



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Peter Bordignon, President of BMRA



Thank you for attending Let's Chat!

On Saturday, October 14th, the BMRA Board hosted a Free Public Round Table Workshop at the L.E. Shore Library.

Refreshments were served and the event was open to all residents of the Blue Mountains. It was great to have many friends, ratepayers and especially many residents new to the local political scene.

The morning session gave us many great new thoughts and concerns from a Public IDEA Board that anyone could add comments too. These will all be addressed by the BMRA Board. The key to this process is to use the information that was provided as a strategy on a go forward basis. Each idea given will be discussed and analyzed by the board.

Thank you again to Councillors Martin and McGee for attending. Thank you to all for your thoughtful participation in our first Let's Chat.

Due to the success of the event, we will be running quarterly Public Let's Chat Forums, starting back up in Q1 of 2018. This will be very helpful heading into an election year.

The Blue Mountains - Glance into Craigleith

The Town of Blue Mountains has so many beautiful and unique landscapes within our boundaries. Many people have asked me over the years about a ward system for TBM to help reflect these diverse geographical areas and there is just not a simple answer to that question.

So for now, I thought I would take a look at the various areas in our town and see what lies within. Let's start in the North East and my beautiful area of Craigleith. Our area is rich with history; remember the first skiers at Blue Mountain came by train to the Craigleith station and by horse and carriage to the ski hills! Today we are home to four-season activities of all kinds. My wife and I love riding bikes along the trail, kayaking on the bay and in the winter, skiing at the Mountain all within our expanded backyard.

Over the past few months, I have spoken with many local residents and neighbours to see what issues are in my own backyard. One such neighbour, Lucy Richmond has expressed her concerns not only to me but to the BMRA in regards to the Pumping Station and the Trucks that use it. She has forwarded this information that I would like to share. A "leachate study" has been completed and published on this topic. What we need to understand is that the pumping station at Craigleith has the capacity to accept "toxic leachate" that travels along the shoreline of Georgian Bay where there are many traffic hazards between Grey Road 19 and 21 on an already busy Hwy 26. This is troublesome for many reasons, not only the leachate but the extra traffic (trucks also having to back down the road – as there is not enough room to turn around), the danger to people using the Georgian Trail and the chance of a toxic spill.

Craigleith along with many areas in the TBM are also facing explosive development over the next few years and the impact must be handled very carefully. That is where the BMRA Board and Committees step in and stay on top of issues of concern. In the next Newsletter, we will take a Glance into another great Blue Mountain Community.



What is the BMRA?

The Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association is a not-for-profit organization which collaborates with individuals, condo boards and community groups who seek to promote responsible local town government decisions.

Prime concerns of the BMRA include the Town's Budget and the Town's disproportionate share of the County's Budget, the Town's administrative services, adherence to the Zoning By-law and Official Plan, enforcement of the Short-Term Accommodation By-law, as well as capital and maintenance expenditures on roads, water and sewers.

Interested BMRA members review agendas, attend Council meetings, meet with councillors and staff as appropriate. The BMRA speaks out, after review and discussion, on subjects which have a broad impact on the Town, or where it appears that a Council decision will set an unwise precedent.

As a recognized community organization with a membership, by-laws and a Board of Directors which meets regularly, the BMRA is an ideal place for interested ratepayers to hone their civic leadership skills. By participating on the BMRA Board and committees, they help to run meetings, hold fund-raising events, become familiar with local issues and receive constructive feedback on their leadership roles and their ideas. As a result of their participation in the BMRA, volunteers tend to form viewpoints which take into consideration the wider community.

Members are kept informed about Town Council business and about municipal election candidates. Through the BMRA web site, newsletters and meetings, the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association provides a forum for the discussion of emerging issues affecting our community. The BMRA encourages residents, businesses and local groups in The Blue Mountains to join the organization to stay informed, have a voice, and mobilize around issues of interest to them.



BMRA in the Community

Pushing for the implementation of the Official Plan and suggesting modifications to Density and eliminating Bonusing.

Encouraging implementation of long awaited regulations on STA operators and enforcement of these new regulations.

