

OTTER LAKE RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MAY 18, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Meeting called to order by Chairperson, Art Coles, at 10:00 a.m.

Introductory comments made by the Chairperson. Members welcomed to the AGM and the Board was introduced.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes from the May 19, 2013 AGM were presented to the membership. Moved by Cheryl Andrews and seconded by Mike LeBlanc that the minutes be approved as presented, which were passed by the members.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Cathy and Brian advised that there are currently 150 member families in the Association with 12 of these members joining immediately prior to the AGM.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial statements were presented for the year ended December 31, 2013. Total income for 2013 was \$8,319.41. Total expenses were \$6,504.78 which left a surplus of \$1,814.63 and a balance of \$9,836.54 in the Operating Fund. The Reserve Fund balance was \$32,959.99. The Environment Fund balance was \$13,721.78. The balance of all funds held by OLRA was \$56,518.31.

NEWSLETTER

The current postal rates have dramatically increased the cost of the newsletter. The members were advised that suggestions would be welcomed for making the delivery of the newsletters more economical.

There are two newsletters per year: the Spring newsletter will be sent to all families on Otter Lake, and the Fall newsletter will be forwarded to members only. Where email addresses are known, newsletters will be forwarded electronically.

Marty Chepesiuk suggested that a link be provided to the Association's website to enable members to access the newsletter directly. He suggested that members be notified when the newsletter would be available. Notification will be sent by mail only to those members who do not have an email address.

Sonja advised that copies of the newsletter could also be left at the Otter Lake Marina.

PHOTO COMPETITION

This year, there will be three categories for the photo contest: Scenery, Wildlife and People. The members will vote on their favorite photographs at the annual barbecue. The overall winning photograph will be published on the front cover of the Fall newsletter. Members were encouraged to submit their photographs.

BARBECUE

The annual barbecue will be held at the Marina on August 16th between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. There were 167 people in attendance at last year's annual barbecue.

BRUCE GIBBON PRESENTATION

Bruce, our Ward 2 representative on Council, spoke on the following topics: Environment, Infrastructure Financial and Other.

ENVIRONMENT

The water clarity on Otter Lake was slightly below last year's average. The rating was 5.4 metres but usually the rating is 5.9 metres. It was thought that the cold temperatures and wet weather conditions were the contributing factors and there is no real concern with this change.

He advised that the ice went out on April 29, 2014 as compared to March 19, 2013. Ice-in this year was December 14. The lake was covered with ice for 136 days as compared to 60 days in 2013.

There were more than 40 days this past winter where the temperature was recorded as being more than minus 19°C.

The Official Plan is in the second year of review. It has now been forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for final approval.

Seguin Township will continue to support the Environment First principle throughout the Township.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Bell tower will be installed on the far side of Blue Lake Road. Bell has made changes to the original proposal, reducing the height of the towers from 106 m to 76 m. There will be no lighting on the towers and they will be painted a neutral color. Construction will start in early June with the expectation that it will be completed by July 30.

Road reconstruction will continue on Otter Lake Road. It will include alignment, ditching, base work, gravel and hard topping. In 2013, \$250,000 had been spent on this project and an additional \$660,000 will be spent in 2014. It is expected that the work will be completed in the fall of 2014.

The new fire hall in Foley was completed on time and within budget. The Foley Community Centre is almost complete. This project involves the conversion of the former Agriculture Hall to a community centre. It is anticipated that construction will be completed in June, including all paving. The library has been opened but shelving has yet to be completed.

Compacting equipment will be installed at the transfer site on Brooks Road. Additional compacting equipment will also be installed at the Christie, Turtle Lake and Humphrey sites. This will allow increased capacity for recycling resulting and reduced transportation costs. Part of the cost for the installation of this equipment has been covered by a grant from Stewardship Ontario.

FINANCIAL

The issue of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) invoicing the municipality for policing services has not yet been resolved. Over 1000 letters of complaint have been filed with the Ontario government but the matter has been deferred until after the Ontario provincial election. The position of the Township is that it will pay its fair share of policing costs but will not subsidize policing outside the municipality. Members are encouraged to contact their respective candidates for the provincial election to encourage them to reject any unfair cost allocation proposal.

The municipal tax rate for 2014 has been slightly reduced. A home or cottage with an assessment of \$400,000 will have a reduction of four dollars in the municipal tax portion of the tax bill.

