



P.O. Box 670
168 Water Street
Shelburne, N.S.
B0T 1W0

Phone: (902) 875-2991

Fax: (902) 875-3932

clerk@town.shelburne.ns.ca

www.town.shelburne.ns.ca

May 20th, 2020

Warden Eddie Nickerson
2447 Highway 3
PO Box 100
Barrington, NS
B0W 1E0

Dear Warden and Council,

It has recently come to our attention that Shelburne Harbour has been removed as a designated Port of Entry for vessels arriving in Canada from overseas ports. Beyond citing the Covid-19 situation, the CBSA offers no specific reason that we can find on its website for the closing of certain Ports of Entry and the holding open of other, significantly less strategic ones. And while we are told this is a “temporary” closure, we believe it presents an immediate hazard for both boaters and local CBSA officers/inspectors and a needless, and potentially devastating, blow to our economy, locally and county-wide.

In the midst of Covid-19, Shelburne Marina has already worked closely with CBSA to meet the repatriation needs of two Canadian flagged yachts returning home from the south. At least six more are enroute. Additional safety protocols, developed and implemented at local expense, along with well suited existing infrastructure have allowed these clearances to proceed without incident.

Already, in the days following last week’s closure order, a vessel redirected to Yarmouth per CBSA’s new order, after having to navigate the difficult and dangerous tides and currents specific to Yarmouth, found no open marina facilities and no ability to provision or refuel.

A second vessel, making way directly for Halifax due to the Shelburne closure, got wrapped up in lobster trap lines and had to be towed to Lockeport where CBSA officers had to then travel from Yarmouth, past Shelburne, in order to clear the vessel in.

Clearing vessels in Yarmouth, which then must proceed close along the south coast presents a further opportunity for entanglement in lobster gear, creating a substantial additional safety hazard as well as economic damage to fishermen in the form of lost or damaged gear.

Over a given season, Shelburne clears more pleasure craft than nearly any other Port of Entry in the province. Using standard industry metrics, those clearances contribute on average over \$300,000 in direct spending into our local economy and well over \$1 million in follow-on economic activity.

Shelburne has already developed and worked successfully with CBSA to safely clear boats, provisioning them and offering protected moorings for 14 day quarantines. To close Shelburne as a Port of Entry, even temporarily, makes no sense from a safety perspective or an economic perspective.

While it may make sense in theory to sharply reduce the Ports of Entry throughout the country, Shelburne is a specific case where this is counterproductive even to the immediate interests of CBSA. We respectfully ask that this decision be reversed. Time is of the essence as Canadian flagged boats are enroute as of this writing and per the Prime Minister's request.

The safe "clearing" of these boats, for both CBSA officers and vessel crews, should be the number one priority of CBSA. Shelburne has always been CBSA's partner in these efforts. If anything, Covid-19 makes it even more crucial that Shelburne be allowed to continue partnering with CBSA – for the safety and security of all concerned.

Sincerely,

Karen Mattatall
Mayor, Town of Shelburne



FACT SHEET

Shelburne Harbour and the Shelburne Harbour Marina are important components of the South Shore economy and vital ones to the town, municipality and county of Shelburne. Consider the following:

LOCATION & LOGISTICS:

Most cruising boats bound for Nova Scotia sail from Cape Cod directly to Shelburne rather than deal with the huge tides and current of the Bay of Fundy. This brings them into Canadian waters between Cape Island and Shelburne. As such, Shelburne is known as the “sailors’ gateway to Nova Scotia.”

NUMBERS:

More pleasure craft “clear” into Canada in Shelburne than almost all other Nova Scotia Ports of Entry. Marina records indicate that average annual visits include approximately 160 vessels from the U.S. and another 40 from the UK, Western Europe and other countries.*

REVENUES:

The accepted industry standard for “boating tourism” is daily spending of \$150/person/day which translates on average annually into over \$300,000 of direct boater spending in Shelburne’s restaurants, bars, museums, grocery stores, hardware store, marina and repair facilities. This trickles down throughout the region creating an economic impact of well over \$1 million per year.**

FACILITIES:

Shelburne offers floating docks for vessels up to 70 feet, the Town Dock for vessels up to 90 feet and the Town Wharf which can handle so-called “mega-yachts” as much as 200 feet in length. We also have a 15 boat mooring field and protected anchorage that can effectively host dozens of sailing and motor yachts at any one time. Additionally, re-fueling capability as well as extensive ship repair facilities and expertise reside in and around the marina area.

RELATED INVESTMENTS:

The Shelburne Port Authority and Marine Terminal is currently engaged in a significant upgrade of the town wharf allowing it, among other things, to readily host super and mega-yachts. For the provincial and federal governments to invest in such an upgrade only to then allow the harbour to be de-listed as a Port of Entry is counterproductive, to say the least.

HISTORY:

Shelburne has long been a Port of Entry and until approximately 15 years ago, had its own Customs Office. When the office closed, Shelburne was designated an “un-manned Port of Entry.”

PRIOR ASSURANCES:

When CBSA changed Shelburne to an "unmanned Port of Entry" we were assured it would be serviced from Yarmouth but not closed.

*Avg. CBSA cleared in 2017- 2018. Actual totals likely higher as data does not include returning Canadian vessels.

** Average marina visitors and length of stays, both domestic and international boaters.



Shelburne Harbour Fact Sheet (Cont'd.)

CURRENT AND FUTURE OBJECTIVES:

The province and the federal government have a vested interest in Shelburne county's viability. To survive now and going forward, Shelburne needs to maintain and expand its tourist base. The de-listing as a Port of Entry is in direct conflict with these objectives.

SAFETY:

CBSA's rationale for the change in Shelburne Harbour's status is to enhance screening and assessments of select marine travellers in the midst of Covid-19. And yet, the following is true:

- Shelburne Harbour Marina is uniquely suited to provide for inspections and, as importantly, quarantines. The Shelburne Harbour Marina Association has developed a written plan detailing how it can continue to facilitate such safe inspections and quarantines.
- SHYC and the Marina Association have already assisted CBSA in the safe inspection and provisioning of two Canadian owned boats returning from points south. Six more are due in the next several weeks. Many more may well be underway.
- For those, and others going forward, the "face dock" of the marina can accommodate multiple boats at a time and allow inspectors to make their inquiries safely and efficiently from the dock.
- Boats can then move offshore to a mooring and be safely serviced and provisioned from the mooring, thus insuring no crew member ever steps foot on Canadian soil before their quarantine is up.
- As far as we are aware, no such facility exists in Yarmouth.*

For the reasons outlined above, we strongly urge all local government entities and our representatives at the provincial and federal level to insist that Shelburne Harbour's status as a designated Port of Entry be restored. To not do so places Canadian as well as international sailors in harms way and needlessly damages an area whose economy has already suffered more than its share of losses in recent decades.

*Boats arriving in Yarmouth are already reporting no mooring, provisioning or refueling services are available.

Shelburne Harbour Yacht Club, Marina Association & Sailing Academy
107 Water Street, Shelburne, NS B0T 1W0, 902-875-4757, www.shyc.ca