Analysis and review of water and wastewater costs with the result of freezing consumption and fixed charges for past 3 years.

Analysis and review of Town budget that now includes a comparison of Actual costs to Budget rather than just Budget to Budget and highlighting for Council and the Public, via graph, the actual % increase of costs year over year amounting to 7% annually.

Supporting and providing ideas to the steering committee working to get a better deal with the County for our 26% share (\$14 million dollars) of the County budget.



Is TBM on the Far Side?

The County Committee finds it very frustrating to see that in addition to ignoring or declining:

- TBM's request for Roads autonomy,
- A professional Facilitator as offered by the Minister.

There is already growing awareness by ratepayers in the lack of accomplishments by the Task Force. The County has now cancelled a scheduled Task Force meeting...is that because of lack of County interest in TBM ... the far side of the County?

Before suggesting how to resurrect the Task Force let's set out a glimpse at what the County Budget looks like.

The total County budget for 2017 is \$143 million and the Provincial share is \$90 million. Will the Task Force consider providing, for the Provincial share, details of the individual County expenditures by line item, showing the Provincial funding portion for each item, both operating and capital?

Line items would include all items under "Ontario Works" (eg, Social Assistance, Community Homelessness, Child Care etc.), "Housing and Long Term Care" (e.g., Social Housing, Lee Manor etc.) and the individual items under "Transportation & Public Safety" (e.g., Ordinary Maintenance, Construction, Paramedic Services)."

We should also ask the Task Force to "prepare a pie chart like the "County 2017 Tax Dollar Chart" for the provincial share, to visually illustrate and highlight the differences."

We have been mulling over some other agenda items that need to take place with the County Task Force. The below 6 points are brief and more detailed dialogue is underway between BMRA representatives and Councilor Michael Martin TBM's Chair representative on the County Task Force.

Please see the attached pie chart of how the county spends TBM's money.

We got to thinking about the above pie chart when Joe Halos put up a Motion on Events for Life. Perhaps the Events for Life "Ask" dovetails with the County way of thinking about equality in 9 municipalities in the County being like a Ward system.

We think that the Events for Life subject (along with others) might be moved over to the County Task Force for a County holistic approach to Social Services. In fact there are several items that our Town now spends money on that should instead be on the County expenditure list, on our behalfas part of a better deal with the County.

6 Points

1. Events for Life is a County-wide not for profit entity. Fund it accordingly.
2. Long-Term Care: As our Deputy Mayor has campaigned on in the past, TBM does not get a fair deal on this.
3. The cheques we send to both Collingwood and Meaford Hospitals should instead be sent by Grey County as well as Simcoe County. TBM is caught on the far edge of both Counties and this is a classic example of the inequities of that. We already fund the County social services and we are obligated with having to fund 2 hospitals in 2 LHINs... as well as sending money to the County which sends funding to Grey Bruce Hospital ...that's 3 hospitals TBM funds... not a fair deal for TBM.
4. As the article in the recent 'On The Bay' mentioned, our region has a "job crisis" and part of the solution to that is transit. This dovetails with Attainable housing efforts that must include transit solutions. (By the way, reference is made in that OTB article to the common sense solution of Regional Government).
5. Please see the attached Staff Report from Sam Dinsmore about Subsidy funding for Services. Each of those items in the Analysis needs to be put to the Task Force. You can also link the Staff Report here:

