, I hope I was able to provide clarity and I hope we can continue to be supported as a valuable community resource for the Municipality of Barrington.

Sincerely,

Amy MacKinnon (she/her)  
Executive Director  
Shelburne County Youth Health and Support Association  
Our House Youth Wellness Centre  
Barrington Care and Recovery Centre  
[ed@scyhsa.com](mailto:ed@scyhsa.com)  
902-875-3337

Dear Municipality of Barrington CAO and Council Members,

As a young student deeply invested in the community of Barrington, it saddens me to hear that the Municipality of Barrington Care and Recovery Centre may be losing its space. Working within the Community Centre last summer, I witnessed first-hand the impact on our small community. Although it first started as a means of support for the wildfires, there has been further impact beyond this population, which has been demonstrated through the success of our programs. Building a strong community does not mean engaging with a select group of people, it means engaging with the entire community to build new relationships and foster old ones. Our goal as a Community Centre is to bring the community together as one.

Currently studying psychology at the University of Toronto, I have engaged in research demonstrating the positive effects of social support and community building. Research suggests that having community groups can support well-being and help prevent mental health challenges, which tend to be higher in rural regions (1,2). Furthermore, programs such as the walking club hosted by the Community Centre, have been found to promote health and well-being (3). Shared meals, similar to the monthly meals hosted in Barrington, have also been suggested to improve social connection and perceived well-being, especially in senior populations (4). Additionally, the grief support programs hosted at the Community Centre provide residents with crucial support during difficult life experiences, especially with the limited access to mental health resources across Nova Scotia. Without such resources, events will be limited, leaving less opportunity for residents to build a lasting community and experience the positive impacts. While municipality events are great at fostering community, there are limits to what one organization can do. With the Community Centre keeping its doors open, an opportunity for collaboration and expansion presents itself. Programs that enhance well-being and promote positive mental health will not be able to continue unless there is a location in Barrington. Taking away this resource would not only result in less programming but also eliminate social support, community building, and positive benefits.

In the long run, removing the Community Centre would have an impact on both the current and future generations. Many youths from the Barrington area have limited opportunities to gain experience in career and volunteer modalities compared to youth in urban areas. The Community Centre provides Barrington youth with a potential opportunity to fulfill both volunteer experiences and potential career aspirations. The participation of numerous volunteers has been instrumental in the success of our programs, using the community dinners as a prime example. Encouraging youth to engage in the community could be a potential avenue to empower the future generation. Taking away the Community Centre would remove the unique experience of working within the community, and future job opportunities that could benefit the area. Personally, as a student with a full career ahead, my aspirations belong in the community of Barrington, helping and advocating for youth in our area. Without the opportunities provided by the Community Centre, my education and career path would look very different. When coming up with a solution, think about the long-term impact on the youth, not just the short-term goal.

While having nice facilities at the ballfield would be beneficial, is it necessary to have these facilities at the expense of limiting opportunities for future growth? Furthermore, can you really place a monetary value on fostering a strong community? There is more than one solution. Having both facilities and a Community Centre is possible. Find a solution that fosters community, not segregates it.

Sincerely,  
Josie Hatfield

## References

1. Lyons, A., Fletcher, G., Farmer, J., Kenny, A., Bourke, L., Carra, K., & Bariola, E. (2016). Participation in rural community groups and links with psychological well-being and resilience: a cross-sectional community-based study. *BMC Psychology* 4(16). <https://bmcp psychology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-016-0121-8>.
2. Masse, M., Nelson, H., & Nicholas, D. (2023). Challenges Accessing Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Communities: A Review of the Literature. Aide Canada. <https://aidecanada.ca/resources/learn/asd-id-core-knowledge/improving-access-to-mental-health-resources-in-rural-and-remote-regions#:~:text=Introduction,Commission%20of%20Canada%2C%202021>.
3. Jones, M., Kimberlee, R., Deave, T., & Evans, S. (2013). The role of community centre-based arts, leisure and social activities in promoting adult well-being and healthy lifestyles. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 10(5), 1948–1962. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph10051948>.
4. Middleton, G., Patterson, K. A., Muir-Cochrane, E., Velardo, S., McCorry, F., & Coveney, J. (2022). The health and well-being impacts of community shared meal programs for older Populations: A scoping review. *Innovation in aging*, 6(7), igac068. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igac068>.