OTHER

Bruce advised that Mayor David Conn will not be seeking re-election and he is decided to allow his name to stand for that position. He advised that he will continue to have as his focus the environment, the financial well-being of municipality, support of economic development and the continued excellence in service delivery.

ALL CANDIDATES MEETING

The first All Candidates Meeting will be held on August 24th at 10 AM at the Memorial Hall in Rosseau. A second meeting will be held on September 20th at 2 PM at the Foley Community Center.

Mario Buszynski will be running as a candidate for Ward 2.

WATER LEVELS

Mario Buszynski addressed the significant issues concerning water levels in Otter Lake in 2013. The issues were attributed to record rainfall levels. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for water levels in Muskoka and Parry Sound. Of particular concern is that the current high water level is too high and results in damage to docks and boat houses. To assist in establishing appropriate levels, the Ministry is seeking input from cottagers on Otter Lake as to when water levels are too high. The contact person at the Ministry is Amanda Vincent. If water is too high at freeze up, significant damage can be caused to docks and structures at water's edge. Contact information for the Ministry will be posted on the website.

REVIEW OF MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Art summarized some of the major accomplishments of the Association over the past year. These included the implementation of the Lake Stewardship Program. Art reviewed the Living Sustainably in Seguin Township Program, the Flag recognition program and the checklist of items to qualify for the Flag award. Art also acknowledged Mario's significant efforts in working with the Ministry of Environment on water level issues.

Other activities and accomplishments of the Association over the past year included:

- the restructuring of the Board of Directors with the appointment of Brian Nelson as the Director responsible for membership issues and Daryle Moffatt as Treasurer;
- the appointment of Sharon Link as Photo Competition Coordinator;
- the creation of the position of Communications Coordinator;
- the continued representation on the Seguin Finance Committee;
- input in the successful negotiations with Bell concerning the construction of the new communication tower resulting in revisions in the original design and height;
- support of the Township concerning the downloading of the costs of OPP policing services. It was noted by Art that if the OPP proposal is implemented, it will result in municipal tax increases of between 11 and 18%;
- participation with other local ratepayer associations resulting in the moratorium on the installation of highway advertising signs;
- a successful 2013 barbecue and photo contest. The barbecue was attended by 167 people; and
- the installation of new signage at the narrows. It was noted that "Slow" signs are available through the Association.

RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS RECOGNITION

Each of Cathy Morrison, Doug Whitman and Mario Buszynski were recognized for their faithful and committed service for many years to the Association. Cathy has served as a Director since 1995 and Doug since 2002. They were each presented with an original Hudson Bay throw cover.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Brian Nelson and Daryle Moffatt were nominated as Directors. There were no further nominations from the floor for additional directors. It was moved by Mario Buszynski and seconded by Marilyn Campbell that these individuals be elected to the Board. The motion was unanimously passed by the members.

The members were advised that Tony Buszynski had been appointed by the Board to fill the balance of Mario's term of office as Mario has resigned in order to pursue election as the Ward 2 candidate in the upcoming municipal election.

DAVID CONN PRESENTATION

Mayor Conn advised the members that the OPP policing proposal would result in an increase of \$1,200,000 in the policing budget for the Township. He advised that this would be a significant issue for all municipalities currently receiving OPP policing services.

He also advised that he would not be seeking re-election as Mayor in the upcoming election. He endorsed Bruce Gibbon as a candidate for Mayor.

The membership thanked him for his many contributions to the Association during his years in office.

FEDERATION OF COTTAGE ASSOCIATIONS

Michelle Lewin from FOCA gave a summary of the role played by FOCA as the province-wide voice for Ontario waterfront property owners. She advised that it is active in policy development and lobbying efforts to benefit cottage owners. She also advised that group insurance benefits are available through FOCA for cottage owners. Other benefits for cottagers included subscription discounts for the Cottage Life magazine and access to Elerts on its website.

NEW BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There was discussion by the members as to the lack of signage from the old Otter Lake Road location to the present road. Bruce Gibbon agreed to speak to the Township Works Department about posting appropriate signage providing direction from Oastler Lake Park Drive to Otter Lake Road.

The members were advised that dredging of the Narrows between Little Otter Lake and Otter Lake was unlikely as it was a fish habitat area and any dredging would require approval of all three levels of government.

Art introduced the new owners of Grand Tappattoo Resort and thanked them for graciously hosting the AGM. After determining from the members that there was no additional business, Art thanked the members for attending the meeting and meeting was adjourned.