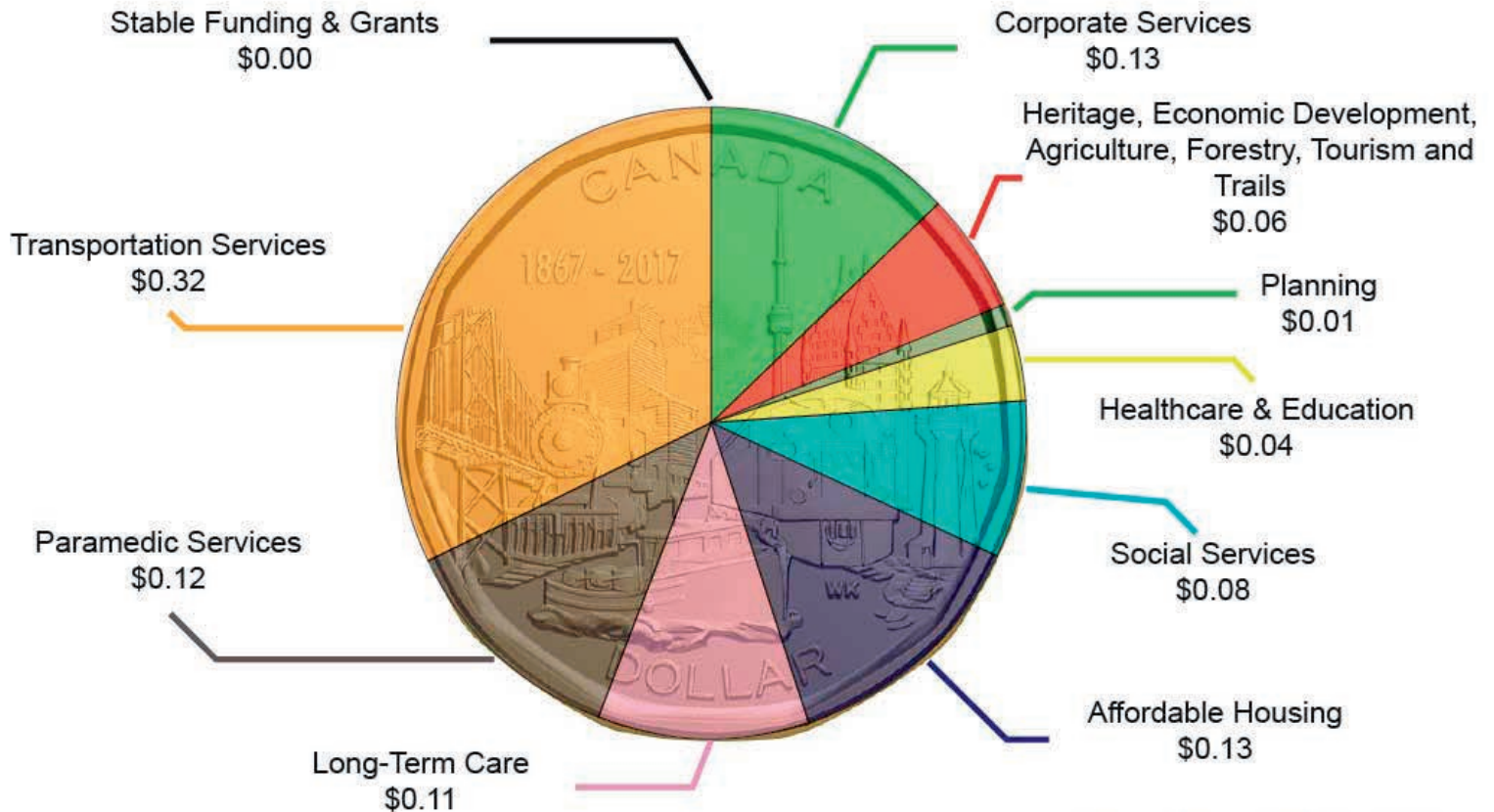
http://www.thebluemountains.ca/public_docs/events/B.2.4%20FAF.17.112%20Subsidies%20for%20all%20Community%20Services%20Facilities.pdf

6. A BMRA Director, Janet Findlay's has a concurring column on "An Ask for Our Recreational Trails", including equitable funding on the Trails similar to that provided by Simcoe. Another huge looming issue is the requirement for funding of Waste and Water in Clarksburg.

In summation: We need to have the Task Force have these 6 items on The Task Force agenda.

While we are happy to pursue ways of working together with the County, we will close by restating Tier 1 will always be our final destination. With an election coming up in 2018 for those who won't see the light, perhaps we need to create a little heat on this County subject. As always we are prepared to work with TBM to discuss these 6 points in more detail.

