

Hello members of Tantramar council, Tantramar municipal candidates & Tantramar administrative staff,

I'm e-mailing to draw your attention to municipal public engagement issues that some of you may not be aware of. As a local news reporter who has covered Sackville Town Council and now, Tantramar Town Council since 2016, I see these issues as very important ones.

About three weeks ago, I went to the new Tantramar website seeking an e-mail address for a newly hired member of town staff. To my surprise, I discovered that the heads of departments are no longer identified by name and the e-mail addresses that were always listed on the old website are missing.

Here is a link to the website page for CAO Jennifer Borne, who is identified by name, but her e-mail address is not given: <https://tantramarnb.com/administration-and-government/chief-administration-officer>

The web page that lists municipal departments does not have department head names or e-mail addresses: <https://tantramarnb.com/administration-and-government/municipal-departments>

Instead of the individual names and e-mail addresses that were always there on the old site, the contact page gives this general e-mail address: [info@tantramarnb.com](mailto:info@tantramarnb.com)

Here's the link to the contact page: <https://tantramarnb.com/contact>

During the all-candidates forum on Tuesday, several candidates urged people to get in touch with them, yet e-mail addresses for members of council are hard to find on the new website, buried at the bottom of this page: <https://tantramarnb.com/administration-and-government/tantramar-municipal-council>

Even there, it is only possible to e-mail all members of council since individual addresses are not given separately.

Here for example is the individual website page for Councillor Butcher with no contact info. given: <https://tantramarnb.com/administration-and-government/tantramar-municipal-council>

If, as a member of the public, I have a private message for only one member of council, I must e-mail them all or take several minutes after clicking on the e-mail list, to strip out the names of the other members of council. And, as I say, that council e-mail list is buried at the bottom of a page that first lists the various types of meetings council holds. (In other words, it is hard to find.)

The old site has disappeared, but using the Internet Wayback Machine, I was able to retrieve pages from the old Sackville site. After amalgamation, the e-mail addresses were updated to Tantramar ones, but the e-mail contact information remained the same.

So, the elimination of e-mail contact information only happened in the last few months when the new website was launched.

I am attaching screenshots of the old Sackville site with e-mail addresses for members of council and for the CAO and heads of departments.

The elimination of names and e-mail addresses for town staff and the change in contact information for members of council is not a minor issue in my opinion.

It effectively inserts an institutional filter between the public and council, raising questions about whether convenience and message management take priority over transparency and accountability — especially in a small municipality where there has always been direct access.

I am thinking about doing a story on this change, but would need to hear from the candidates running in this election. If you respond to this e-mail, I would include your comments on this issue in my story.

I would also like to hear from the CAO about how this happened. Was it an accidental oversight or a deliberate change in communications policy?

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