Your 2017 Tax Dollar



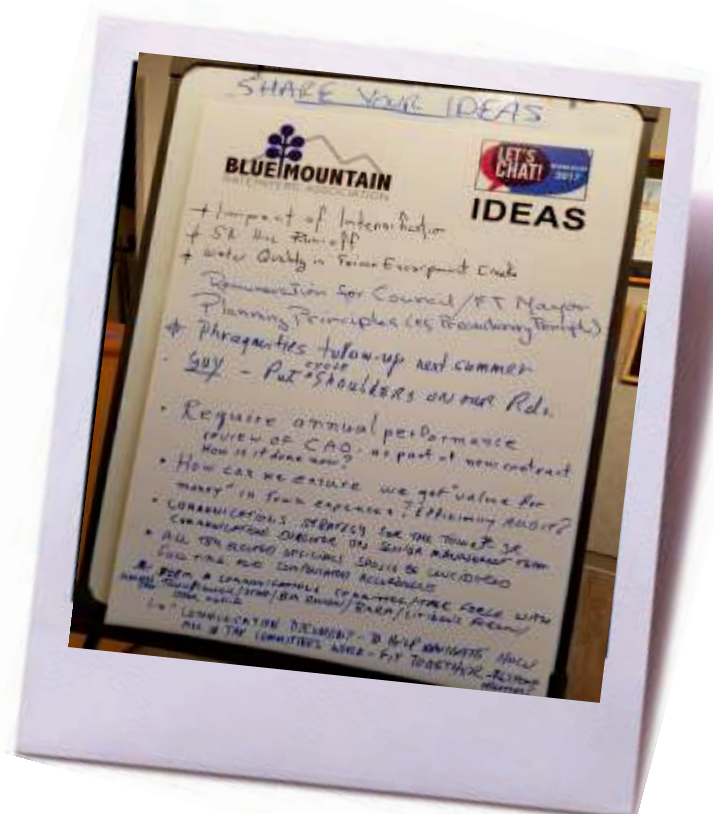
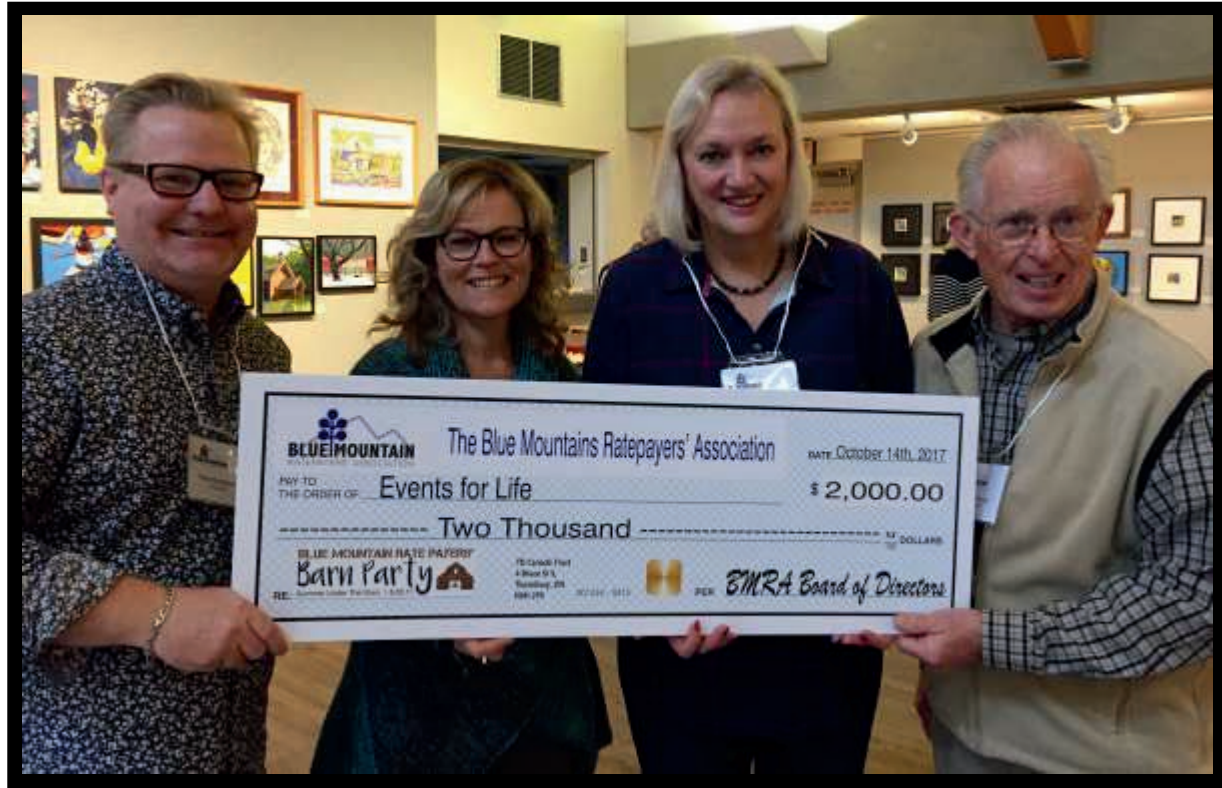
Canada 150 Loonie photo: www.mint.ca

An 'Ask' for Our Recreational Trails - By: Janet Findlay

As part of our strategy for getting a better deal with the County, I have supported the suggestion that we develop a list of "ASKS", particular ones that speak to the unique nature of our area. One suggestion relates to the recreational trails which are such an important part of our resident and tourist experience.

Grey County is currently seeking input on its Recreational Trails Master Plan, however the focus is on the County's forest properties and the CP Rail Trail from Owen Sound to Dundalk. The Georgian Cycle & Ski Trail Association has written to the County planner, requesting funding assistance for trails in the individual municipalities and particularly the crossing of the Georgian Trail at Highway 26.

This suggestion of County funding assistance for trails is in line with what has been available to municipalities in Simcoe County since at least 2010. Approximately \$250,000 per year is allocated in the Simcoe County budget, with a maximum of \$30,000 available to each municipality for an approved project on a matching basis - i.e. the municipality must put up the same amount as they are requesting from the County to a maximum ask of \$30,000. Collingwood has been successful at obtaining access to these funds almost every year since 2010. The program is called the Trails Connecting Communities Program.







FROM THE EDITOR - Paula Hope, Editor

Part-Time Elected Representation at TBM...Really?

"Put the right people on the bus" is a famous phrase from the well-respected Good to Great book which provides excellent business wisdom.

It is a phrase that translates well into the direction of local politics in the Town of Blue Mountains. For we, the electorate of TBM, must make sure that we put the "right people" onto the Town bus in 2018.

"Right people" are not part-time hobbyists who are filling in time. The "right people" are very serious about the direction of our precious municipality and take full time responsibility for our future.

And those elected individuals should be compensated accordingly for their thoughtfulness, dedication and commitment. We should expect that they are listening, all the time, to us, their electorate.

If it is true that the decisions that elected town leaders make in the next four years will impact life in the TBM for the next forty years, it is imperative that we get the "right people on the bus".

Part-Time elected leaders at TBM?...Really?



JOIN TODAY!

The Blue Mountains Ratepayers' Association is growing in numbers thanks to many of you who keep abreast of the issues and support BMRA activities! Please don't forget to send in your \$25 and keep us the force we've become! New members and diversity always welcome!

We are actively seeking residential members as well as members from our agricultural community, corporate business, and small business. We are looking for committee volunteers with skillsets in website, social media, fundraising and municipal elections.

PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN TODAY!

**RENEW TODAY
ONLY \$25!**

www.bmrateratepayers.com

Visit the website and click on JOIN NOW today!



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Michael Seguin
Past President

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WHY BE A BMRA MEMBER?

- Strength in numbers = influence on government and community issues, paid membership is the proof
- Membership means you can bring issues of concern to the attention of the Association and perhaps find like minded support
- Represent the issues facing your neighbourhood or industry and make a difference
- While your Board are all Volunteers...
Website, Newsletters and AGM are costly: for effective and timely communication we need your dues!